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A multidisciplinary perspective on the knowledge economy and society

Abstract

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The skilful acquisition and use of available knowledge resources can be a factor in increasing the effectiveness of management processes. It directly influences the level and effectiveness of priorities. The aim of this article is a comparative study of the existing relevant literature with a multidisciplinary perspective on aspects of the knowledge economy and society.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: The data presented in the article are based on a relevant literature review (both book and article publications) and provides a spectrum of comparisons of views, theories and publications from the fields of organisational forms, knowledge models and KM, as well as the social dimension of qualitative modelling theory.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: The time of being the best is over. The era of being exceptional has begun. It is through the skills, knowledge and competences of employees as key elements influencing development that a competitive advantage can be secured. Knowledge is seen as a strategically important resource in this aspect.

RESEARCH RESULTS: The results provide a review of the achievements in individual fields, as well as selective task and function areas in the academic dimension. Particular attention was paid to the perception of the issue of qualitology (1970s). Models of knowledge management KM, social capital are juxtaposed, and the importance of the socio-economic influences observed in terms

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of the behaviour, expectations and choices of a modern society (often referred to as a consumer society) is highlighted.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Due to the relatively short period in which the described issues have functioned, any results and research attempts made in this area are interesting and valuable. Particularly cross-sectional works, which enable a clear compilation of the progress of individual theories against economic practice and the possibility of determining the future direction of their development.

Keywords:
knowledge economy and management, intellectual capital, quality management, knowledge models, social capital

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge was a subject of consideration – alongside truth, belief, judgement and perception – in the works of both Aristotle and Plato. However, epistemology, as the science of cognition (gr. ἐπιστήμη, *episteme* – knowledge, skill, understanding; λόγος, *logos* – science; thought), is a work of the modern era, although reflections on it can be traced back to the Ionian school, as well as to the theories of the Milesian philosophers Parmenides and Heraclitus; thus, from deliberation on reason and rationality to *panta rhei* and sense perception.

Individual theories evolved from the creation of wealth in the theories of W. Petty (1687), through the market conditions of P. Boisguillebert (1714) and the laws governing them, to the money theory of D. Hume (1711), followed by F. Quesnay (1694), who was the first to construct and publish the *Tableau économique* providing the basis for the development of physiocratism. The assumptions of classical economics see labour and capital as its most essential components (Smith, 1776). The works of R. Cantilon (1680), J.Ch.L. Simonde de Sismondi (1773), and J.B. Say (1767) were influenced by British and French thinkers. In philosophical terms, on the other hand, it is a theory of natural order based on three pillars: (1) personal and economic freedom, (2) equality before the law and (3) respect for private property. Knowledge, education, intellectual capital and

entrepreneurial attitudes have always been issues considered in the relevant literature. However, because they were not intrinsically valuable in themselves, they were not subject to evaluation and did not find a place in compilations and calculations. The time of competitive markets, globalisation and the development of technology has improved the flow of information and communication, making the role of knowledge more important – it has now become a central element of effective and efficient management.

The terms *knowledge economy*, *new economy*, *information society* and *social capital* began to be used in the relevant literature. Knowledge has ceased to be merely a factor of production and has become the most relevant object of production in the knowledge-based economy and information society (Durst & Edvardsson, 2012; Cerchione, Esposito, & Spadaro, 2016; Małecka, 2018a). Indeed, knowledge- and information-based economies are among the most competitive economies in the world, making efficient use of all the elements in a single economic and social process: production, distribution, knowledge and information. It is the unique competencies of employees ensuring efficiency gains that are the source of progress, and the individual predisposition to transform existing knowledge resources into new ones, implemented in the form of technologies, inventions, products, methods or procedures ensure the success and profit creation of enterprises (Davenport, 2005; Daud & Yusoff, 2011).

Knowledge-based economies consider the paradigm of smart organisations, in which the intellectual capital and organisational culture of the enterprise is one of the most important values (Matoskova & Smesna, 2017; Brown & Katz, 2009; Bock, Zmund, & Kim, 2005). The time of being the best is over, the era of being exceptional has begun. The skills, knowledge and competences of employees as key elements influencing the development of a company provides its competitive advantage (Małecka, 2019). Knowledge in this aspect is seen as a resource of strategic importance. Its constant identification, the process of collection, development and processing, as well as its protection, constitute an important issue in both its theoretical and practical aspects (Małecka, 2018a; 2018b; 2022). As an intangible resource, knowledge can be used in different processes and places; it is a simultaneous and, most importantly, inexhaustible resource (Toffler, 1980). Despite being difficult to measure, it contributes to

the added value of companies by creating organisational cultures that foster learning.

The purpose of this article is to present a comparative study of the relevant literature with a multidisciplinary perspective of the knowledge economy and society. Hence, against the background of the relevant literature, reflections will be made on the accompanying phenomena, theories and methods in terms of their organisational forms, knowledge management models, roles and relevance to economic and social processes, knowledge generation and qualitative modelling.

RESEARCH METHODS

The data presented in this article are based on relevant literature and constitutes a broad spectrum of comparisons of views and publications from the fields of organisational forms, knowledge models and knowledge management (KM), as well as qualitative modelling theory in the social dimension. Fifty-three scientific publications were compared, with a multidisciplinary approach and applicability to diverse scientific fields as quality criteria.

Achievements in individual fields are reviewed, as well as selective task and function areas in the academic dimension. Models of knowledge management, the role and importance of social capital, and the importance of socio-economic influences observed in terms of the behaviour, expectations and choices of contemporary society are presented and described. Individual sections are devoted to:

1. organisational form and its relationship to theoretical aspects of knowledge management models, and the categories of *know-what*, *know-why*, *know-how* and *know-who*, as well as the theory of T. Kuhn, whom the relevant literature recognises as the originator of the concept of the scientific paradigm, which focuses on the social nature of scientific research;
2. the role and importance of knowledge models, including the knowledge hierarchy model, the division into explicit and tacit knowledge described by I. Nonaka and H. Takeuchi, and the theory of A. Toffler on the basic characteristics of knowledge: dominance, inexhaustibility, simultaneity and non-linearity;

3. models of knowledge generation – starting with the Japanese model, followed by D. Leonard-Barton's resource model, the functional model and the process model, marking H. Fayol's contribution to theory building, ending with the mixed model;
4. the relationship of knowledge to quality – i.e., the role and significance of qualitology in the dimension of social determinants represented in the literature by R. Kolman.

Organisational form and knowledge management models

One of the most important elements enabling organisations to achieve their goals is their structure and organisational form, ensuring the flow of information within the organisation. It serves, among other things, to reduce possible internal conflicts that arise at the interface of individual departments both vertically and horizontally. Contemporary models of learning organisations are based on coordination and horizontal structures, enabling the demonstration of commitment and influence in the management of enterprises. Five organisational forms were identified by H. Mintzberg (1939): (1) simple structure, (2) mechanistic bureaucracy, (3) professional bureaucracy,(4) divisional structure, (5) adhocracy.

In the first, there is a dominance of informal ties and management authority is usually in the hands of one person. The lack of formalisation, flat hierarchical structure, and quick response to change and flexibility of decisions are also special features. This structure means that the success of the organisation usually depends on the competence of one person – usually the owner. It is this resource that creates future guidelines.

The second is characterised by functioning in an even and balanced environment with a high degree of work stability. This structure results in decision-making powers that depend on the prevailing hierarchy in the organisation. The formalised nature, which limits the autonomy of the members of the organisation, is considered a disadvantage.

A professional bureaucracy introduces rules according to which the members of the organisation are highly qualified. Thus, by

definition, the state of knowledge should be professional, confirmed by education, diplomas or certificates. The form should be formalised and characterised by the imposition of organisational behaviour.

The fourth model, the divisional structure, is characterised by a number of autonomous units that are responsible for the entire process. Operational management belongs to middle management, which allows individual ambition needs to be realised. As a significant disadvantage, the duplication of individual functions within the organisation is a possibility that should be mentioned. Knowledge is often hidden and the reasons for this can be traced back to the individual characteristics of the community building it.

Adhocracy, on the other hand, is an informal, organic structure in which specialists work in teams on specific projects. These structures are highly flexible and the employees are multidisciplinary which allows the rapid adoption of change and stimulates innovation (Mintzberg, 1973; 1983). Knowledge sharing processes are born naturally within it.

When considering the management process itself, it is important to note that in this activity, the subject is always a person or a team of people, and the object is always a person or a team of people and the things they use in deciding the type and size of the objectives to be achieved. Consequently, organisational management can be analysed on two levels: process, described in the literature by H. Fayol (1841), and function (Fayol, 1916).

In the modern functional approach (planning – organising – motivating – controlling), planning is considered the most essential management function. Logic indicates the order, since in order to organise, control and motivate employees, it is first necessary to determine what, when, where and by whom it is to be done. The main and subsidiary objectives serve this purpose. However, special attention should also be paid to the foundations of knowledge-based management theory, which considers the division into four categories:

1. *know-what* – knowledge of facts, concrete data that can be put into words and numbers, stored and transmitted, and is close to information;
2. *know-why* – knowledge of the laws and principles of nature, of cause-and-effect relationships, and of the human mind and society;

3. *know-how* – knowledge relating to skills and experience as a basis for practical action, expressed in terms of qualifications and skills possessed;
4. *know-who* – knowledge about who has what knowledge and to what extent they are specialised in it (Małecka, 2019, p. 50).

Indeed, knowledge management concerns intellectual resources and, if only for this reason, is not only a complex but also a multidisciplinary issue, as it touches on social capital and human resources – thus sociology and psychology – and, in terms of the behaviour and attitudes of those who manage and are managed, also on philosophy and ethics. The academic subjects have been joined by extended courses in information and its economic-sociological multifacetedness. It is not only the linguistic or legal aspects that have gained in importance, but also the psychological and ethical aspects.

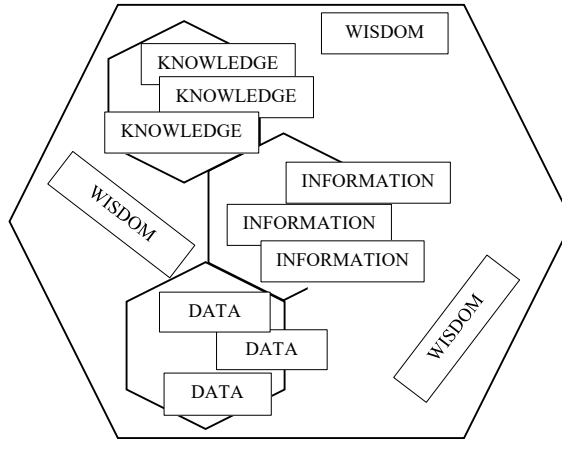
The theories of T. Kuhn (1922), the originator of the concept of the scientific paradigm, centre around the social nature of scientific research. By making a detailed analysis of the relationship between scientific progress and evolution, he developed the concept of incommensurability, understood as a relationship between linguistic structures (Kuhn, 2002).

Building learning organisations is a complex problem. Difficulties are encountered not only in theory, but also in practice. The introduction of new solutions is always accompanied by the introduction of changes. These are not usually perceived positively, especially when accompanied by an element of innovation – eliminating human error and sometimes a human himself. At the end of the last century, the promoter of the knowledge-based society, P. Drucker, described the determinants for the implementation of new systems for building civilisations of broad horizons (Drucker, 1954). Knowledge has become widely available and its absence does not excuse incompetence or inefficiency. A knowledge-based enterprise should not be an innovation, but a necessity and a consequence of mature decisions based on social capital. Thus, the answers to the question of knowledge management should be expanded to include aspects of internationalisation and globalisation, for it should no longer be a question of "if" but of "what and when" to start the related processes.

The role and importance of knowledge models

Knowledge management is a multidisciplinary issue. The so-called knowledge hierarchy model also adds to the complexity of the issue (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The knowledge hierarchy model



Source: own elaboration.

The model assumes the coexistence of (1) data, i.e., facts and figures, (2) information, i.e., collected and processed data, (3) knowledge, which is the domain of humans interpreting cause and effect relationships, (4) wisdom, which determines the maximum level of knowledge (Probst, Raub, & Romhardt, 2002). Wisdom is the ability to put one's knowledge base into practice. Knowledge based on data and information is nevertheless a much broader concept, closely related to the person or organisation acting as its administrator. It is also a related element because the two basic links in the model – data and information – may exist on their own as independent collections, databases or documents and be stored, but knowledge does not. This is because it is a combination of both rationalism: acquired data and information, the so-called hard records, and empiricism: experience, intuition and the need to understand the motives of its owner, who stores it in his or her own mind.

The most common division in the relevant literature considers the classification of knowledge into: (1) explicit, otherwise known as accessible (explicit knowledge) and (2) tacit, another term for tacit knowledge, or yet another term for public and private (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Explicit knowledge is an organised, structured, easily articulated collection of processed data and information. It is normalised and systemised, making it easily stored, keep, processed and transmitted via new technologies.

Tacit knowledge, on the other hand, has an individual character, precluding formalisation, mass processing and distribution. It is stored in people's minds. Thus, it also concerns aspects of: intuition, organisational culture, individual experiences, ideals, values, priorities, as well as the emotions of individuals. Assuming that, in the knowledge economy, it is a fundamental resource, it will represent the sum of the intellectual assets of individual employees, teams, and departments making up the entire organisation. The complexity of the issue is often complemented by the state of unawareness of the holder of such knowledge. Lack of skills or ignorance about its value and possibilities of use further hinders the formalisation and transfer of its resources.

According to A. Toffler, knowledge has four basic characteristics:

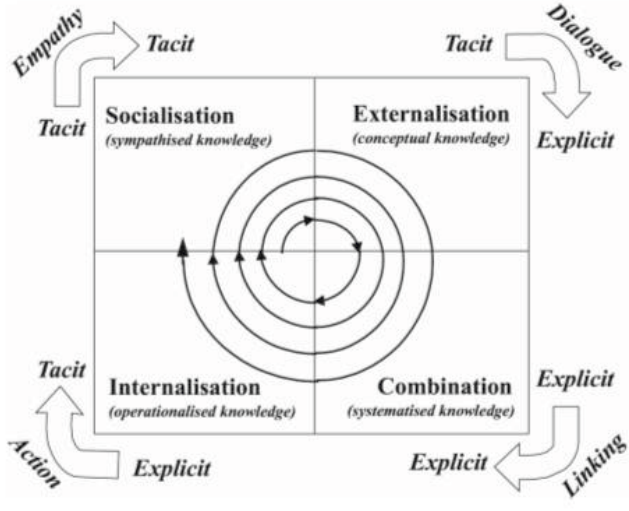
1. dominance – it is the most important resource of strategic importance;
2. inexhaustibility – its use does not diminish the resource, but on the contrary enriches it with new elements;
3. simultaneity – it can be used at the same time by different people in different parts or levels;
4. non-linearity – the size of the resources held does not determine the effects that can be achieved (Toffler, 1980).

Thus, its unique nature directly affects the creation of uniqueness in both economic and social aspects. Such a set can contain values which can be used to highlight individual economic and public-social values in a competitive economic environment and to establish an identity. (Małecka, 2018a).

Knowledge generation models

There are a multitude of models of knowledge generation for organisations in the relevant literature. One that is already considered a classic is the Japanese model, also known as the organisational theory of knowledge generation, developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi in the early 1990s. The knowledge spiral form recognises the role of explicit knowledge as insufficient – representing only a small part of the knowledge available in organisations. Processing is an important part of this model which involves the conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge in a continuous process. Explicit knowledge, according to this model, is the element of tacit knowledge that can be structured and is transferable (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The knowledge spiral model

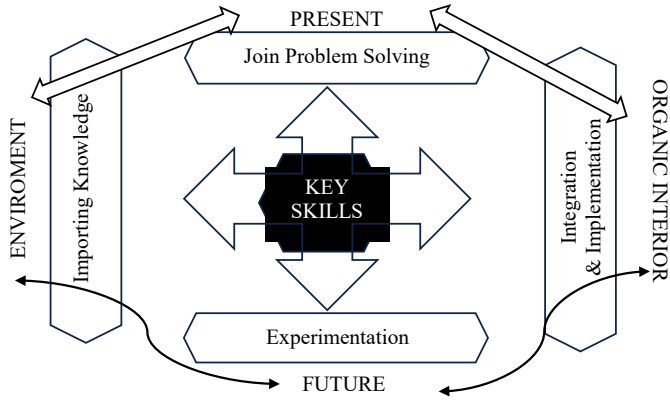


Source: Emerald Insight.

The iterative cycle, which is an important element that occurs between the two types of knowledge, consists of four knowledge conversion processes: (1) socialisation, i.e., conversion of tacit (tacit) knowledge into tacit (tacit) knowledge, (2) externalisation, i.e., conversion of tacit (tacit) knowledge into formal (accessible) knowledge, (3) combination, i.e., conversion of formal (accessible) knowledge

into formal (accessible) knowledge, (4) internalisation, i.e., conversion of formal (accessible) knowledge into tacit (tacit) knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The precursor of the resource model, which treats knowledge as a strategic resource that is a source of competitive advantage, was devised by D. Leonard-Barton (1942) of Harvard Business School (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Source of knowledge



Source: own elaboration based on Leonard-Barton, 1995.

Core competences and core capabilities form the basis of the model, which addresses both internal conditions taking into account the social aspects, and the economic environment. It is important to embed all elements in the present and the future, oriented around society's core competencies and in each area of activity: (1) collaborative problem solving, (2) experimentation, (3) implementation and integration of new tools and technologies, (4) importing knowledge (Leonard-Barton, 1995).

P. Murray (1941) and A. Myers (1940) formulated a process model in which the knowledge creation process is the most important factor for the organisation. In this concept, the knowledge management process is the totality of the processes of creating, disseminating and using knowledge to achieve objectives through a process of learning in three stages: (1) acquisition (2) dissemination and (3) exploitation. This involves the creation and development of new qualifications, technologies and methods, or the external purchase of them, as well

as the acquisition of specialists and experts, (the localisation of knowledge, the sharing and replication of ready-made solutions, as well as the integration of learning and the implementation of new conditions (Murray & Myers, 1997).

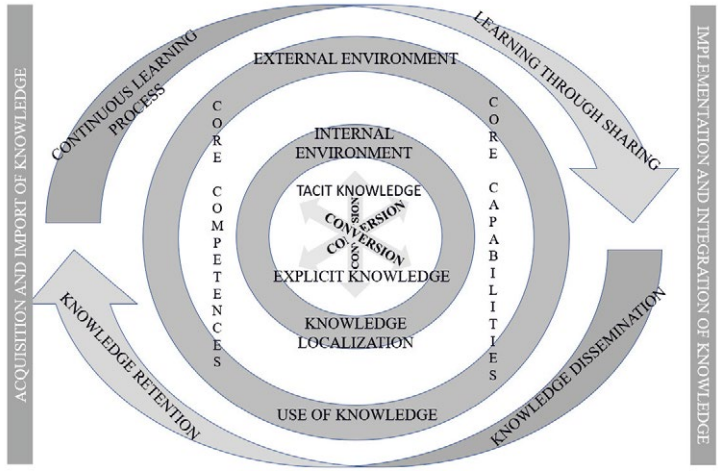
Advocates of the process approach, the origins of which are attributed to H. Fayol, include: T. Davenport and L. Prusak, for whom there are three additional stages: (4) extension of knowledge, (5) codification of knowledge and 6) transfer (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Davenport, 1997; Davenport, De Lond & Beers, 1998). The theory of W.R. Bukowitz and R.L. Williams includes a five-stage schema, divided into external and internal activities: (1) acquiring knowledge from the environment, (2) applying knowledge within the organisation, (3) estimating knowledge assets within the organisation, (4) maintaining knowledge assets, (5) selling knowledge in the form of new products, services or technologies (Bukowitz & Williams, 1999).

The six stages of the process model as key elements of knowledge management were created by G. Probst, S. Raub and K. Romhardt. In this model, the most important stages of knowledge are considered to be: (1) locate, (2) acquire, (3) develop, (4) share and disseminate, (5) use, (6) retain (Probst, Raub, & Romhardt, 2002).

As is sometimes the case with the application of management methods to issues, using the same method always and everywhere is possible, but not always effective. The situation, the turbulent economic environment, the qualifications and competences of the team and sometimes even their emotional states, require the selection of tools adapted to the situation. Therefore, all models that are flexible enough in their design to apply individual functions from different models, creating mixed models of knowledge management, are worth emphasising.

It is important to note the possibility of implementing individual models simultaneously, which can result in much greater efficiency. The positions presented here make it possible to create a schema, which is a common part of all the models described, being a composition of the elements considered important for a mixed knowledge management model. By definition, this model consists of processes that should be individually adapted to the needs of the business units concerned, taking into account the social aspects and additional characteristic conditions (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The mixed model of knowledge management



Source: Małecka, 2019, p. 49.

Learning economies and societies that skilfully combine experience and external signals implement new processes and projects much faster, while maximising and exploiting their intellectual potential. However, to create such an environment, trust, i.e., a high level of social capital, is needed, both in the aspect of the general public and in the collection of processed entire bodies of knowledge. Indeed, knowledge management is not only a problem-solving proposal that can be implemented and practised, but above all, it is an open way of thinking and drawing constructive conclusions from one's own experiences and managing the intellectual potential of human resources.

Knowledge vs. quality – qualitology in the social dimension

The origins of qualitology can be traced back to the 1970s, when R. Kolman described issues and developments in qualitative research and modelling theory (Kolman, 1971; 1973; 2002; 2009; 2013). The discipline continues to evolve, systematising the scopes and divisions

of particular qualitative issues (Mantura, 2010; Hamrol & Mantura, 1998; Borys, 1984). It is an interdisciplinary field built on quality and science (*Latin: qualitas* and *Greek: logos*) (Duda, 1995). Systematising, ordering and unifying the concepts and issues related to quality in each area of activity, as well as sketching a homogeneous methodology for dealing with the determination of the quality level, constitute the main tasks faced by qualitology (Biegański, 2004).

The systematics present in the relevant literature indicates 10 main divisions of the field into: (1) qualitosystematics – the systematics of quality, dealing with the ordering of quality issues, (2) qualitogenesis – the history of quality, dealing with the emergence and development of quality issues in various fields of knowledge and justifying the desirability of quality research in these fields, (3) qualitography – the factography of quality, describing the transformations of quality with the recording of factors influencing it, (4) quantomethology – a methodology of quality, covering methods of proceeding in the study of quality, algorithms of rational pro-quality actions, indications for proceeding in solving various quality issues, (5) qualitoveristics – quality modelling, looking for mathematical functions that determine the level of different varieties of quality and their patterns, (6) qualitonomy – quality studies, including the analysis of different varieties of quality and the causes for these changes, (7) qualitocybernetics – controlling or securing quality, utilising the achievements of cybernetics in the development of rational control systems and quality management, (8) qualitoprognostics – quality planning and forecasting, (9) qualitoduction – quality enforcement, from implementation to the study of the determinants of the impact and the shaping of quality affecting performance, (10) other or miscellaneous. An important assumption of the issue is the constituent, subcomponent definitions of qualitology as: quality knowledge (capturing basic qualitology, i.e., theoretical issues) and applied qualitology (delineating a subfield within practical quality knowledge called quality engineering) (Kolman, 2009; Mantura, 2012; Małecka, 2018b).

The application aspect of quality engineering is distinguished in the relevant literature by its economic utility (including the study of economic processes) and its social utility (the study of human requirements, society and the processes within it) in addition to technical and natural applications (Powell, 1995; Kolman, 2002; Nwabuze, 2013;

Ooi et al., 2007). Starting from the most general understanding of quality, knowledge in this area should be explored by anyone professionally involved in management issues. This approach extends the object of study and is applicable to quality of life, product or service, analysing processes, activities and systems occurring in different organisations or economic systems and social conditions (Małecka, 2018b; Pelantova & Slaichova, 2017). The delineation of the process of continuous quality improvement is determined by five areas of quality knowledge development (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Areas for the development of quality-related knowledge

Source: Małecka, 2018b, p. 247.

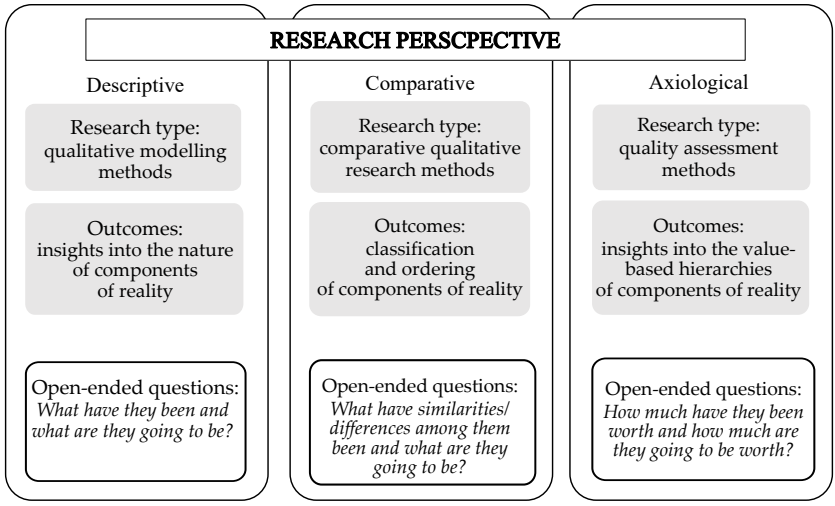
The cycle systematises the quality transformations that take place in the economic environment and indicates the next steps: a system for organising quality information, a quantitative implementation of quality levels, a methodology for calculating optimal quality, its variations and proposals for improvement (Małecka, 2018a; 2022; Kolman, 2009; Black & Porter, 1995).

The multidisciplinarity of quality science thus consists in applying the achievements of technical science, methodological science and conceptual apparatus, as well as philosophy, mathematics, cybernetics, organisational and management science, praxeology, metrology, psychology and economic science (Kolman, 2009; Mantura, 2012, Małecka, 2018a; 2018b).

In the relevant literature, there are mainly authoritative approaches to comprehensively capturing existing and emerging quality knowledge. Crucial issues include the development of a unified definition for the category of quality building on issues of qualitology based on an epistemological definition of quality. Descriptivism then adopts a theoretically universal and practical account of the axiological definition of quality. Thus, the perception of individual qualitative categories is cognitive in nature with a universal application, and a qualitative approach emerges in which the informational modelling of the components of reality forms a paradigm in the human-reality relationship (Mantura, 2010). The importance and undeniable contribution of qualitative issues in all fields of economic and social activity is indicated by the division of the applications of qualitology, into: (1) practical and (2) creative-creative. The former deals with the continuous and systematic acquisition of information, the latter with the conceptualisation and purposeful transformation of reality. The division thus made clearly delineates: (1) cognitive (otherwise known as scientific) activity, which serves to develop and deepen knowledge, and (2) practical activity. They arise thanks to the continuous development of the economy, which is intensified by ubiquitous globalisation. This implies the occurrence of a continuous process of improvement, the primary goal of which is to raise the quality of life of both individuals who, being an integral part of entire societies, directly affect the efficiency of entire economies (Małecka, 2018b; Mantura, 2012).

The application of qualitology can adopt integrated research perspectives that take into account the temporal perspectives adopted in the Leonard-Barton model: past, present and future (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Integrated research perspectives according to W. Mantura



Source: own research based on Mantura, 2012.

Quality is now one of the most important economic categories for assessing the performance of society and the competitiveness of individual economies worldwide. Hence, the use of sequential activities becomes worth considering (Juran, 1994; 1995; 1999; Juran & Schruben, 2004; Biegański, 2004). Quality improvement, then, takes the form of a set of endeavours undertaken for mutual benefit in a continuous process, i.e., the application of Harvard's WIN-WIN communication models. Marshall Rosenberg's support of education in promoting non-violent agreements can only enhance the effectiveness of such activities (Rosenberg, 2004).

Design breakdowns, assuming diversification into successive smaller cycles, should always adopt a continuous nature. Those recommended include: (1) the Deming cycle (P-lan, D-o, C-heck, A-ct), (2) the TQM method (T-otal, Q-uality, M-anagement), and (3) the Six Sigma techniques (see: Deming, 1966; 1985; 2012; Juran, 1999; McCarty et al., 2004; Brue, 2006; Levine, 2006; Srinivasu et al, 2009; Salaheldin, 2009). It can therefore be concluded that building an adequate set of universal tools will support the improvement of the quality processes that take place in any knowledge economy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The social sciences are, by definition, a multidisciplinary research discipline. The questions that arise concern the issues T. Kuhn described in terms of problems defined by existing knowledge. Are new theories and models typically descriptive in nature, or are they an attempt to seek confirmations in reality? Attempting to answer these questions points to a gap where there is a danger of problem-solving being dictated by theory.

The skilful acquisition and use of available knowledge resources can be a factor in increasing the efficiency of management processes. This is because they directly influence the level and effectiveness of set priorities and the achievement of objectives. The aim of this article is a comparative study of the relevant literature with a multidisciplinary perspective on aspects of the knowledge economy and society. Hence, the importance, power and consequences of combining theory and practice (i.e., competence and education with qualifications and the ability to learn) are highlighted, and models to support these processes are described. Knowledge management should be in line with the chosen strategy, and this should combine theory with practice, i.e., paradigm with experience. Due to the relatively short period of time in which the issues described and the foundations of the evaluated disciplines that constitute the substance of the article have been built, any results and research attempts made in this area are interesting and valuable. Particularly cross-sectional work, which enables a clear juxtaposition of the progress of individual theories against economic practice and the possibility of determining the future direction of their development.

The multidisciplinary view of the knowledge economy and society is a complex process that includes: (1) management of the intellectual potential of employees, (2) management of knowledge resources and (3) IT support for knowledge management. After all, in a knowledge-based economy, the strategic resource is knowledge, which determines economic development and growth through to the processes of acquisition, collection and processing. Knowledge management concerns intellectual resources and, if only for this reason, it is not only a complex but also a multidisciplinary issue. It touches upon social capital and human resources – thus sociology and psychology – and,

in terms of the behaviours and attitudes of both managers and managed communities, also philosophy and ethics.

On the other hand, the application of the methods described in the article in terms of the application of qualitology has a very broad and forward-looking meaning. It makes it possible to clearly delineate the individual theoretical and practical spheres influencing explicitly, in a continuous process, all aspects concerning quality in its integrated form. Consequently, it combines the excellent theoretical descriptions set by the relevant literature with a pragmatic approach that allows a much broader perspective than the dichotomous characteristics of the phenomena and issues under study. Understood as a set of endeavours undertaken to gain additional benefits, the approach allows development in line with economic and social requirements.

The presented aspects of the multidisciplinary view of the knowledge economy and society are subjective. Hence – against the background of the selected literature – a consideration of the accompanying phenomena, theories and methods in terms of their organisational forms, knowledge management models, their role and relevance for economic and social processes, and their knowledge generation and qualitative modelling has been carried out. Due to the relatively short period of operation of the issues described and the fact that building the foundations of the evaluated disciplines constituting the substance of the article, all results and research attempts made in this area are interesting and valuable, particularly the cross-sectional work, which enables a clear juxtaposition of the progress of individual theories against economic practice and the possibility of determining the future direction of their development.

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