

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

**TWO IDEAL TYPICAL FORMS OF
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND ITS
COMPETENCE-BASED METHODS IN
PRACTICE**

CSABA TITKOS

Faculty of Business and Economics,
University of Pécs, Republic of Hungary

JEL Classifications: D83 **UDC Classification:** 005.94

Keywords: Ideal type, approach and method-based knowledge transfer, change in behavior, specific development toolkit

Abstract: The paper classifies and examines the ideal typical forms of knowledge transfer, based on Max Weber's notion of ideal type. It distinguishes approach-based and method-based knowledge transfer, and compares them with the help of basic variables to investigate the kinds of problems they address, the direction they take, the results they produce, the type and form of information they provide, and the sources and outcome that arise. Furthermore, it demonstrates the dual direction of the model: the desirable states of variables can also be defined from the aspect of outcome. The paper emphasizes the role of forming a question, and introduces area-specific methods in the competence-based analysis of knowledge transfer aimed to trigger change in the behavior. The paper argues that given the diversity of behavior related competences, the approach, method and grounding that address them should also be manifold. It also highlights the role of paradigms and common language.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15208/pieb.2013.02>

Vol.13 (1), PP.17-25

Source: Titkos C., 2013. "Two ideal typical forms of knowledge transfer and its competence-based methods in practice", *Perspectives of Innovations, Economics & Business*, Vol.13(1), pp.17-25, <http://dx.doi.org/10.15208/pieb.2013.02>

Introduction

Managing knowledge as a resource and the outstanding role of training and development is nowadays evident for the management. It is a theoretical cliché with the difficulties of practical adaptation. My work can contribute to analytic consideration of difficult situations, this is a theory born from practice, which according to my hopes points toward practice. Sound and wise judgment has never ever underestimated knowledge. Possessing it means power, influence, subsistence and competitiveness. It means vendible and deliverable value. It is beyond question that its transparency has remarkably increased. Books, journals, conferences and university courses indicate this very well.

This study deals with several issues, among which I can mention the knowledge versus reading experience. It differentiates lexical reading experience mediation from knowledge transfer. Then it classifies and analyzes the ideal typical forms of knowledge transfer, using Max Weber's definition of

ideal type, in the sense of the static, historical individual. It distinguishes the approach-based knowledge transfer from the method-based one and compares them with each other along basic variables. It investigates to which fundamental question they give an answer, what their orientation is, what they give, what their result is, what kind of information they provide, in what kind of form they appear, what their sources and implications are.

This study presents the dual orientation of the model, i.e. the desirable states of the variables can be determined by the consequences. If the outcome expectations of the receivers are clear, their resistance can be better understood. This gives the chance for the providers to move and adapt.

The study highlights the role of questions, points out their role in resource- and knowledge-activation; furthermore, it analyzes field-specific methods in course of competence-based examination of knowledge transfer aiming change in behavior. It explains that the variety of competencies determining behavior demands different (both in depth and methodology) toolkits and way of preparation. Emphasizing the responsibility of both the providing and the receiving party, it indicates the roles of the common language and paradigms.

According to my intentions the thoughts included in the study can be the indicators of conversation and knowledge transfer. They can cause discussions and development processes. They can project the theoretical background and structure behind the process and practice of knowledge transfer.

The definition of knowledge

First and foremost I do not regard the definition of knowledge as evident, and from a methodological consideration instead of the Western positive approach, I use the negative aspect. Just like the Eastern philosophy put the question of Who am I not? Instead of the fundamental question of Who am I? obviously looking for the same result in the end - but exclusively approaching to something which is really hard to conclude; I have chosen the same way. I ask What is not knowledge? And in this case I only deal with the most common misbelief: reading experience is obviously not knowledge. Consequently, the mediation of the reading experience is not knowledge transfer.

It is all about that people who read (more) try to persuade others to read more too (and of course to read the books they recommend), so that they could belong to the group of widely read people. Back to the Western method, knowledge on one hand is some kind of intellectual essence, on the other it is experimental competence treat. Maintaining the possibility of the multilateral approach, I emphasize these two aspects, as it is them which point out the Weberian, object-oriented ideal types of knowledge transfer.

Definition of the ideal type

According to the definition of Max Weber we can separate different ideal types in connection with knowledge transfer. Weber used the definition of ideal types in two senses (Weber, 1967, 41-53.). One can be regarded as the static and the other as the dynamic type. The first is some kind of historical

individual: A concept established from the typical characteristics of some historical phenomenon, e.g. feudalism. And it is not about describing a specific era - such as the medieval Hungarian, German or French society, but their unique, distinctive essence: their ideal type. The other - the dynamic one - is a historical process: a consistent model of a real, historical process; it presents the way of development led by pure rationality. Naturally, procedures in reality differ from this, since their actors behave led by their interests, irrationality, emotions, attitudes and their circumstances. The ideal type - and consequently the typology presented below - can be characterized by the followings:

1. It means an instrument in the process of getting to know instead of presenting the goal itself. As an etalon it intends to measure reality, the extent of difference from the ideal type
2. It is an intellectual product, not an existing, influencing force
3. It is not a norm; it is an instrument for getting to know instead of evaluation.

An ideal type is similarly etalon-like as our usual measuring standard: the meter, which is on one hand an instrument of measuring distance, mostly measuring the difference from meter. As rarely do we measure the way of light under $1/299\ 792\ 458$ seconds, which is the official definition of meter since 1983. On the other hand it is an artificial intellectual product of science (Sasovits, n.a.). It is not a plummet in itself; this -predestinated - distance has absolutely no natural privileges or preferences at all.

The ideal typical classification of knowledge transfer

In this study I analyze knowledge transfer with the help of the static, historical individual ideal type. According to this, I differentiate the approach-providing knowledge from the method-providing one. This objective difference refers to the previously highlighted two aspects of knowledge, i.e. knowledge is some kind of intellectual essence, and an experimental competence treat. In the followings I deal with the description of the two differentiated types of knowledge (based on its object and aspect). My method is operationalization. I examine these two types along some measurable or at least identifiable variables. The variables are: fundamentals, center, orientation, outcome, type of knowledge, form of knowledge, source of knowledge and consequence.

TABLE 1. THE IDEAL TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

| Variables | Approach | Method |
|---------------------|------------|------------|
| Fundamentals | Why | How |
| Center | Value | Interest |
| Orientation | End | Means |
| Outcome | Compass | Instrument |
| Type of knowledge | General | Special |
| Form of knowledge | Conception | Formula |
| Source of knowledge | Culture | Know-how |
| Consequence | Wisdom | Power |

Source: Own construction

The variables of knowledge transfer

Fundamentals: The approach-based and the method-based knowledge transfer are seeking the answers for different questions. The former one focuses on the Why, the latter one on the How questions. The former one provides answers to the questions of Why does this happen? Why do we think/do/perceive this?; while the latter one gives answers to How does this happen? How do we think/do/perceive this? sometimes in a declarative, sometimes in an imperative mode.

Center: If we investigate the core, the source of energy of ideal types, it can be seen that one of them is value-, the other is interest-centered. One of them is legitimated by some kind of preference system, value system, while the other focuses on utility and interest.

Orientation: The two types differ in their orientation too. The approach-based knowledge transfer is end-oriented, concentrates on the final goal, while the method-based one is instrumental, and concentrates on the means. I.e.: the first shows a presumed or attractive goal, the second probably the necessary tools to reach it.

Outcome: As a result of the differences in their orientation, the two types differ in their outcomes as well. The approach-based one gives a compass which shows the assumed goal, the method-based one offers an instrument with which the goal can be reached.

Type of knowledge: The type of knowledge is also different at these two kinds of knowledge transfer. The approach-based presents general, holistic knowledge, while the other deals with specialized, reductionist knowledge. This first represents the complexity and beauty of the world, the second is about the micro level of a specific field (Méró, 1989. 75, 88-89.). The receivers' critics reflect on this feature several times. In the first case their dislike is expressed by such sentences as "there is nothing concrete, nothing conceivable"; "what should I do with that?" or "what is this good for?". In the second case the "I understand its parts but cannot see the whole picture"; "I can't see the wood for the trees" expressions can be typical.

Form of knowledge: Beyond the type of knowledge their form is specific too. In case of the approach-based knowledge transfer the provider uses conception, in case of the method-based one he/she uses formula. For example, in the first case, mainly presented with a value and attitude content, it is expressed why we cook (e.g. at home for our children instead of giving him fast-food) or why an outplacement should be provident. While in the second case, we just write the recipe objectively with technical exactitude (e.g. the ingredients of the potato sauce and way of preparation or the steps and methods of the provident outplacement).

Source of knowledge: Besides the type and form of knowledge its source is different. The source of the approach-based knowledge is culture; the source of the method-based knowledge is know-how. These two need to be separated. "Know-how" is nothing by itself; it is a means without an end, a mere potentiality, an unfinished sentence. "Know-how" is no more a culture than a piano is music" (Schumacher, 1982.)

And it is necessary to legitimate and line them up. "...There is no doubt also the need to transmit know-how but this must take second place, for it is obviously somewhat foolhardy to put great powers into the hands of people without making sure that they have a reasonable idea of what to do with them."

(Schumacher, 1982.) This idea is excellently represented in Dürrenmatt's drama, *The Physicists*.

Consequence: Probably as a conclusion of the above mentioned, there is an important difference in the consequences of the two knowledge transfer types. The approach-based knowledge leads to wisdom, while the method-based one leads to power. To this refers the quote of Schumacher - at least partly.

Lessons learned from the model

The presented model is a dual direction one, which means that just like a sand-glass, it is reversible. This way examining from the consequences, the state of the dependent variables can be determined. This can be interesting for both the knowledge provider both the receiver.

- a) *The receiver* (the recipient of the knowledge transfer) can determine the wanted kind of knowledge based on the desirable consequence (wisdom versus power), if he/she has some self-recognition (which is actually the synonym of wisdom as well). So if the receiver intends to have power in order to influence others (influence is the key word of power), then obviously he/she has to prefer the method-based knowledge transfer. While having an intention of getting ahead in wisdom, he/she needs to choose the approach-based knowledge transfer.

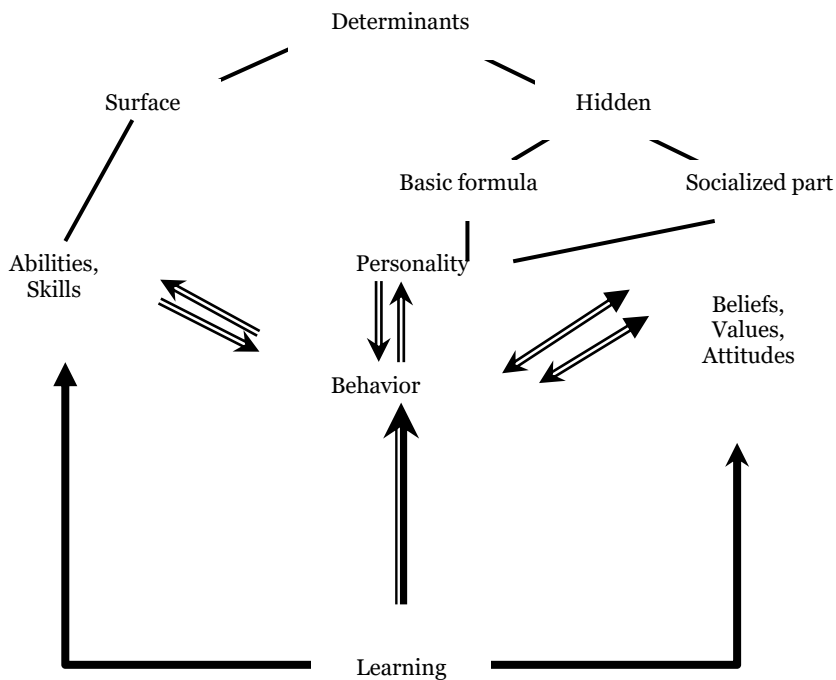
Or it is possible to gain some self-recognition by realizing in which kind of knowledge he/she is interested in (which consequences he/she attracted to). Therefore if the receiver recognizes that he/she is attracted to method-based knowledge transfer then obviously he/she is driven by the need of influencing things-people-processes. But if the receiver finds the approach-based knowledge transfer as his/her own field then the wisdom focus can be supposed.

- b) For the knowledge *providers* this is relevant as well, as starting with the consequences they will be able to determine the wished states of variables. If the expectations regarding the consequences are clear, then on one hand it makes the resistance of the receivers understandable, on the other it offers possibilities and chances to move on and adapt. I.e. the aspirations of the receivers (power or wisdom) can determine the wanted states of variables in themselves. (E.g. during management education they would like to "learn" how to influence others, how to gain power over their employees.) This provides two ways of reaction for the knowledge providers: either they adapt or manage the resistance of the receivers. Their strategic choice can be influenced by the final goal, the situation and the participants.
- c) Some other characteristics of the two ideal types provide further opportunities for the knowledge providers. *In course of the approach-based knowledge transfer questions have an outstanding role.* They may be even more important than the answers. This has a philosophical and a social-psychological reason. The philosophical reason derives from the differences of the questions and answers. Thinking may raise such questions which can be answered neither actually nor generally. However, this is not negative, just a fact which can be originated in that it is possible to ask perfect questions, nevertheless, it is almost impossible to give perfect answers. This is not only philosophical and social scientific, but natural scientific specialty as well, i.e. it is generally valid

for “scientific truth”. It is a greater intellectual achievement to put a new question, than giving the umpteenth answer to an existing question. One of the perfect questions is: Who are you? As a curio here is one perfect answer /to Moses/ from God: “I am who I am.” Since here the “am” is a finite form of the verb “be”, this is not tautology.

The social psychological reason is that everyone has his/her own answer to the questions, which make it possible to integrate them deeply and permanently: this is called internalization - this is the opposite of reacting other ways to canned responses: mainly short-time subservience stemming from temptation or violence and assimilation laid open to the variability of emotions (Aronson, 2002. 52-57.). Thus, questions have an outstanding role in approach-based knowledge transfer (mobilizing receivers).

FIGURE 1. INTERNAL DETERMINANTS OF BEHAVIOR



Source: Titkos, 2012, p. 88.

- a) *The particularity of the method-based knowledge transfer is that its purpose is the change in behavior.* This has even more serious consequences. Examining the internal determinants of behavior (Figure 1.) can help in unfolding this. It can be clearly seen that among the determinants of behavior there are such inner psychological factors as abilities, competencies, personality, beliefs, values and attitudes. The external factors determining the behavior are also important. The situation, the external environment has a special role. Social psychology has emphasized the verification of this phenomenon, e.g. the electric shock experiment of Milgram (Aronson, 2002. 57-63.), or the prison experiment connected to Zimbardo (Aronson, 2002. 30-31., 293.) or

the definition of the fundamental attribution error which indicates the tendency according to which people overvalue how internal dispositional factors determine our behavior, at the same time underestimate the role of the situational factors.

The process of socialization is not less important at all, through which we acquire our beliefs, values, attitudes and behavioral patterns. Our personality and our competencies are developing during a life-long learning process, and in most cases we become the imprint of the culture in which we were born.

The Figure 1 indicates as well that changes in the behavior are induced by the learning process. It either directly affects behavior or indirectly influences it through abilities, competencies, personality, beliefs, values and attitudes. The question has arisen: what kind of different techniques are necessary to either directly or indirectly influence behavior in method-based knowledge transfer? Are there any adequate forms of these directions and ways? Well, these ways stem from different competence areas. This heterogeneity requires several, different toolkits and preparation both in their depth and techniques.

Adequate development tools

The development tools I use in practice and are thought as adequate are the followings: in case of developing abilities and competencies training and coaching; in case of personality development therapy; for developing beliefs, values and attitudes education, evaluation and pedagogy; and for changing behavior training and coaching as well (Table 2).

TABLE 2. DEVELOPMENT TOOLS RELATED TO COMPETENCE AREAS

| Abilities Competences | Personality | Beliefs, values, attitudes | Behavior |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Training | Personality Development | Education Evaluation | Training |
| Coaching | Therapy | Pedagogy | Coaching |

Source: Own construction

I would like to add two important and not evidential remarks to the table: the first is about the contractual form of relationship with regard to the usage of the development toolkit; the other is about personality development, about therapy.

As the development tools can be remarkably different both is their depth, in their techniques and in the level of their intimacy, the relationship between the provider (developer) and the receiver can be considerably different as well. Due to the relationship and the role-clarification it is necessary to create a contract between the two parties in which both the internal (content) and external (form) elements of the relationship can be said and mutually accepted. This is an essential condition of the common work and both parties' comfort feeling.

If our aim is personality development, then for this specific methods are necessary. Ones which were born to this 'experiment': to reframe the area beyond behavior. Several specific methods were developed to reveal the hidden aspects of the personality. Such methods are the analysis, psychodrama,

kinesiology, hypnosis, NLP (Neurolinguistic Programming) (Bíró, Gy.), KIP (Katatim Imaginative Psychotherapy) (Bölcs, manuscript), and EGO-state. These are used mostly in therapy, but some of them - NLP and psychodrama (Blatner, 2004) - can be used in trainings to some extent.

In my view it is important to clarify what we mean by therapy, because some may find it intimidating. Any friendly conversation may have a therapeutic effect if it contains (albeit unconsciously) Rogers's three principles (Rogers, 2004):

- Empathy: solidarity, sympathy, fellow-feeling
- Unconditional acceptance: respect for the person herself/himself (independently from her/his behavior)
- Congruence: authenticity, credibility, presence without masks.

Therapy, of course, has different levels, although this may be detected only by the therapist and only with regard to how difficult the process is. Yet the therapeutic intention is likely to be the same. (Titkos, 2012, p. 93).

Convergence and conclusion

Besides the differences several common features of the two ideal types of knowledge transfer can be seen. E.g. both of them increase efficiency if the provider knows his/her way around the receiver's map (NLP category) and around the receiver's paradigms and find a way to the common work. If the provider is willing and able to get to know the receiver's system of experiences and thinking schemes, and use it as the field and instrument of the common work. This involves the challenge of giving up his/her own comfort zone and undertaking the risk of the unknown and the disorientation, as it is not possible for the provider to completely be aware of the receiver's map and paradigms. However, several times without this notional rapport the provider endangers the effectiveness of the cooperation.

Finally, as some kind of conclusion, and providing a framework for the topic I emphasize that due to the Weberian interpretation of its characteristics, the ideal types mentioned above have two negative and positive consequences (just like ideal types generally).

The negative ones are the following:

1. They do not exist purely in reality.
2. They are not bases for qualification.

The positive ones are the following:

1. Their role is to measure reality based on its difference from the ideal types.
2. They provide support for understanding.

The knowledge transfer in reality combines the elements of the two types. By doing so, the consequences of both can be seen in course of certain trainings and developments. It is the responsibility of the knowledge mediators/providers to take these into consideration for the sake of quality. This study intends to contribute to this.

References

- Aronson, E., 2002. A társas lény [The social animal], in Hungarian, KJK Budapest
- Bíró, G., Rövid pszichoterápiák strukturált szintézise, avagy az NLP alap gondolatai [Structured synthesis of short psychotherapies, i.e. the basic assumptions of NLP], in Hungarian, (Manuscript)
- Blatner, A., 2004. A pszichodráma alapjai, történet, elmélet, gyakorlat [Basics of psychodrama, history, theory and practice] , in Hungarian, Budapest: Animula
- Bölcs, E., Katatim imaginatív pszichoterápia (KIP) [Katatim imaginative psychotherapy (KIP)], in Hungarian (Manuscript)
- Mérő, L., 1989. Észjárások [Turns of Minds], in Hungarian, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó
- Rogers, C., 2004. Valakivé válni. A személyiség születése, [On becoming a person], in Hungarian, SHL Budapest
- Schumacher, E., 1982. A kicsi szép [Small is beautiful], in Hungarian, Budapest: KJK
- Titkos, Cs., 2012. "The Kaizen principle of personality." *Perspectives of Innovations, Economics and Business*, Vol.12(3), pp.86-96
- Weber, M., 1967. Szociológiai alapfogalmak In: *Gazdaság és Társadalom*, Budapest: KJK, pp.38-51