

The impact of information technologies upon the social interaction culture among employees in Latvian enterprises

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Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to explore the impact of information technologies upon the social interaction culture among employees in Latvian enterprises. To transform the available data and information into a valuable form for decision-making and subsequent actions, organisations have to provide an efficient communication circulation system, which is directly affected by each company's social interaction culture. Based on previous study results in Latvia the problem of the research is to reveal and assess how to increase mutual confidence among colleagues and encourage to share of information. Tasks of the study were to research the basis of the review of scientific sources and to study the organisational and individual factors affecting employees' perceptions regarding the role of information technologies in the information sharing process in Latvian organisations. The research showed that in organisations with positive social interaction culture, employees and supervisors socialize, interact and share information much more frequently in a verbal form, which promotes a sense of adherence to the organisation; information technologies, for their part, are used for creation of database and distribution of formal instructions.

Key words: social interaction culture, information sharing.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of last century, a new system of social interaction grew up, which integrated various types and means of communication and which is characterised by a new culture of social interaction. In this connection, Rudnick (1996) writes:

‘In a world where the corporate information network is the dominant employee communications conduit for news, information and feedback, it seems logical for the employee communicator to have a role in the creation and management of the network. And the employee communicator is perhaps the best manager within the organization to develop strategies for use of that network as a communications resource, to champion use of the network for two-way communications, for feedback and dialogue’.

Today, one-way or even two-way communication has been replaced by meaningful multi-directional communication. This new system of social interaction introduced significant changes into contemporary culture, turning it into informative.

A characteristic feature of XXI century is serious informatisation process of all spheres of the modern society. It is expected that the development of information technology will become increasingly important. According to the forecasts given by the management consulting firm 'Boston Consulting Group', the impact of technologies and Internet upon national economies will increase until 2016 by 11% reaching 4.2 trillion US dollars in economically most advanced countries and in the European Union. Due to this fact, more and more serious focusing on new information technologies and their expansion in the social environment is observed. Scientists have found that members of virtual communities tend to share the sense of values, belonging and preferences among each other (e.g., Postmes et al., 2001; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Dholakia et al., 2004).

Modern society is congested with increasing information flows that must be captured and processed. Therefore, the process of social interaction cannot do without information technologies any more. Massive 'flooding' of the modern social world with intensive information traffic has changed the habits of social interaction and information exchange, including acquisition, processing, analysis, storage, preservation and distribution of information. Several studies have shown that information and communication technologies affect the behaviour of information seekers (e.g., Heath, 2007; Olander, 2008; Morris et al., 2010; Niu et al., 2010). The study by Morris et al. (2010) found that using social networking sites to seek information enabled researchers to find information and receive personalised answers, increasing their confidence in the validity of the information.

For the company to be able to successfully communicate in the new age of Internet and technologies, communication with key audiences should be developed skilfully, systematically, purposefully and according to the situation. To transform the available data and information into a valuable form for decision-making and subsequent actions, organisations have to provide an efficient communication circulation system, which is directly affected by each company's social interaction culture. In this regard, social interaction culture at Latvian enterprises will become the research subject of the Paper.

The social interaction culture that facilitates dissemination and exchange of information is identified as a positive aspect in innovative organisations; however, the organisational and individual factors affecting the social interaction culture among employees, are often hard to explain and influence. According to the company research performed by the telecommunication operator and Internet service provider in Latvia 'Lattelecom', development of information technologies is not the only criterion affecting development and competitiveness of enterprises. Loyalty and stability of the workforce are also mentioned by enterprises as important factors for persistence of competitiveness (Rutule, 2010).

One of the most significant aspects ensuring investigation of innovations including competition, is organisation's receptiveness of changes and enabling the flow of information, so that the required information was any time available to each employee. In addition, recent rapid advancements in information technology have opened a new age in which the successes of organizations are vitally dependent on the adaptation and application of new and existing knowledge assets on key business processes (Ndelela & du Toit, 2001). It is very important for business managers to be able to convert the wealth of available data and information into a valuable form for decision-making and subsequent actions; collected data must be converted into intelligence (Fleisher & Bensoussan, 2007).

Virtual communication has many benefits. Mostly, they are the information exchange rate and interactivity – the possibility to participate. Social interaction can be different: collective, verbal, non-verbal, direct, indirect, external and internal. Forms of social interaction are chosen depending on the needs of contacting parties.

The process of communication is explained as transfer of signals to the other, which is capable of receiving these signals. There are different levels, and mostly non-verbal communication takes place. And yet it comes into senses, winds into movements, gestures and facial expressions, until it finds expression in words in addition accompanied by the appropriate intonation. All this is very much missed by communication on the Internet, where merely certain letter and word combinations are displayed on the monitor. Information technologies directly affect social communication, because a very important component of communication is virtually missing – the effect and reflection of emotional presence. When creating a certain impulse, senses are created at the same time.

Organisations increasingly develop new communication channels and platforms, while some of the previously used communication tools are becoming less valid and are used more rarely. The possibilities are varied, because modern social interaction platform provide continuous interaction taking place immediately. Each employee who has access to the Internet, can quickly and easily contact both within the organisation and outside the enterprise and with people all over the world. It has certainly brought something new to the mutual communication (Fig. 1).

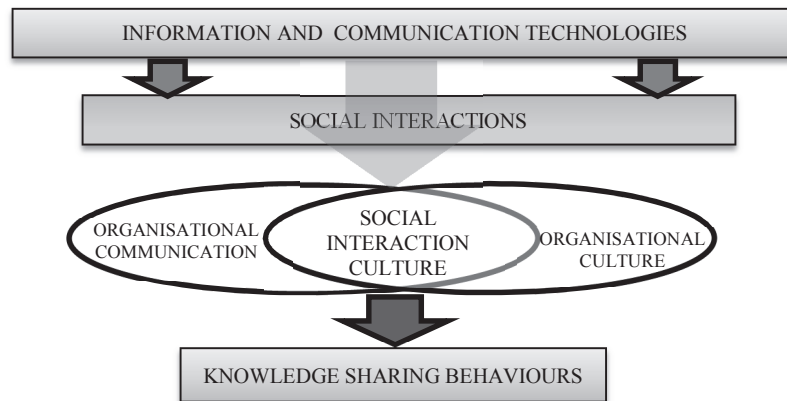


Figure 1. Influence of information and communication technologies upon the social interaction culture.

Information and communication technologies undoubtedly determine the social interaction culture in the organisation through direct impact upon social interaction. Social interaction culture is formed in close connection with organisational culture and organisational communication behaviours that continuously subject to the influence of information and communication technologies. Postmes et al. (2001) for example, argued that in groups that used computer-mediated communication, the existence of group norms is significant and influential. Use of information technologies in communication directly affect social interaction culture by determining what interacting will be like by

degree of formality (businesslike or informal), what form the communication direction will take (anonymous, individual or mass), what the structure of contacting will be (vertical or horizontal), and what the decisive information style will be like.

The network of social interaction is increasingly expanding. This is clearly illustrated by statistics and studies, highlighting the modern communication trends. For example, the study performed in 2010 within the framework of media agency's 'Universal McCann' research 'Wave 5' on communication via social networks revealed that in Latvia, personal communication among active Internet users more often takes place via social networks rather than in person. In Latvia, direct contacts are as second, followed by phone calls, e-mail and SMS. However, the research team media agency 'Inspired' pointed out that Latvian Internet users are not that active with regard to content creation and sharing (Rutule, 2010).

Evaluation of the background studies in Latvia on provision of organizational culture in Latvia indicated the trends that employees lack incentive to share information. When establishing procedures of the information turnover process, the goal of communication should be estimated – to involve, to find out the opinion, to gain responsiveness or to enlighten on the information required for the organisation. Data from preliminary research in Latvia showed that companies spend 35% of time for data collection stage and only 12% – for communication (Cekuls, 2014).

Although the enterprises that seek to maximise knowledge sharing among their employees, often invest in a variety of new technologies, the reasons of inefficient knowledge sharing may not be simple availability or unavailability of technologies. Social interaction materializes in an interactive, communicative and perceptive way, so it is important for the enterprise to identify what social interaction culture will stimulate achievement of goals of the particular organisation.

The range of information technology tools is huge, and it increases day by day, but is worth to look at this phenomenon from another side as well. The current research evaluates whether the informative knowledge sharing technologies available for organisations, affect social interaction and whether they facilitate absolutely efficient knowledge sharing at the organisation. Given that social interaction is aimed at building partnerships, getting information and at settling interpersonal relationships, people mutually interact through many nuances of social interaction including facial expression, eye contact, gestures, tone of voice and temperament. People continuously examine these social nuances in order to make sure whether a mutual understanding is reached.

Social interaction will certainly be dependent on the purposes of using the social networks. Therefore, the use of social networks and their return will differ. This should be considered when planning the company's communication activities, because the existing information technologies at the enterprise do not mean a real improvement of an existing communication.

In today's competitive environment, more and more sophisticated communication strategies are used to be able to ensure the circulation of information and an efficient process of knowledge-sharing. Furthermore, it is important to identify side-factors that may affect social interaction in organisations. Creating the social environment with the new information and communication technologies, organisations tend to lose touch with the nuances of social interaction, cultural values, as well as the characteristics of traditional society.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To find out individuals' opinions and attitudes, the focus group is selected as the most appropriate data collection method for high-quality research. The focus group interview took place in Riga on 8 December 2015. Members from various industries and with different employment period were included in discussion group. In aggregate, opinions of the employees from 24 different enterprises were summarized regarding the aspects affecting the social interaction culture in enterprises.

Results of the focus group discussions, possibilities of their interpretation and use should be repeatedly considered and weighted. The aim of group discussion was to obtain the range of opinions of members on the impact of information technologies upon the culture of social interaction in organisation. Group discussions provide the view of members upon aspects including stereotypes and the general disposition.

In order to obtain opinions of different range, members from various industries and with different employment period were included in discussion groups. The focus groups were formed in view of the age and gender structure, the industry represented by the company and the time worked for the company. Information on the focus group members has been summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Informative description of the focus group participants

Member Nr.	Age	M/F	Position	Work Experience	Industry
Interview nr.1	57	M	Employee	39	Transportation
Interview nr.2	48	M	Supervisor	23	Transportation
Interview nr.3	37	F	Employee	16	Food Services
Interview nr.4	38	M	Employee	19	Retail Trade
Interview nr.5	44	F	Supervisor	20	Education
Interview nr.6	58	F	Employee	37	Retail Trade
Interview nr.7	29	F	Supervisor	4	Finance and Insurance
Interview nr.8	31	M	Employee	10	Communication and IT
Interview nr.9	27	F	Employee	5	Finance and Insurance
Interview nr.10	45	M	Employee	25	Logistics
Interview nr.11	29	M	Supervisor	5	Communication and IT
Interview nr.12	26	M	Employee	8	Retail Trade
Interview nr.13	33	M	Supervisor	9	Communication and IT
Interview nr.14	41	F	Supervisor	17	Health Care
Interview nr.15	39	F	Supervisor	14	Food Services
Interview nr.16	44	M	Employee	24	Communication and IT
Interview nr.17	42	F	Supervisor	18	Education
Interview nr.18	41	M	Employee	20	Communication and IT
Interview nr.19	36	M	Supervisor	12	Communication and IT
Interview nr.20	33	M	Employee	15	Logistics
Interview nr.21	46	M	Employee	23	Wholesale
Interview nr.22	59	M	Supervisor	35	Logistics
Interview nr.23	48	F	Supervisor	24	Finance and Insurance
Interview nr.24	34	F	Supervisor	10	Retail Trade

Participants represent a variety of industry sectors: transportation, food services, finance, retail trade, etc. Most of the participants represent the communication and IT industry.

At the beginning of the discussion, the moderator presented the objective of the discussion and rules of procedure. The discussion participants were asked to present themselves, to provide a brief description of the industry of their company, etc.

The place of companies' business is mainly Riga, but several members from other regions of Latvia were included in the research.

In aggregate, opinions of the employees from 24 different companies were summarised regarding the aspects affecting culture of social interaction in the age of information technologies and with the purpose to elicit the impact of information technologies and communications upon the organisational communication in the organisation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Today, the environment – economics, social conditions, technologies – are rapidly changing, and an organization has to be able to survive and develop; therefore the organization shall follow the information the competitive environment and be able to introduce alterations. The participants emphasized that changes denote a constant adjustment of one's activities and search for new opportunities. The organization will never be successful where its management fails to notice changes or is unable to foresee them in future. Today, changes have affected many areas, especially the social interaction culture.

Results of the research show specifics of the social introduction culture in Latvian enterprises. The main problem pertains to aspects affected by information and communication technologies: communication satisfaction, organisational and interpersonal trust, motivation etc.

Before the discussion, participants were asked to write down 3–5 associations, which, in their view, are related to social interaction in the aspect of mutual communication in the age of information and communication technologies.

The most pressing challenges for the discussion participants are associated:

- 1) with the role of information technologies in providing the circulation of information. e.g.,
Interviewee nr.2: 'In fact, any future work will be done with the help of information technologies.'
Interviewee nr.6: 'Dependence on information technology manifesting as excessive use of them, interferes with the ability to form normal relationships with peers.'
Interviewee nr.7: 'Social networks will push out and replace real relationships and leave a negative impact on the culture of social interaction.'
- 2) with efficiency of information flow. e.g.,
Interviewee nr.14: 'Development of our civilisation and even its existence has become dependent on information technologies, and we can no longer exist without information technologies at the current level of our development and welfare.'
Interviewee 17: 'When using information and communication technologies, we are often confronted with the Communication breakdown, which is often a very disturbing factor, better communicate face to face.'

- 3) with organisational communication system. e.g.,
Interviewee nr.2: 'Online social networks allow Internet users to form groups, where they can exchange written, audio and visual information.'
Interviewee nr.21: 'In the past, there was an expression: If a company does not have a website, there is no company.' Now, this expression has been paraphrased: 'If the company is not in Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, there is no company'.
Interviewee nr.13: 'A company has no system for communicating important information.'
Interviewee nr.4: 'We gather a lot of information, but it is not clear who needs it.'
- 4) with effectiveness of communication in organization. e.g.,
Interviewee nr.16: 'Almost every company has social networking accounts, which is an important channel for sales and customer information.'
- 5) with the information exchange. e.g.,
Interviewee nr.17: 'It will be practically impossible for an economically active person not to use IT in personal sphere and for work, because people expect they will be able to communicate without limitations via mobile phone, e-mail, social networks etc. Due to expansion of social networking in the business environment, the boundaries between personal and working environment will disappear the future.'
Interviewee nr.3: 'We lose the opportunity to go into the substance of the information and focus on the most important issues.'
Interviewee nr.7: 'We stick to a strict hierarchy: I deal with the information available to me.'
- 6) with the knowledge sharing behaviours. e.g.,
Interviewee nr.24: 'The existing global situation requires involvement of all employees in knowledge sharing.'
Interviewee nr.23: 'Whatever we do, we cannot put hundred percent our feelings in a printed version, so other person does not feel them to the core and does not know how true our written words are.'
- 7) with mutual communication satisfaction. e.g.,
Interviewee nr.19: 'An employee will not always hand over the whole information to a manager.'
- 8) with trust and confidence. e.g.,
Interviewee nr.2: 'I have a feeling that nobody cares for my information, because everything has already been decided; no transparency; no certainty for preservation of copyright.'

Managers, for their part, more often than specialists have seen the problems associated with efficiency of information flow due to information and communication technologies.

Summarizing the results of preliminary discussion, it should be concluded that the views were characterised by contradictory statements about the role of information technology and their impact on social interaction culture. Responses showed that although information technologies accelerate the flow of information, they still affect the communication quality from the perspective of human factor. (Fig. 2).

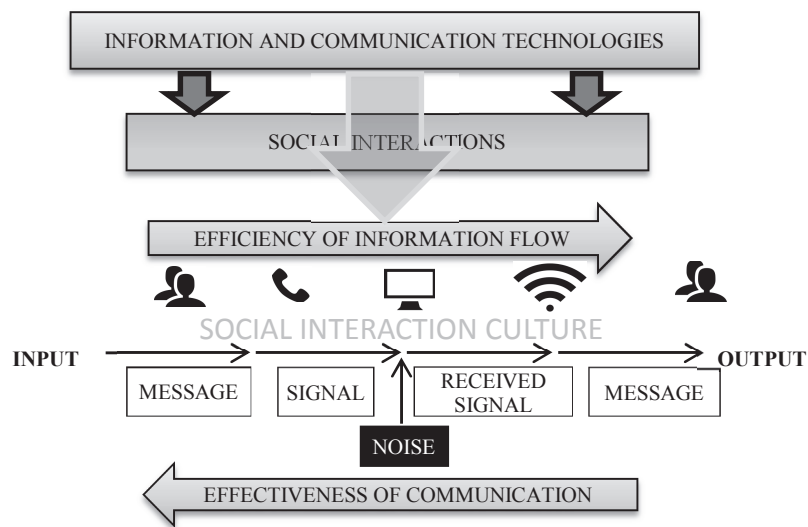


Figure 2. Influence of information and communication technologies upon the communication quality.

The individual in the process of social interaction acts as a decoder that decodes a message. However, the use of information communication technology ensuring the decoding or perception are more likely to be affected, but the message is decoded incorrectly. There may be different reasons, because perception has various components: knowledge, experience, ability to evaluate the situation, ability to select information and ability to understand the medium non-verbally. Among the obstructive factors in the aspect of communication, the participants mentioned, e.g., ‘Communication breakdown’, which occurs when using information technologies as a communication tool; likewise, the participants pointed out that such cases often lead to confusion, because the information breakdown problems are not predictable both in terms of time and of content. Participants expressed the opinion that effectiveness of communication broadly depends on the percept about other person created ‘face to face’. This may mean that the report may be received wrongly or partially. E.g.,

Interviewee nr.23: ‘In virtual communication, you cannot see the speaker’s face or hear his voice, which is certainly an important part of the conversation....and new small and also larger mistakes or lack of understanding came out.’

Although all participants confirmed that information technologies provide a communication speed and could be considered as a positive factor for ensuring (efficiency of information flow), however, the volume of received information is increasing in disproportion with the ability to look through the received data. The participants expressed the view that under the impact of information technologies, the role of such social interaction culture values as organisational trust, interpersonal trust and confidence decreases, because the amount of information is constantly growing and putting pressure on the data reliability assessment and building trustful relationships.

The author summarised the issues of concern and nominated the most topical themes in focus group, which show how information technologies influence the social interaction culture. From the problems listed by respondents at the focus group discussion, the following discussion topics were selected:

1. information technologies and efficiency of information flow;
2. information technologies and effectiveness of communication;
3. social interaction culture values (communication satisfaction, knowledge sharing behaviours, trust and honesty, loyalty etc.)

Participants acknowledged that the information technology communications means can provide gathering, storage and distribution of any information, efficiently speeding up circulation and storage of information. During the discussion it was suggested that the modern information technology systems can be a unique and invaluable assistant, which opens up unprecedented opportunities for organizations, e.g., improvement of training process. Today, information technologies can provide great support for business by facilitating access to information, improving the performance of various processes and ensuring close cooperation of all employees in reaching the enterprise's objectives. The discussion participants believe that advised use of information technology solutions will increase operational efficiency, improve product and service quality and contribute to the development of the enterprise. However, the participants expressed the view that in order to provide the best solutions for implementation of information technology system, the enterprise needs an overview of the organisation's future direction.

Interviewee nr.23: '...the enterprise could have guidelines defining what and which type of communication is expected by organisation management during the transition to use of information and communication technologies as a means of communication between employees, what ethical requirements should be followed etc. Although they are quite self-evident things, it is not bad to define them.

Interviewee nr.17: '...to identify the actual situation, it is necessary to gather information on potential risks and evaluate their prevention methods... and then, based on the results of the examination, to eliminate shortages and build IT infrastructure, according to the enterprise culture.'

Participants of the discussion agreed that implementation of information technologies can significantly reduce the administrative burden and costs for enterprises. It is therefore important to improve the business environment and to use the opportunities offered by technologies, such as introduction of electronic document circulation, etc .

Interviewee nr.1: 'Paperless' or electronic document sharing enables organisations and enterprises to achieve economy of human resources, financial, time and other resources'.

Interviewee nr.17: 'For example, the electronic document sharing provides transparency of document circulation, reduces corruption risks in institutions.'

During the discussion, the opinion was expressed that new technologies create new opportunities and at the same time unprecedented problems, because nowadays, one person during the day obtains more information than several generations during many centuries. Often, people cannot cope with the amount of information. This causes stress, wrong decisions, discomfort and leaves impact upon such social interaction culture values as motivation, loyalty and interpersonal trust. Results of focus group discussion revealed a number of factors affecting the social interaction culture (Table 2).

Table 2. Influence of the factors of information technologies upon the social interaction culture

Influence of information technologies	Influence upon the social interaction culture
Interference of communication breakdown	Selective barriers can be created – the recipient of a message captures only the information they want to perceive
The volume of received information is increasing in disproportion with the ability to look through the received data.	The constantly growing amount of information is putting pressure on assessment of data reliability and on building trustful relationships. The participants expressed the view that under the impact of information technologies, the role of such social interaction culture values as organisational trust, interpersonal trust and confidence decreases, because the amount of information is constantly growing.
The information technology communications means can provide gathering, storage and distribution of any information, efficiently speeding up circulation and storage of information.	Under the impact of information technologies, exchange of information and knowledge sharing behaviours decrease.
Modern information technology systems can be a unique and invaluable assistant, which opens up unprecedented opportunities for organizations, e.g., improvement of training process.	Can facilitate learning of social interaction culture
Today, information technologies can provide great support for business by facilitating access to information, improving the performance of various processes and ensuring close cooperation of all employees in reaching the enterprise's objectives. A person during one day obtains more information than several generations during many centuries.	Under the impact of information technologies, the exchange of information and knowledge sharing behaviours can decrease if such social interaction culture values as organisational trust, interpersonal trust and confidence are missing in the organisation. Often, people cannot cope with the amount of information. This causes stress, wrong decisions, discomfort and leaves impact upon such social interaction culture values as motivation, loyalty and interpersonal trust.
Use of information technology solutions will increase operational efficiency, improve product and service quality and contribute to the development of the enterprise.	Under the impact of information technologies, exchange of information and knowledge sharing behaviours may decrease.
Implementation of information technologies can significantly reduce the administrative burden and costs for enterprises.	The enterprise needs an overview of the organisation's future direction, which includes also the social interaction culture.

During the discussion, the opinion was expressed that values of social interaction culture are created by people, therefore the human factor plays an important role in building the social interaction culture in the organisation. Social interaction is undoubtedly characterised by the emotional component. Several participants believe that information technologies are also able to provide presence of this component, e.g.,

Interviewee nr.4: 'From the web camera of computer or cell phone, based on our face mimics, it is possible to determine our emotional attitude to what we see on a computer or cell phone.'

However, loss of privacy together with entry of information and communication technologies in the social environment was referred to as one of the main counterarguments. e.g.

Interviewee nr.21: 'One can manipulate with us and influence what information we receive. Already now, in fact, we receive all information through Internet databases and social networks, so the one who rules over these channels, will determine what kind of information we receive.'

The issue on social interaction culture values was topical during the discussion, particularly in the cases of implementing new technologies. During the discussion, respondents were asked qualifying questions regarding the impact of social interaction cultural values of the organisation – whether trust affects information turnover; what is the role of trust and honesty between employees. Participants of the discussion think that defining of a value system is the first step in creation of social interaction culture.

Interviewee nr.12: '...organisational values form the basis of its culture, so it is important that employee's individual values were similar with organisational values'.

It gives a clear idea of how an employee should act in some or other situation. It is important for the organisation to define its system of values, working out, for example, by-laws or simply record the values in a free narrative.

Interviewee nr.5: '...if permanent social interaction culture values is defined in the company, it enables every employee feel him/herself as a part of a single mechanism, and joint efforts help to achieve the goal – culture supports the business processes in the organisation'.

During the discussion, group members expressed ideas and beliefs based on their personal experience that inefficient communication in many organisations is the main reason of problems. Communication should not be unilateral – there must be feedback. Participants also emphasized that information turnover should be timely, which a substantial prerequisite for knowledge is sharing to have an added value in the organisation. Always make sure whether the other party has understood the information. Good communication is a way to reach trust; excessive control, however, can reduce trust.

Participants emphasized that nowadays, information technologies are widely applied, but the human factor should not be forgotten. If communication is not efficiently managed, an information gap occurs filled by inaccurate information or rumour, which does not create a motivating environment and do not facilitate achievement of goals.

Interviewee nr.27: 'Communication using information technologies or virtual communication can certainly be important in building relationships. However, its pros are at the same time its cons. For example, consideration of answers – positive, because you have no chance to say a spontaneous, incorrect or unverified'

information, but at the same time, we read and correct an important answer for tens of times – to make it sound better. And such document does not contain our true attitude any more, but 'polished up' sentences'.

If information units are connected with each other, analysed or otherwise processed, knowledge originates. But knowledge can be only acquired through information, its distribution and use.

Participants emphasized that knowledge in the organisational context is information integrated in a common system, easily available and used for ensuring operation of the organisation. Previously expressed knowledge can be supplemented by new information due to knowledge sharing among people during conversations, and it can again become source knowledge stored in memory. Knowledge is seen as the basis for each separate employee's decision making and action. Depending on this basis, the employee will be able to select the action most suitable to the situation. In its turn, knowledge originates from the data transformed through context into information, and from information transformed through experience into knowledge. As a result of employees' interaction, transformation of knowledge from an individual's knowledge into common organisational knowledge is ensured. Transformation takes place in the process of activity as people share their knowledge.

Employee's knowledge is one of reserves of intellectual capital and organisation's intangible resources that allow successful functioning of the organisation. Evaluating the role of knowledge as a resource favouring competitiveness, the issue regarding the role of knowledge sharing in the process of competitive intelligence becomes topical.

Interviewee nr.15: 'Knowledge sharing ensures the company staff becoming more valuable, because employee's knowledge constantly increases, the employee learns.'

Interviewee nr.22: 'Knowledge sharing stimulates employees' expertise.'

Social interaction culture changes in the process of organisational learning. Knowledge sharing ensures that each employee both teaches and learns. Trust arises gradually and within a longer period of time, and only when employees and manager have verified it by their actions.

Interviewee nr.12: 'A good company's communication system providing information turnover encourages mutual trust. Trust is associated with company's results and efficient process.'

Interviewee nr.1: 'Trust among employees ensures knowledge sharing.'

Creation of the atmosphere of mutual trust within the collective body is one of the competencies having a long-term crucial effect for efficient operation of organisational processes. Information and communication technologies can affect formation of feedback. Creation of a percept about the message recipient is encumbered, and so is the ability to act or to participate in the process. The new social interaction culture is characterised by standard communication values.

CONCLUSIONS

The last ten years are characterised by rapid development of information and communication paradigm that affects social interaction culture. Results of research show that enterprises attempting to increase information sharing among employees, often introduce new technologies in order to improve information turnover. However, the results of focus group discussion showed that not only availability of technologies in the organisation is important for employees, but also various other factors that determine the social interaction culture in the organisation: interpersonal trust, organisational trust, and loyalty, support, fairness etc.

Information and communication technologies increase the distances within the social communication space. The social communication area is much wider than the personal communication area. The new culture of social interaction should involve those communication values, which characterise the social interaction competencies of the human factor: (1) the ability to build tolerant and loyal relationships; (2) the ability to predict the results of the communication; (3) the skill to maintain the unity of internal and external culture; (4) the ability to create feedback (5) being able to use the communication competencies in accordance with the communication style, etc. In the age of information technologies, a standardized communication style is often dominating with missing creativity and personal component.

Summarising the results, the research showed that in organisations with positive social interaction culture, employees and supervisors socialize, interact and share information much more frequently in a verbal form, which promotes a sense of adherence to the organisation; information technologies, for their part, are used for creation of database and distribution of formal instructions.

Neither conclusions regarding the reasons, nor generalisations can be made on the basis of these opinions or views, because the number of participants is small; the range of the expressed opinions, however, is wide enough to gain a picture on the various aspects of the investigated phenomenon. Therefore, such examination of opinions is important and necessary due to the gnostic reason.

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