

Temat pracy: *Influence of organizational culture on knowledge management processes in small family firms.*

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Summary.

The doctoral dissertation addresses the issue of knowledge management in family-owned SME's. Organizational culture is considered to be a major factor influencing knowledge management practices.

Small family firms create a special kind of environment for knowledge management practices. SME's manage their knowledge differently than bigger organizations. Lack of formal processes or established procedures makes it difficult to investigate these phenomena. Knowledge management is based on personal interactions, tacit knowledge sharing and informal practices. Firm's organizational culture may enhance or deteriorate this process. Family involvement affects many areas of business operations. It also shapes firm's organizational culture on many levels. It is difficult to identify any consistent type of organizational culture that could describe this kind of businesses. The organizational culture is influenced by individual character of the family, type of the business and other social factors. It evolves over time and firm changes with every generation. Despite this complexity it is possible to identify several elements that are linked to general features of family as a social institution. Cooperation, focus on common good, hierarchical structures and multigenerational perspective are elements common for most of the family businesses.

To investigate knowledge management practices of family-owned SME's I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi theory of knowledge creation spiral was applied.¹ It was augmented by the theory of knowledge absorptive capacity developed by W.M. Cohen and D.A. Levinthal.² Family firm's organizational culture features were fitted into organizational culture framework by G. Hofstede.³

The main aim of the study was to describe organizational culture and knowledge management practices of family owned SMEs and establish, whether there is a relationship between them. The research was based on questionnaire distributed among family-owned SME's. It was hypothesized that family involvement influence knowledge management

¹ Nonaka I., Takeuchi H., *The knowledge creating company*, Oxford, 1995

² Cohen W.M., Levinthal D.A., *Absorptive capacity: a new perspective on learning and innovation*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 35, 1990

³ Hofstede G., Hofstede G.J., Minkov M., *Kultury i organizacje*, Warszawa 2011

practices in two-fold way: positively in terms of knowledge sharing (H2) negatively in terms of knowledge creation (H1) and knowledge sourcing (H3). The survey results confirmed H1 and H2, rejected H3.

The main managerial implication of this dissertation is better understanding of character of small family businesses, their organizational culture and knowledge management techniques. It enables to better address their needs in terms of education, advisory and policy making, but also enables managers to introduce change and promote innovativeness in their firms.