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# Power and knowledge acquisition: the implications for team performance

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# Organizational Knowledge, Learning and Capabilities Conference

Barcelona, April 13-14, 2003

## Program and abstracts

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## Track E: Organizational learning, knowledge, and organization components

### Session E-5: Teams and learning

Monday, April 14, 09:30-10:30 Room B-102

Chair: *Guillermo Pérez-Bustamante*  
Universidad de Oviedo, Spain

#### **Team composition and learning: how knowledge conversion abilities facilitate team learning processes**

*Jia-Chi Huang*, Soochow University, Taiwan (jchuang@mail2.scu.edu.tw)

*Sy-Fong Wang*, Soochow University, Taiwan

Based on Nonaka's knowledge spiral theory, this study argued the four knowledge creating patterns, including socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization, can be conceived as four types of knowledge conversion abilities. We developed level, completeness, redundancy, and heterogeneity as four dimensions of team knowledge conversion abilities combination, and explored relationships between these dimensions and team learning processes, including framing/reframing, experimenting, crossing boundaries, diverging, and integrating perspectives. We found the level of team knowledge conversion abilities on socialization, combination, and internalization has positive relationships with team learning processes. The completeness and redundancy of team knowledge conversion abilities also have positive relationships with team learning processes, especially crossing boundaries and integrating perspectives. Besides, the heterogeneity of team knowledge conversion abilities has some negative relationships with team learning processes, especially experimenting. This study provides a new perspective about the application of knowledge spiral theory, and team composition research

#### **Power and knowledge acquisition: the implications for team performance**

*John Politis*, Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE, (john.politis@hct.ac.ae)

Knowledge has been identified as an important resource that contributes to the competitive advantage of an organisation. The problems associated with irresponsible use of power manifest itself in the loss of organisational knowledge and the expensive duplication of knowledge acquisition, rising costs and reduced performance. Although interpersonal skills are most often cited as essential for successful knowledge acquisition, little is known about the affect of the forces of power in the process of knowledge acquisition. A survey of 130 members of self-managing teams who are engaged in knowledge acquisition activities was carried out to investigate the relationship between the dimensions of power associated with French and Ravens' power-based taxonomy, a number of knowledge acquisition attributes, and performance. The findings suggest that most of the bases of power enable followers' knowledge acquisition, but the bases of power and indeed knowledge acquisition are not pre-existing conditions for achieving desirable performance.

#### **The effect of team structure on project-based learning**

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Work-based teams are an integral part of the landscape of the modern firm. However, despite the extensive research that has been done on projects and teams, there is still a great deal of uncertainty about the process through which teams actually acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge. In this paper we extend the emerging theory of project-based learning, by developing a learning model that examines the structural elements of the project team. To do this we draw on the results of an empirical study of five organizations in the United Kingdom. Our findings indicate that there are two prevalent team structures, the "human capital" model and the "social capital model. In addition, the choice of which structure to adopt is contingent upon the internal organizational climate of the firm as well as the level of dynamism in the firm's external environment. Finally, the choice of team structure has a lasting impact on traditional project outcomes as well as project learning outcomes. Implications are discussed.

### Session E-6: Knowledge measurements

Monday, April 14, 12:15-13:15 Room B-102

Chair: *Joseph Lampel*  
Cass Business School, City University, UK