Interpreting the Czech Knowledge Management Experience[1]

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Abstract

   Knowledge Management (KM) is today a relatively well-established managerial discipline. A self-administered questionnaire is conducted to investigate hypotheses focused on Knowledge Management and managerial perceptions. The main research question becomes "what is the nature of this attitude and whether the perception of KM can be generalised or is specific to certain groups". Data are processed using descriptive statistics, Pearson chi-square, Likelihood ratio, Cramer's V, and additional supportive tests. It is apparent from the data analysis that a negative perception of KM prevails among Czech managers. Moreover, the study proves that there is no significant relationship between the replies of various respondent subgroups segregated by age and the non/existence of KM in an organisation. A shift in the responsibilities and the democratisation of knowledge are contrary to the ideologies and practice of doing business today in the Czech Republic.

Keywords: *Czech Republic, knowledge management, technology, perception, knowledge sharing, culture*

JEL Classification: M14, C12, D83

1. Introduction

   Several business concepts have been established to improve organisations' competitiveness or performance. Knowledge Management (KM) as a managerial discipline emerged approximately two decades ago. From this time, many companies

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have demonstrated significant interest in KM. However, although exceptions may be found, these are mostly multinationals headquartered in western Europe or the United States. As cited by Brunet-Thornton and Bureš (2009), or Marešová (2010), successful KM implementation in the Czech lands, wherein KM remains a controversial topic, is rare. The economic benefits and liabilities of KM related to corporate competitiveness have been investigated, discussed and substantiated by several studies (Miklosik, Hvizdova and Zak, 2012; Mihi Ramirez, Morales and Jesus, 2011). However, the current study rises beyond the economic analysis. The reason for this approach is that current issues are both technical and social (Lin and Joe, 2012). Despite the endeavours of a few organisations and public institutions to attract KM adherents, it remains largely a neglected resource in the Czech business environment. As similarly conducted in Spain (Forcada et al., 2013) the problem becomes in determining the reason as to why this condition exists. The aim of this paper is to investigate reasons for the current state of Knowledge Management in the Czech Republic and provide interpretation that can serve as a lesson learnt in other countries. The paper is organised as follows. The next section briefly describes the theoretical background based on the research analysis on KM conducted in various countries as well as the Czech Republic. The third section presents the research methodology whereas; the fourth section depicts the acquired results. The subsequent section discusses the results using several perspectives and finally, the last section concludes the discussion.

2. Theoretical Background

Knowledge Management has gained attention of both practitioners and academicians. It can be demonstrated by an overly optimistic literature (Storey and Barnett, 2000), considerable fanfare (Malhotra, 2005) and poor performance (Marr and Spender, 2004), reinforces suggestions that KM is yet another fad (Coulson-Thomas, 2004; Wilson, 2002). Furthermore, several case studies institutionalising KM in theory and practice have already been published (McGuinness, Demirbag and Bandara, 2013; Hannay, Ben Jaafar and Earl, 2013). There exists a myriad of studies published expressing the experience with issues related to KM introduction in different countries and political settings. For instance, in their research Birol, Dagli and Silman (2010) interviewed thirty-five respondents from Russia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Results confirm that knowledge management tools have not been used effectively in areas such as improvement, acquisition, sharing or evaluation of knowledge in Turkey and Russia. Based on the results achieved from the analysis of Finnish, Russian and Chinese companies, Andreeva and Kianto (2012) propose a framework that incorporates

KM with human resources management and information, and communication technologies that should impact competitiveness and economic performance of firms. Palacios-Marques, Gil-Pechuán and Lim (2011) describe how introducing KM practices has a positive impact on the improvement of human capital in Spanish firms within the biotechnology and telecommunications industries. Behzadi and Sanji (2012) used K-ACT model (knowledge access, creation and transfer) and evaluated the current state of KM in Iranian government services. They conclude that there are many weaknesses, requiring examination and altered through planning and scientific research. Shoham and Perry (2009) propose a model for managing organisation-wide technological changes in Israeli universities on the basis of an existing mechanism, using knowledge management strategies for the purpose of change management. In their study Huang and Lai (2012) explore the critical success factors for KM in the life insurance industry in Taiwan. Using the conclusion that individual characteristics, KM characteristics and organisational characteristics significantly influence KM implementation. They suggest a comprehensive research model for further examination in other industries and provide the life insurance business with practical suggestions. The primary idea of all the aforementioned empirical and case studies is that managing knowledge promotes the creation of value-added products and services once knowledge is shared (Bhatt, 2001).

The initial literature study suggests that KM comprises a diverse and growing body. However, there is little available that discusses the Czech condition since European Union adherence in 2004. Not surprisingly, the majority of existing scientific literature focuses either on KM principles, methods, techniques, or tools in general, or on the current state of KM in the Czech Republic. This discussion is however, without an in-depth analysis or does it endeavour to identify reasons creating this situation. One can state that while current literature promoting KM exists, there is an alarming shortage of empirical studies that demonstrate an actual connection between KM activities in Czech companies and the underlying reasons. The work published by Petříková et al. (2010) can be considered as an exception. It presents the KM practice associated with the energy giant ČEZ, a. s., Mládková (2011) deals intensively with tacit knowledge or knowledge worker issues, emphasising the importance of fundamental principles and methods. Ladová (2010) focuses on KM infrastructure and application strategies. However, Czech specifics are not taken into consideration. The same can be stated about methodology of KM introduction developed by Bureš (2006). Alternatively, Marešová (2010) investigates the situation of KM in the Czech Republic. Grounded on a questionnaire survey with 132 respondents, she concludes that Czech companies are interested in KM and consider it as a significant

tool for increasing their competitive ability. Nevertheless, they encounter many obstacles that finally discourage them from consistent implementation. Although the study identifies the central benefits and barriers of KM introduction in the Czech Republic, nothing is said as to the reasons and grounds for this condition. Moreover, in the aim to facilitate learning, many textbooks are translated from the original English language often with commentary from the Czech author. Unless the author is fully fluent with the topic and the language, the quality of the material suffers from the lack of a culture-specific transfer. To bridge the existing gap, this paper analyses the link between existence of KM programmes in Czech organisations and perception of KM by Czech managers.

3. Research Methods

This study deploys quantitative research as defined by Babbie (2010). The basic assumption is that the current state of KM in the Czech Republic is created primarily by Czech cultural attitudes (Brunet-Thornton and Bureš, 2012). The main research question becomes "what is the nature of this attitude and whether the perception of KM can be generalised or attributed to specific groups". In order to incorporate all selected aspects of KM described in the previous section, replies to the following statements reflecting KM attitudes, are analysed based on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree/Agree/I do not know/Disagree Strongly Disagree):

S1. I believe that knowledge sharing jeopardises the certainty of a job.
S2. Knowledge represents power at the workplace.
S3. If team work exists, there is no need for KM.
S4. KM is a foreign concept unsuitable for the Czech environment.
S5. KM is another managerial fad that will disappear in the near future.
S6. KM is merely about computer systems and usage of advanced information technologies.

Based on the aforementioned central research question and investigated statements, the hypotheses tested in this study are:

H1. The majority of Czechs embrace a negative attitude towards KM.
H2. There is no relationship between the respondents' age and attitude to KM.
H3. There is no relationship between the respondents' seniority and their perception towards KM.
H4. There is no relationship between respondents' gender and their attitude towards KM.
H5. There is no relationship between the existence of a KM programme in an enterprise and the attitude towards KM.

The research instrument is embodied in the Czech Knowledge Management Experience (CZ-KM-E). The survey consists of thirty-one questions in the Czech language. Only a fragment of the research study is presented in this paper. The unique component of this vehicle is its nature and design. The preface provides the respondent with a definition of KM, which is in concordance with prevailing definitions used in the domain. For the purpose of this study KM is defined as following: "… deliberate and systematic coordination of people, technologies, processes, and structures aimed at creating values based on knowledge and innovation; whereas these values are achieved with the help of knowledge processes and best practices embedded in the organisational memory." Invitations (in Czech) were aimed directly to various Czech-interest groups. Next round was based on the snowball sampling technique. This effort resulted in 93 replies. 13 questionnaires had to be excluded from statistical processing due to response incompleteness. Hence, eighty questionnaires (n = 80) were analysed. Only organisations in which a KM programme is introduced or not (n = 60), are analysed in hypothesis H5. Data are processed using the SPSS statistical package.

4. Results

Respondents (n = 80) comprise forty-five males (56.3%) and thirty-five females (43.7%). Further relevant demographical characteristics are available in Table 1. There are other demographical data; however, these are not used for testing purposes, but serve only as control variables to validate the sample representativeness.

T a b l e 1

Basic Respondents' Characteristics

Age		Experience		KM introduced		
<=37	*>37*	*<=24*	*>24*	*Yes*	*No*	*I don't know*
39	41	34	46	32	28	20
Total	**80**		**80**			**80**

Source: Authors' research.

Firstly, the distribution hypotheses related to the frequency of answers (both original scale and binned to positive, neutral and negative answers) is conducted. The significance level is 0.05. Results of the One-Sample Chi-Square Test reveal (Table 2) that data do not contain any anomalies that would disable its statistical processing.

T a b l e 2

Global Frequency Evaluation

Null hypothesis: The categories of *[X]* occur with equal probabilities	Chi-square	df	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
[X] = S1 (binned)	13.900[a]	2	.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S2 (binned)	83.125[a]	2	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S3 (binned)	34.825[a]	2	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S4 (binned)	51.925[a]	2	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S5 (binned)	45.700[a]	2	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S6 (binned)	15.925[a]	2	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S1	9.875[b]	4	.043	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S2	60.875[b]	4	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S3	25.875[b]	4	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S4	33.000[b]	4	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S5	29.500[b]	4	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
[X] = S6	10.625[b]	4	.031	Reject the null hypothesis.
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 26.7.				
b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 16.0.				

Source: Authors' research.

Statements S1 – S6 have a negative meaning with respect to KM. Therefore, the agreement with the statements represents a negative attitude to KM. Table 3 illustrates the details of the respondents' answers. It demonstrates that Czech managers do possess a negative perception of KM, which is proved by the overall 298 answers (62.1%) that concur in varying degrees with the selected statements. Only 131 answers (27.3%) do not agree (10.6% of respondents do not know). In this sense, the hypothesis H1 is accepted – Czechs hold a negative attitude to KM.

T a b l e 3

H1 Test Results

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	*Total*
I Strongly agree	19	29	25	30	29	22	*154*
I agree	23	36	24	25	25	11	*144*
I don't know	16	10	6	3	6	10	*51*
I disagree	16	4	21	15	15	24	*95*
I strongly disagree	6	1	4	7	5	13	*36*
Total	*80*	*80*	*80*	*80*	*80*	*80*	*480*

Source: Authors' research.

The negative attitude may not represent all Czechs, in that it may be characteristic of a specific group. Therefore, further tests focus on the investigation if differences exist within this perception with respect to seniority, age, gender, or the existence of any type of KM programme in the organisation. Due to this categorisation, the original five-point Likert scale is slightly modified to ensure plausible statistical results. Therefore, positive and negative answers are binned and a three-point scale is statistically processed in testing hypotheses H2 – H5.

In addition, during the testing of these hypotheses, respondents are divided into two disjunctive groups. Since 37 years of age represents the age distribution medium, this value serves as a boundary in H2. Similarly, respondents are divided to those with work-seniority longer than two years (24 months) and those with 24 month or less during H3 testing. The division by gender (H4) and existence of a KM programme (H5) is apparent.

The test results of the hypothesis H2 indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between replies to statements S1 – S6 and age (chi-square with two degrees of freedom = 3.886; 2.215; 4.810; 1.224; 3.467, and 4.116 respectively; p = 0.143; 0.330; 0.090; 0.542; 0.177, and 0.128 respectively). However, in the case of statements S2 – S5 p values cannot be trusted due to the sparseness of particular cells in the observed contingency tables. Consequently, additional tests in the form of the Likelihood Ratio, an alternative to the Pearson chi-square test for testing independence of row and column classifications in unordered contingency tables, and Cramér's V are conducted. In contrast to Phi, which can be calculated only for 2 x 2 tables, Cramér's V is appropriate for tables that are larger than 2 x 2. It also uses chi-square and corrects for table size. It is apparent from table 4 that these tests support the aforesaid conclusion. Hypothesis H2 is confirmed.

T a b l e 4

H2 Test Results

S1 – S3	Value			df			Asymp. sig. (2-sided)		
	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Pearson chi-square	3.886[a]	2.215[b]	4.810[c]	2	2	2	.143	.330	.090
Likelihood ratio	3.963	2.346	5.081	2	2	2	.138	.310	.079

a) 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.00.
b) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.50.
c) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.00.

	Value			Approx. sig.		
	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Cramer's V	.220	.166	.245	.143	.330	.090

S4 – S6	Value			df			Asymp. sig. (2-sided)		
	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6
Pearson chi-square	1.224[d]	3.467[e]	4.116[f]	2	2	2	.542	.177	.128
Likelihood ratio	1.235	3.716	4.372	2	2	2	.539	.156	.112

d) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.50.
e) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.00.
f) 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.00.

	Value			Approx. sig.		
	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6
Cramer's V	.124	.208	.227	.542	.177	.128
N of valid cases	80					

Source: Authors' research.

The test results of the hypothesis H3 demonstrate that there is a significant relationship between answers to statements S1, S3, S4 and S5 (chi-square with two degrees of freedom = 12.722; 7.509; 9.825, and 12.966 respectively; p = 0.002; 0.023; 0.007, and 0.002 respectively). However, statements S2 and S6 appear not to have a significant interaction (chi-square = 0.787; and 5.634 respectively; p = 0.675, and 0.060 respectively). Additional tests also confirm that individuals with less work-related seniority do not have a tendency to consider knowledge sharing as something that jeopardises their position (job). This group feels the need for KM even if team work is an active component at the workplace (Table 5). The same group do not consider KM as a foreign concept or as a managerial fad. Hence, hypothesis H3 can be neither confirmed nor refuted based on the available data set.

T a b l e 5

H3 Test Results

S1 – S3	Value			df			Asymp. sig. (2-sided)		
	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Pearson chi-square	12.722[a]	.787[b]	7.509[c]	2	2	2	.002	.675	.023
Likelihood ratio	13.550	.789	7.904	2	2	2	.001	.674	.019

a) 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.60.
b) 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.38.
c) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.85.

	Value			Approx. sig.		
	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Cramer's V	.399	.099	.306	.002	.675	.023

S4 – S6	Value			df			Asymp. sig. (2-sided)		
	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6
Pearson chi-square	9.825[d]	12.966[e]	5.634[f]	2	2	2	.007	.002	.060
Likelihood ratio	11.330	14.197	5.896	2	2	2	.003	.001	.052

d) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.43.
e) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.85.
f) 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.75.

	Value			Approx. sig.		
	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6
Cramer's V	.350	.403	.265	.007	.002	.060
N of valid cases	80					

Source: Authors' research.

Test results of the hypothesis H4 indicate that there is a significant relationship between responses to statements S4 and S5 (chi-square with two degrees of freedom = 6.562, and 6.729; p = 0.038, and 0.035 respectively). Yet statements S1, S2, S3 and S6 seem not to have a significant interaction (chi-square = 2.978; 0.105; 2.720, and 2.489 respectively; p = 0.226; 0.949; 0.257, and 0.288 respectively). Additional tests also confirm that males do not consider KM as a foreign concept or a managerial fad in comparison to females (Table 6). Hence, hypothesis H4 can be neither confirmed nor refuted.

T a b l e 6
H4 Test Results

S1 – S3	Value			df			Asymp. sig. (2-sided)		
	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Pearson chi-square	2.978[a]	.105[b]	2.720[c]	2	2	2	.226	.949	.257
Likelihood ratio	3.115	.106	2.761	2	2	2	.211	.948	.252

a) 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.00.
b) 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.19.
c) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.63.

	Value			Approx. sig.		
	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Cramer's V	.193	.036	.184	.226	.949	.257

S4 – S6	Value			df			Asymp. sig. (2-sided)		
	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6
Pearson chi-square	6.562[d]	6.729[e]	2.489[f]	2	2	2	.038	.035	.288
Likelihood Ratio	7.786	8.967	2.500	2	2	2	.020	.011	.287

d) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.31.
e) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.63.
f) 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.38.

	Value			Approx. sig.		
	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6
Cramer's V	.286	.290	.176	.038	.035	.288
N of valid cases				80		

Source: Authors' research.

T a b l e 7
H5 Test Results

S1 – S3	Value			df			Asymp. sig. (2-sided)		
	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Pearson chi-square	4.398[a]	.831[b]	1.258[c]	2	2	2	.111	.660	.533
Likelihood ratio	4.490	.831	1.269	2	2	2	.106	.660	.530

a) 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.07.
b) 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.33.
c). 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.80.

		Value			Approx. sig.		
		S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
	Cramer's V	.271	.118	.145	.111	.660	.533

S4 – S6	Value			df			Asymp. sig. (2-sided)		
	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6
Pearson chi-square	.512[d]	1.406[e]	2.324[f]	2	2	2	.774	.495	.313
Likelihood ratio	.517	1.420	2.347	2	2	2	.772	.492	.309
Linear-by-linear Association	.000	1.054	.792	1	1	1	.985	.305	.374

d) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.40.
e) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.80.
f) 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.20.

		Value			Approx. sig.		
		S4	S5	S6	S4	S5	S6
Nominal by nominal	Phi	.092	.153	.197	.774	.495	.313
	Cramer's V	.092	.153	.197	.774	.495	.313
N of valid cases					60		

Source: Authors' research.

The last tested hypothesis investigates the relationship between statements S1-S6 and the existence of a KM programme in the organisation. Test results of the hypothesis H5 indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between these two variables (chi-square with two degrees of freedom = 4.498; 0.831; 1.258; 0.512; 1.406, and 2.324 respectively; p = 0.111; 0.660; 0.533; 0.774; 0.495, and 0.313 respectively). Additional tests also confirm this conclusion. Subsequently, hypothesis H5 is confirmed.

5. Discussion

The study indicates that KM programmes are prevalent in larger enterprises, often affiliates or subsidiaries of multinationals. Those not working in a KM environment believe that such a programme is an asset to their organisation. Most have not considered a programme whereas; those that have are in the process of establishing. Despite the limited size of the survey, the state of KM in the Czech Lands is either in its infancy or in a state of dormancy waiting for recognition. The obstacles to KM implementation are classical: no time to share, information overload, or an unwillingness to share. Lip service is paid even in the instances where KM exists. There is a lack of an overall development plan once implemented. In sum, this demonstrates that KM as a concept let alone a practice remains an unknown within Czech society. The remedy can be based on the existence of successful entrepreneurs using KM-related approaches. They can be identified in various industries and within diverse business positions, such as the innovator Zbyněk Frolík whose enterprise Linet was founded on smart solutions related to medical care equipment in general, and in particular, hospital beds. Also worthy of note is Tomáš Baťa, an innovative Czech-Canadian shoemaker. These renowned business personalities are exemplified to better understand the power of KM in practice and solve the identified problems.

There is an evident lack of even a basic appreciation within the general population. From the survey, a reasonably high percentage assumes that KM is an activity performed using a computer. Though not the reason of its origin or importance, one should not ignore that modern technologies catalyse many changes (Bureš, 2009). There is a lack of 'knowledge' of the principles associated with KM or a general disinterest. Advanced technologies such as mobile services (Kozel and Mohelská, 2010) or ubiquitous computing (Mikulecký, 2003) are not used at all. This leads to the premise that KM can be supported with any available IT tool. There is an unequivocal need for trust and curiosity. It is recommended "rather than waiting for KM to be adopted, perhaps as a management fad or with a technology emphasis, the informal tactics practised centre on using small internal Communities of Practice…" (Oliver, Handzic and Toorn, 2003,

p. 143). However, even with an improved IT infrastructure, there are those who would not participate more in discussions and idea sharing. This leads one to believe that the environment is not conducive to KM.

Knowledge Management imports with it a sense of foreignness and 'not made here'. There is a predominant notion of knowledge equating to power that is particular to the Czech Republic. After successive oppressive regimes in which knowledge is restricted to a select few, there remains a sense of ownership that knowledge, although no longer restricted to an elite, fetches money. The latter in turn converts to material goods, and prestige. The lack of time to share reflects heavily on the Czech concept of time and in general, organisational sense. Other more pressing issues or circumstances, often replace current priorities. To the Czech mentality, KM is a formalisation of what is already being accomplished and thus, adds another formality to the workday. It hinders the Czech sense of innovation that depends on the circumstances. KM also threatens the cultural aspect of experts and specialists. Sharing democratises knowledge and renders an equal standing to all who possess it. This together with what may be termed, a generational gap, enforces the in/out group syndrome. Hence, the support from the Czech government needs to be re-established. Economic incentive and institutional regime (tariff and nontariff barriers; regulatory quality, or rule of law), the innovation system, or support in the fields of education and human resources, or information and communication technologies development need to be established. Although the latest development can be considered as positive as the Czech Republic improved relatively to other countries in the Knowledge Economy Index and the Knowledge Index ranking based on the World Bank's Knowledge Assessment Methodology, there remain gaps that need to be bridged. For instance, the current progress is grounded in the existence European Funds and associated development projects, whereas; the Czech national funding remains below the required level.

The unique sense of Czech bureaucracy and adaptive attitude impede the normalisation of KM as an integral part of life. Brunet-Thornton and Bureš (2012) describe the 'traditional nature' of Czech cultural environment that acts as an obstacle to KM in that the decision-making processes are quite lengthy and therefore, create additional delays to KM deployment. "It is no secret that knowledge is power. A frequent management complaint about implementing KM has been that some employees resist sharing their knowledge out of the fear the company will replace them." (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998) In order to activate its commitments, the government must transfer KM from the academics to the workers (Kants, 2011). Most Czech educational institutions offer a selection of KM courses. The question remains if this meta-knowledge is in turn, transmitted

publically to others once the former students become owners, managers, or leaders of industry.

In order to change the model, Czech success stories and actual implementations are documented and constitute 'native' artefacts. There is a need to introduce stories made here. KM ownership becomes an issue of national pride overriding goals of other EU nations. A rationalisation of KM from a Czech perspective is required starting with a more realistic presentation of case studies concentrating on small and medium sized enterprises. There is need for a national product in the Czech Republic that includes a series of managerial products (artefacts) that comprise user guides, templates and explanatory notes in Czech. If KM is to become a plausible asset to the Czech Republic, it must be simplified to connect with daily activities often taken for granted.

Conclusions

Five hypotheses are tested in this study. It is apparent from the data analysis that negative perception of KM prevails among Czech managers. The results do not unambiguously explain if there is a relationship between the replies of respondents with different seniority, or gender. In particular statements, reactions differ between male and female, or between junior and senior professionals. However, the study substantiates that there is no relationship between replies of the respondent subgroups divided by age and the non-existence of KM in an organisation. Given that only 40% of respondents claim to have any sort of KM programme in place, it is not surprising that there are those who claim to have no idea as to when other KM related activities are planned. The results indicate that there is an overall lack of motivation through feedback and encouragement. In addition, the environment lacks incentive to develop new ideas.

Knowledge Management is a foreign concept complete with its case studies of the larger enterprises such as GM, British Telecom, and IBM. There is little content that is Czech or substance in which the Czech entrepreneur may acknowledge as a tangible association. KM requires interaction with colleagues and subordinates that entails additional work. A shift in responsibilities and the democratisation of knowledge are contrary to the ideologies and practice of doing business today in the Czech Republic. Lastly, the experience reflects not only the Czech cultural values but also a culturally demographic divide. Lacking national heroes and traditions, youth adopt a progressive and contemporary view on learning whereas the knowledge providers are in a process of evaluating the impact of the past twenty years. The inherent sense of bureaucratisation, and changing priorities dictated by the state and the EU, add already to the anxious nature of the society.

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