

**Understanding the relevance of knowledge flows.  
How to realize the benefits of knowledge transfer processes**

Doctoral thesis  
PhD in Management  
XXVII cycle

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## **Abstract**

Managing and exploiting knowledge flows is an imperative for all firms. Scholars, practitioners, and analysts agree on the importance of production, diffusion, and use of knowledge as the most relevant drivers of the world economy. Being knowledge tacit or explicit, organizations need to recognize it as a valuable resource and tap into the collective intelligence and skills of employees in order to create a greater organizational knowledge base and remain competitive in the global marketplace. Consistently, investigating knowledge, how this may be accumulated and then used as well as its consequences for individual and organizational performance is still a hot topic in several fields of research.

Starting from this premise, this dissertation proposes four studies on different yet interrelated knowledge-related topics. They are categorized into three research areas: cognition in knowledge-based processes, knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer, and knowledge utilization. Cognition in knowledge-based processes is addressed by Chapter 3, which links boundary spanning literature with top management teams' members interacting with both internal and external networks. The second research area (i.e., knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer) has led to the development of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 which respectively investigate the organizational antecedents to employees' knowledge sharing behaviors and vicarious learning among companies engaging in licensing agreements. Knowledge utilization is examined in Chapter 6, whose purpose is to explore the effect of individual creativity and job design dimensions on employees' orientation toward using the already available knowledge. See Table 1 here below for an outline of the thesis.

**Keywords:** top management team, vicarious learning, knowledge transfer, knowledge utilization.

#Paper/n. Chapter	Title	Type of paper	Level of analysis	Dataset	Keywords	Research area
Paper 1 (Chapter 3)	“Governing from the periphery: Impact of top management team boundary spanning on strategic decision making”	Conceptual	Team level	-----	Top management team, social exchange, decision making/distributed decision making	Cognition in knowledge-based processes
Paper 2 (Chapter 4)	“A motivation crowding effect on knowledge sharing within organizational flexible structures”	Empirical	Individual level	Knowledge sharing dataset on international manufacturing firms – University of Florence	Knowledge sharing, motivation crowding-effect, integrative mechanisms, rewards	Knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer
Paper 3 (Chapter 5)	“When vicarious learning rewards the originating firm: Exploring the learning opportunities available to the licensor”	Empirical	Firm level	Longitudinal dataset on licensing agreements from 1986 to 2014, disclosed to the USA SEC and compiled by KTMine	Vicarious learning, licensing, incentives	Knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer
Paper 4 (Chapter 6)	“Realizing the benefits of knowledge sharing: An empirical investigation of knowledge utilization”	Empirical	Individual level	FOKS dataset – Copenhagen Business School	Knowledge utilization, creativity, feedback, autonomy	Knowledge utilization

**Table 1** - Outline of the thesis

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