

A Multilevel Assessment of the Knowledge Conversion Process

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Abstract

Knowledge management research has recognized the important role of knowledge conversion within organizations as a social process whereby individuals are able to learn from the experience of others. Knowledge provides organizational members with the capability to take appropriate action, engage in effective decision making and create a knowledge repository. The goal of this research is to examine how organizational level, team level and individual level factors affect the knowledge conversion process. Social capital theory is used to take a sociological perspective to assess the impact of trust, social norms and interactions on information exchange. It is argued that teams provide a cognitive and temporal space where individuals can collectively offer and elicit information as well as discuss their experiences. Through inter-team and individual interactions, information processing is used to transform information offered as input that is ultimately used to create new knowledge. Information processing theory is used to examine potential enablers and inhibitors to the integration of newly created knowledge. Expectancy theory is used as a framework to examine individual motivations to engage in knowledge sharing needed to stimulate the knowledge conversion process. Organizational, team and individual level scale measures will be used to collect measures for relevant constructs. Scale items will be measured primarily using seven-point Likert scales anchored by “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Hierarchical linear modeling will be used to analyze the cross-level relationships that reside within the individual level of analysis and in conjunction with relationships that traverse up the team and organizational levels and their resultant impact on the knowledge conversion process.