

An Extended Abstract of “Emergence of knowledge management in Russia: Towards legitimacy for practice”

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Abstract

The explicit assumption of the knowledge-based view of the firm is that knowledge is an organization's most valuable resource for the creation of a competitive advantage. This suggests that knowledge resources, along with the knowledge-related policies, practices, processes and technological tools, are necessary components for a firm's survival and success in the modern volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world; and it becomes quite clear that firms – considering the present economic, political and social trends that are tangibly reshaping the business landscape – cannot remain globally competitive by basing their strategy primarily on ‘traditional’ tangible resources. The advancing globalization forces, digitalization of business, technological evolution, etc. – all of these exogenous factors have facilitated the emergence and formation of knowledge management. Although the popularity of knowledge management has been steadily increasing over the last decade, with research and practice exploring how firms create and sustain competitive advantages by developing their ability to effectively and efficiently manage knowledge, pertinent literature has had little conversation about the legitimization of knowledge management and related practices in non-Western contexts, including

countries of CEE and the Former Soviet Union (known as transition economies). In this article we reflect upon the emergence of knowledge management in Russia – a transition economy that falls out of the ‘Western – Eastern’ dichotomy in the knowledge management discourse, thus representing an interesting and rather peculiar research context. On the basis of the following data: conference proceedings (of KM-Russia and Innowave), curricula of 50 leading Russian universities, profiles of the top knowledge management leaders / experts who actively popularize the field in Russia, selected scientific articles which describe cases of knowledge management implementation in this country context, 20 knowledge-management-related national standards (some of which are direct translations of open-access international ones), and interviews with community of practice members, we offer context-specific explanations as to how knowledge management practitioners seek legitimacy with different constituencies..

Keywords: Russia; knowledge management emergence; pragmatic legitimacy; moral legitimacy; cognitive legitimacy; transition economy