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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING AS KEY FACTORS IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT – EVIDENCE FROM SLOVAK SMES

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ABSTRACT. Over the last decades, researchers have been increasingly studying the field of emotional intelligence and knowledge management. However, the interaction between these two important factors has not received sufficient attention thus far, therefore this paper aims to assess it. The goal of this article is to assess the impact of emotional intelligence on the willingness of knowledge transfer and examine additional factors (such as gender and generation group). The research sample (N=508) consisted of employees of Slovak SMEs. The study was conducted in June-August of 2022. A two-way variance analysis and a binomial logistic regression were applied. In the case of Hypotheses 1 and 2, Emotional Quotient (EQ) figured as an independent variable, while gender and generation group were independent categorical variables. In the case of Hypotheses 3, 4 and 5, a model was set up using logistic regression, where the EQ, gender and generation group were all independent variables. The results show that gender has a real impact on the level of EQ. The willingness of knowledge transfer is influenced by both the level of EQ and gender. The importance of emotional intelligence in connection to knowledge transfer was examined during the crisis caused by COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war, thus expanding the knowledge related to human resources. Previous research on the topic is quite limited and the present study is unique in considering the issue in the context of SMEs and the CEE countries.

JEL Classification: D83,
D91, J24

Keywords: knowledge sharing, knowledge management, emotional intelligence, Emotional Quotient, small and medium enterprises, Slovakia

Introduction

Although many factors can influence the success of companies, it is no secret that they can gain a favorable position in the market with appropriate knowledge. Market leaders possess adequate amount of capital, so unique knowledge contributes to their differentiation and

competitive advantage. This statement is also valid for SMEs, where knowledge plays an important role in the form of human capital. It is not enough to acquire the essential knowledge, it is also important to ensure access to knowledge in order to maintain smooth operations and to find ways to store knowledge to ensure such access in the future. Companies that do not manage knowledge properly can find themselves in a difficult position. It is crucial for companies to employ staff who have already acquired the necessary knowledge and who also show willingness to share it with fellow employees or their superiors. Based on the preliminary assumptions, we believe that emotional intelligence has significant impact on knowledge transfer and the willingness of individuals to pass on knowledge.

In addition, it is essential to address the challenges that emerged as a result of the pandemic and war and had negative impact on the employees working in small and medium enterprises. Physical presence and contact play an essential role in these companies, so their employees were left in vulnerable position as a result of closures and restrictions introduced by the governments. The same applied to the leaders of these companies, who also became dependent on enforced restriction measures (Sarihasan et al., 2022; Pierog, 2023). Some companies were able to survive accumulating loss (e.g. financial), while others went bankrupt. An extremely large number of people reported psychological distress, mental illnesses resulting from isolation and social distancing. The Russia-Ukraine war has had a significant impact on mental well-being and optimism of people (Pató et al., 2022). Increasing energy prices and transport costs resulted in s increased living costs (Keskin & Güven, 2022; Mariotti, 2022; Szép et al., 2022; Fiszeder & Małecka, 2022; Lin et al., 2023).

The preparation phase of our research was primarily influenced by the facts described above. The study is focusing on the impact of emotional intelligence on the willingness of knowledge sharing among individuals when distrust has strengthened. In addition to the listed, the impact of demographic factors (gender, generation group) was also considered.

1. Literature review

HR challenges in the constantly changing businesses environment are an addressed issue both by large enterprises and the SME sector. It is difficult to replace qualified and experienced employees in different sectors of the economy. (Ključnikov, et al., 2021). However, the SME sector faces many specifics, it is important to examine the issue of human resources in terms of complex perspectives (Čera, et al., 2022). The current research is focusing on human resource development in terms t of regional development (Jašková & Havierníková, 2020; Hrivnák & Moritz, 2021; Rozsa et al., 2022), employee motivation (Hajduová & Sebestyén, 2021; Hitka et al., 2022; Hutmanová et al., 2022), organizational loyalty, work productivity, work engagement or managerial support (Smith, 2020; Marić et al., 2021; Mihalca, et al., 2021; Borisov & Vinogradov, 2022), development of effective links with internal and external stakeholders (Mishchuk et al., 2022), value chain management (Setyaningsih & Kelle, 2021), innovation, sustainability, development and competitiveness (Durda, & Ključnikov, 2019; Dvorský et al., 2021; Grondys at el. 2021; Muangmee et al., 2022). The knowledge management systems within the HRM should be aligned with the overall strategic aim of the business (Lesníková et al., 2022). To achieve the strategic goals, enterprises try to increase the effectiveness of knowledge sharing via vocational training (Samoliuk et al., 2021) and overall changes in the learning orientation of firms (Meekaewkunchorn et al., 2021). These actions demand new approaches to HRM departments' activity and severe changes in their functions (Stachova et al., 2020). There are further factors that have significant impact on HRM and the company management. This paper targeted to examine the factor of emotional intelligence in relation to knowledge transfer.

The impact of emotional intelligence on knowledge transfer has not been adequately examined yet, but the research of Rechberg (2019) has to be emphasized, which is focusing on the employees. According to Rechberg (2019), emotional intelligence facilitates the processing of knowledge. Individuals with higher level of emotional intelligence can benefit from differentiating emotions and self-awareness. It makes possible to retain knowledge in the organization. According to Rechberg (2019), it is important to highlight that neither the individuals with high emotional intelligence can escape the feeling of job insecurity. Based on the model presented above, the companies have to develop management strategies that take into account the individual's emotional intelligence and focus on development of EQ. This will make the knowledge management in the company effective. A well-organized company is not only a group of individuals, but cooperation of individuals with emotional motivation. Based on this model, generating knowledge is closely linked to the abilities of individuals. Knowledge sharing is facilitated by the interpersonal and communication skills of individuals as well as their motivation for teamwork.

According to Fox & Spector (2000), individuals with high emotional intelligence are more successful in their interactions with others. They can achieve their goals thanks to the ability to recognize the emotions of others and react accordingly. The emotional intelligence is closely related to success within an organization (Dénes & Berke, 2015; Yi et al., 2021, Shi et al., 2021; Antinienė et al., 2022). According to the authors, in addition to general skills and abilities, it is necessary to take into account the ability of self-management, empathy and interpersonal skills. These help to recognize, regulate and express emotions. According to Hobfoll (2001), it can happen that individuals do not have intention to share their knowledge with the rest of the employees in order to maintain or protect their position in the company. Webster et al. (2008) emphasized that individuals may develop a sense of knowledge ownership. Knowledge is a source of power and job security, and regardless to the level of EQ, individuals can weigh whether they want to share knowledge or not. According to our opinion, retaining knowledge counts as unethical behavior in certain situations, since the individual is prioritizing his/her own interests instead of taking into consideration the development of the company. It is important to draw attention to the fact that knowledge sharing will make their work easier. Cabral & De Oliveira (2014) came to the same conclusion. Their research proved that individuals with higher score of EQ feel less important to use unethical tools in order to achieve success. Individuals with higher score of EQ possess higher ethical standards, and feel other individuals ethical as well. Individuals with less EQ are less ethical, and find other individuals unethical as well.

Wang (2004) and Cabrera & Cabrera (2005) pointed out that the company can lose valuable knowledge if it does not properly motivate the employees. These organizations consider only the corporate needs and neglecting the needs of the individual. If individuals feel job security and developed a certain level of trust, there is higher chance for knowledge sharing among the colleagues (Kessel et al., 2012; Androniceanu & Marton, 2021; Balková et al., 2022; Cizreliogulları & Babayiğit, 2022). Employee involvement and empowerment will support the interpersonal relations (Borisov & Vinogradov, 2022).

Based on the facts above, it can be assumed that individuals need to feel safe and trust at their workplace. If it is achieved, higher is the chance that they will share their knowledge with their peers. Business leaders and owners have to be aware that EQ plays a significant role at workplaces (Chang et al., 2022). Leaders with high EQ will be able to recognize and understand the feelings of their employees and act accordingly (Strugar Jelača, et al., 2022). Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in case of employees as well, especially when performing tasks that require teamwork. Developed emotional skills contribute to improved employee relationships. High EQ score can also contribute to better understanding between the

employees and the external groups (suppliers, customers). However, when developing the appropriate company culture, it has to be ensured that the employees will not perform disrespectful behaviour.

2. Methodological approach

The aim of this research is to assess the impact of emotional intelligence (the impact of EQ) on willingness of knowledge sharing in Slovak SMEs. The authors found important to examine further factors as gender and generation group as well (Figure 1). A Google Form questionnaire survey was applied. The questionnaires were distributed to employees of Slovak SMEs in June-August, 2022. Since it was not possible to access the opinion of the entire population, sampling was carried out. The sampling units were the companies themselves, as the authors did not have the opportunity to create a database of individuals working at SMEs in Slovakia. An online Slovak database (Finstat.sk) with thousands of companies was used during the research. The website helped to establish the number of SMEs operating with at least one employee in Slovakia. The database enabled us to obtain the e-mail address of the companies. Since, the number of SMEs fulfilling the criteria was also high (142 937 based on SBA, 2022), we randomly selected 3% of them. It means that the questionnaire was sent to 4 500 SMEs. Company owners were addressed and asked to forward the questionnaire to their employees. In some of the cases, the e-mail delivery was unsuccessful. It also happened that the e-mail addresses were not valid, since the company ceased to exist or changed the contact address. A total of 535 responses were obtained, and 508 responses were processed in the analysis.

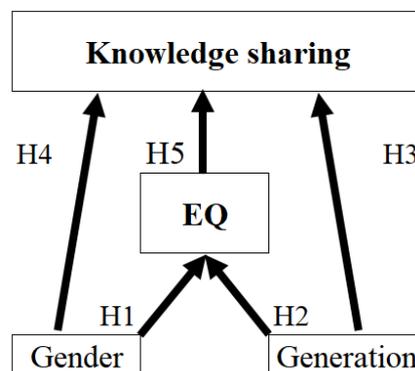


Figure 1. Research model

Source: *own editing*

The following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1: The EQ score is influenced by gender.

Hypothesis 2: The EQ score is influenced by generation group.

Hypothesis 3: The generation group of individuals influences their knowledge sharing willingness.

Hypothesis 4: The gender of individuals influences their knowledge sharing willingness.

Hypothesis 5: The EQ score of individuals influences their knowledge sharing willingness.

Two-way variance analysis was applied in order to test Hypothesis 1 and 2:

$$SS_T = SS_W + (SS_{Factor A} + SS_{Factor B} + SS_{Factor A*B})$$

$$SS_B = SS_{Factor A} + SS_{Factor B} + SS_{Factor A*B}$$

where SST means treatment sum of squares, SSW is the Sum of Squares Within, SSB is the Sum of Squares Between.

In order to perform a two-way ANOVA analysis, the homogeneity of variance is required, which was tested using a Levene's test:

$$W = \frac{(N - k) \sum_{i=1}^k N_i (Z_{i.} - Z_{..})^2}{(k - 1) \sum_{i=1}^k \sum_{j=1}^k (Z_{ij} - Z_{i.})^2}$$

The other condition is to achieve a normal distribution. A Saphiro-Wilk test was applied to prove it.

$$W = \frac{(\sum_{t=2}^n a_t y_t)}{\sum_{y=1}^n (x_t - \bar{y})^2}$$

In case of Hypotheses 3, 4 and 5, a logistic regression was applied:

$$P = \frac{e^{a+bX}}{1 + e^{a+bX}}$$

e = the base of the natural logarithm (2.718)

P = the probability of a 1

a and b = the parameters of the model

The sample size was calculated based on Cochran (1977):

$$n = \frac{Z^2 * p(1 - p)}{e^2}$$

n = sample size

Z = z-score associated with a level of confidence (95%)

p = sample proportion – decimal (0.05)

e = margin of error – decimal (5%)

A sample size of 385 corresponds with a confidence level of 95% and margin of error 5% when the population is larger than 100,000 since Slovakia has XY inhabitants. The minimum sample in our case was 385.

When reviewing the scales measuring the emotional intelligence (LAES, MSCEIT, Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory, AES), Assessing Emotions Scale (AES) was chosen. It is based on a questionnaire including 33 statements. The respondents had to fill in their opinion about the statements on a 5-point Likert scale. Schutte et al. (1998; 2009) categorized the statements (33) under a single factor when measuring the EQ. This is called a “global emotional intelligence”. This standpoint was backed by several results, so the method proved to be valid.

Cronbach's Alfa was used to determine the reliability of the AES scale:

$$\rho_T = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \sigma_i^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right)$$

The statistical analysis was performed with the help of IBM SPSS software.

3. Conducting research and results

3.1. Presentation of the sample

The minimum sample size defined above was met (N=508). The unfinished or not properly completed questionnaires, as well as the responses provided by company leaders were excluded from the sample (SMEs with zero employee). The work of Berkup (2014) was used when determining the generation groups. A minor modification was made, as the youngest members of Generation Z were born in 2009. Taking into account the ethical issues, the research concluded the responses of adult respondents only. According to this principle, the respondents born in 2003 were already 18 years old when the research started (June 2022). The respondents born in 2004 were not 18 years old when the research started, so they were excluded from the sample (Table 1).

Table 1. Means and standard deviation

Characteristics	Category	Percent (%)	Count (N)
Gender	Male	47.4%	241
	Female	52.6%	267
Generation	Generation X (1965-1979)	21.5%	109
	Generation Y (1980-1994)	48.6%	247
	Generation Z (1995-2003)	29.9%	152
Net income (per month)	500€ and below	14.4%	73
	501-1000€	45.3%	230
	1001-1500€	27.0%	137
	1501-2000€	8.5%	43
	2000€ and above	4.9%	25
Residence	Village	43.9%	223
	Town/City	56.1%	285
	Micro	19.3%	98
Size of SME	Small	30.1%	153
	Medium	50.6%	257

Source: *own editing*

It is not a coincidence that in the case of determining the net salary, most of the respondents chose a scale of 501-1000€, since the average gross wage of Slovak employees in 2021 was 1 211€, and the net wage was 849.48€ (Podnikajte, 2022).

3.2. Measuring emotional intelligence

The reliability test of AES scale was conducted. Based on the result ($\alpha = 0.915$), there is a strong reliability (Table 2). Schutte et al. (1998) reported a reliability of 0.9. Schutte et al.

(2009) examined the results of several research, with reliability levels ranked between 0.76-0.95. According to Aldrich (1995), the acceptable level has to be between 0.7-0.85. In order to delete some statements, further in-depth research is required.

Table 2. Reliability – AES (33) scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.915	0.926	33

Source: *based on own research results*

The paper did not aim to provide a deeper psychological conclusion, so the total sum of the scale is used. The interpretation of some of the scales used to measure the emotional intelligence is complicated and requires a professional expertise. The AES scale allows interpretation based on a single factor. It is important to notice that although some items of the scale are Likert scale results, at the same time, the authors (Schutte et al, 1998) also calculated the mean and standard deviation based on the final result. Schutte et al. (2009) examined the results of several research, based on which the mean value of the EQ measured on the scale was 124, and the standard deviation was 13. It can be concluded that a value less than 111 refers to low and the value above 137 refers to high emotional intelligence. However, in our case the mean value was 123, while the standard deviation was 16, so the value below 107 is considered low, while the value over 139 is high. The reversed statements had to be reverse-coded. Based on the results, a higher deviation based on the classification methods examined can be detected, however, based on both of the methods, the number of respondents with average EQ is the highest. The creators of AES test make no notice about categorization, they just summarized the results of the past research. The respondents in our research were treated according to our own categorization. Based on the answers of the respondents, the value of median is 124, while the value of mode is 130. It can be concluded that the results below 106 refer to low, while the results above 140 refer to high emotional intelligence.

Figure 2 presents the categorization based on the research sample. The categorization of Schutte et al. (2009) is indicated with black, while the method used by the authors of this study is indicated with grey color. It is visible that the research result is copying the shape of the traditional Bell-diagram. This cannot be described as accidental, but happens due to the applied procedure.

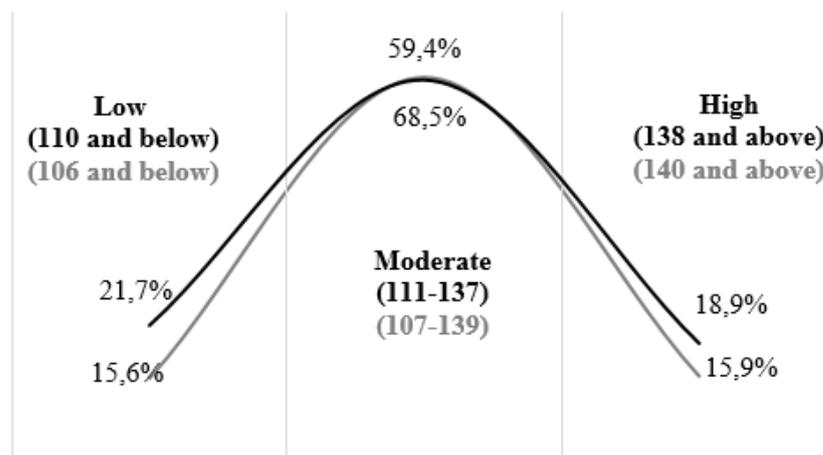


Figure 2. Categorization of respondents based on EQ

Source: *own editing, comparing own results and the research results of Schutte et al. (2009)*

3.3. Hypotheses testing

We tested Hypothesis 1(H1) and Hypothesis 2 (H2) together:

Hypothesis 1: The EQ score is influenced by gender.

Hypothesis 2: The EQ score is influenced by generation group.

Saklofske et al. (2007) found that women often score higher on emotional intelligence than men. This served as a basis when formulating our hypothesis (H1). It was essential to investigate a further demographic feature. In order to do this, the age of the respondent and the generation group the respondents belonged to was chosen. Figure 3 presents the results calculated by SPSS software, which shows that female respondents have higher EQ than male respondents considering all 3 age groups identified. It means that categorization based on age group of the respondents has no impact on EQ of the respondents.

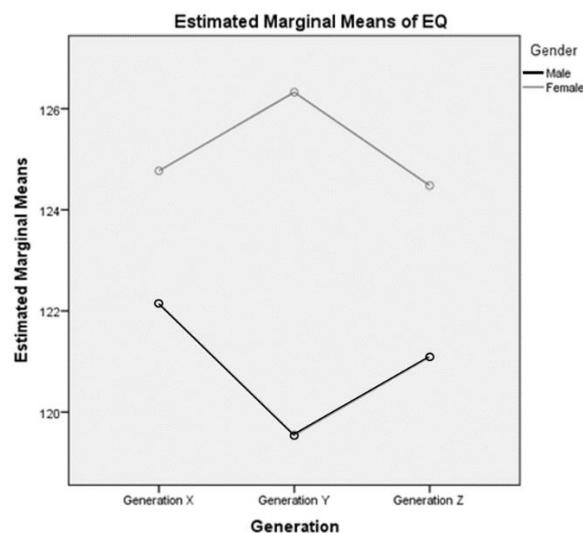


Figure 3. Connection between EQ score, Generation and Gender

Source: based on own research results

While dealing with EQ, the respondents were not classified into 3 categories, but the total sum (EQ) obtained was used. It means that the dependent variable is metric (interval scale). The independent variables - gender (binary, nominal) and the age group categorization (3 groups, ordinal) - were assessed using non-metric variables. Based on this, a two-way variance analysis was applied. The following sub-hypotheses were formulated:

H1₀: Gender has no impact on the EQ score.

H1₁: Gender has impact on the EQ score.

H2₀: Generation group has no impact on the EQ score.

H2₁: Generation group has impact on the EQ score.

The dependent variable had to be normally distributed for all combinations of the groups of independent variables. The Saphiro-Wilk test was used to determine this. Normal distribution can be detected in the case of each group, since the Saphiro-Wilk test is not significant in the case of any of the groups (Table 3).

Table 3. Normality test – Hypothesis 1 and 2

		Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Gender	Male	0.992	235	0.258
	Female	0.992	273	0.176
Generation	Generation X (1965-1979)	0.987	109	0.366
	Generation Y (1980-1994)	0.991	247	0.134
	Generation Z (1995-2003)	0.983	152	0.056

Source: based on own research results

As a next step, the variance homogeneity was examined, using the Levene's test. It is fulfilled, since the Levene's test is not significant ($p=0.973 > 0.05$).

Based on the results (Table 4), the level of significance related to gender ($p = 0.005$) is lower than the determined $\alpha = 0.05$, while the significance level related to generation ($p = 0.942$) is higher. According to the results, gender has impact on the EQ. It is clearly visible that the significance level of the paired interaction ($p = 0.418$) is higher than the determined ($\alpha = 0.05$), so the joint effect can be excluded.

Table 4. Two-way ANOVA – Hypothesis 1 and 2

	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3478.545	5	695.709	2.744	0.019
Intercept	6824679.873	1	6824679.873	26916.575	0.000
Gender	2048.795	1	2048.795	8.080	0.005
Generation	30.478	2	15.239	0.060	0.942
Gender*Generation	442.582	2	221.291	0.873	0.418
Error	127281.770	502	253.549		
Total	7840912.000	508			

Source: based on own research results

Based on all these facts, H10 can be rejected, while H20 can't. So, the original Hypothesis 1 ("The EQ score is influenced by gender") can be accepted, while Hypothesis 2 ("The EQ score is influenced by generation group.") can be rejected. As long as the gender has impact on the EQ, the generation group the respondents belonged to has no impact on EQ at all.

Hypotheses H3, H4 and H5 were also tested together:

Hypothesis 3: The generation group of individuals influences their knowledge sharing willingness.

H3₀: The generation group has no impact on knowledge sharing willingness.

H3₁: The generation group has impact on knowledge sharing willingness.

Hypothesis 4: The gender of individuals influences the knowledge sharing willingness.

H4₀: Gender has no impact on knowledge sharing willingness.

H4₁: Gender has impact on knowledge sharing willingness.

Hypothesis 5: The EQ influences the knowledge sharing willingness.

H5₀: The EQ has no impact on knowledge sharing willingness.

H5₁: The EQ has impact on knowledge sharing willingness.

In order to conduct the analysis, the binary logistic regression was chosen, since the dependent variables had two outputs (sharing knowledge: “yes” or “no”). In this case, fewer conditions have to be met than in the case of discriminant analysis. It also allows the use of both metric and non-metric independent variables. There is also a requirement to conduct a test. One of the most basic requirements is that the sample has to include 60 items. In this case, we did not use the original sample (N=508), and only those respondents were included, who – according to their responses – possess the knowledge that is essential for the company. Altogether, n = 297 respondents indicated that they possess this type of knowledge, so this criterion was fulfilled.

As one of the first steps of running binary logistic regression, the categorical independent variables had to be specified. In this case, it was the gender and generation group, which had a nominal and binary character. If we provided a random answer, whether the respondents share their knowledge or not at workplaces, the probability that we are right would be 85.5%. The parameter estimates are significantly based on Wald statistics (p=0.000).

Following this step the „Enter” method was performed. The program submitted the examined independent variables into the analysis at the same time. Omnibus tests are statistical tests, which test whether the explained variance in a set of data is significantly greater than the unexplained variance. In our case, the result was p=0.008, which means that the entire model is significant. The rate of correctly categorized cases was 85.5%, which reflects stagnation compared to random categorization (85.5%).

Table 5. Logistic regression – Hypotheses 3, 4 and 5

Variable	B	S. E.	Wald	df	Sig.
EQ	0.032	0.011	8.265	1	0.004
Gender (1)	0.099	0.048	4.266	1	0.039
Generation			4.349	2	0.114
Generation (1)	-0.255	0.466	0.300	1	0.584
Generation (2)	-0.861	0.462	3.475	1	0.062
Constant	-1.719	1.344	1.637	1	0.201

Source: based on own research results

The results show that Hypothesis 3 (“The generation group influences the knowledge sharing willingness”) can be rejected, while H4 (“The gender of individuals influences the knowledge sharing willingness”) and H5 (“The EQ influences the knowledge sharing willingness”) can be accepted.

Based on this, “bar” (H4) and “scatter/dot” (H5) graphs were prepared (Figure 4 and 5), which illustrates the relationship between gender and the willingness of knowledge sharing; the EQ and the willingness of knowledge sharing. It is presented that in the case of those sharing their knowledge at workplace, the EQ scores are higher, which is the result of real relationship based on hypothesis testing. Female respondents proved to be more open to knowledge sharing.

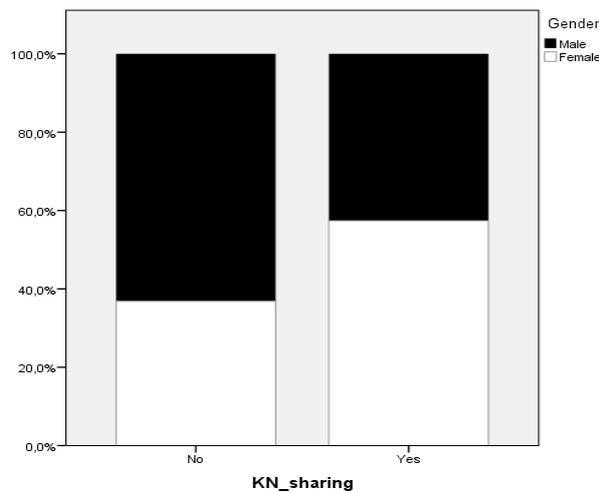


Figure 4. Gender and Knowledge sharing
Source: based on own research results

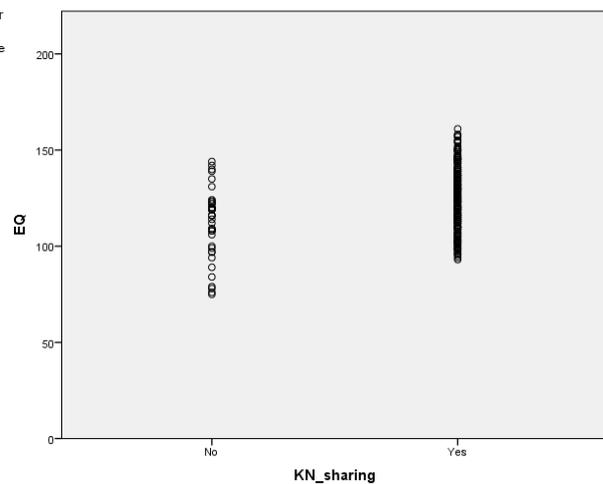


Figure 5. EQ and Knowledge sharing
Source: based on own research results

Based on the results, the research model (Figure 1) can be updated:

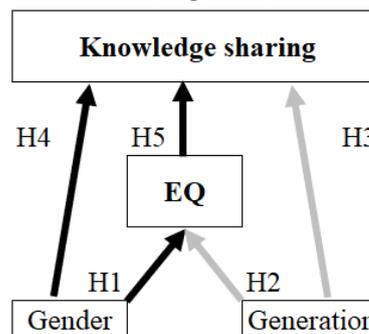


Figure 6. The relationship between the given factors after hypotheses testing
Source: based on own research results

The grey lines refer to no relationship, while black lines refer to real relationship between the factors (Figure 6). Although, two hypotheses were rejected, some influencing factors were discovered.

Conclusion

Covid-19 is the worst global crisis in the 21st century both in social and economic terms. The crisis caused by the pandemic was even deepened by the Russia-Ukraine war. The consequences of the above mentioned could be felt not only by individuals but the corporate sector as well.

The survey is addressing the role of EQ in the corporate sector. Based on the survey results it can be assumed that employing individuals with high EQ score is a benefit for the company, especially when these employees are in positions where direct interaction with customer is required (e.g. sales staff, customer service employees and other services). Emotional intelligence is also a benefit in team work and positions where cooperation is needed (e.g. suppliers, business partners, manager-employee relation). The adequate level of emotional

intelligence can be essential at all organizational levels (owner, middle manager, employee, etc.), especially during the period of crisis.

The research results show that gender should be taken into account if businesses would like to employ an emotionally balanced individual. The impact of EQ on knowledge sharing willingness is also worth to mention. If a company is looking for an employee to fill a position, where knowledge sharing plays an important role, it should not be solely based on the EQ of the individual, since the potential candidate has to possess the potential knowledge to be shared with other employees.

If the companies would like to assess the level of emotional intelligence, using AES scale would be the most appropriate. The test is self-administered and evaluation of the results does not require a specific psychological knowledge. The AES quantifies the level of emotional intelligence of individuals. In addition, it is one of the shortest internationally recognized self-administered tests. If it is required, the employees can be classified into categories. The method of Schutte et al. (2009) might be suitable for this (Low = 110 and below; Moderate = 111-137; High = 138-165); or the solution presented in this research (Low = 106 and below; Moderate = 107-139; High = 140-165). In addition to this, own calculations of companies based on average and standard deviation can also be applied.

There were several limits to this research, which are important to mention. The authors had to face financial obstacles when conducting the research. Online questionnaire survey was chosen as an appropriate method, which is both efficient and fast. The disadvantage is that not all the managers of small and medium enterprises spend hours with reading e-mails. It is also necessary to mention the biggest disadvantage of self-administered tests. It often happens that the respondents do not understand or misinterpret the questions. The results of these types of questionnaires demonstrate that the respondents are aware of themselves and their environment. However, it does not often correspond with the reality. Long questionnaires usually discourage respondents to participate in the survey. In addition, in our case the reliability of AES scale ($\alpha = 0.902$) was higher than the acceptability range (0.7-0.85) determined by Aldrich (1995), the scale might include also unnecessary statements. In order to delete some of the statements, further research is required in the future.

Future goals include sending the questionnaire to further potential respondents. An adequate support is needed to achieve this goal – a telephone conversation may be the most appropriate. Addressing the respondents verbally develops a certain level of trust between the parties. As a further goal is planned to conduct a questionnaire survey and interviews among the managers. In our opinion, expansion of the research in international field means further opportunities in the future as well.

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Annex

AES (33) scale results – average, standard deviation, median and mode

No.	Item	Mean	St. dev.	Median	Mode
1.	I know when to speak about my personal problems to others	3.73	0.94	4	4
2.	When I am faced with obstacles, I remember the situations I faced similar obstacles and solved them	4.16	0.77	4	4
3.	I expect that I will do well on most things I try	3.79	0.92	4	4
4.	Other people find it easy to trust me	3.96	0.83	4	4
5.	I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people *	2.49	1.12	2	2
6.	Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not	4.06	0.92	4	5
7.	When my mood changes, I see new opportunities	3.15	1.11	4	3
8.	Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living	3.70	1.00	3	4
9.	I am aware of my emotions as I experience them	3.98	0.95	4	4
10.	I expect good things to happen	3.95	1.00	4	5
11.	I like to share my emotions with others	3.24	1.15	4	3
12.	When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last	3.55	1.00	3	4
13.	I arrange events others enjoy	3.59	1.03	4	4
14.	I am looking for activities that make me happy	4.14	0.89	4	5
15.	I am aware of non-verbal messages I send to others	3.81	0.97	4	4
16.	I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others	3.75	1.02	4	4
17.	When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me	4.06	0.90	4	4
18.	When looking at facial expressions of people, I recognize the emotions they are experiencing	3.92	0.96	4	4
19.	I know why my emotions change	3.72	0.97	4	4
20.	When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas	4.06	0.91	4	4
21.	I can control my emotions	3.28	1.07	3	3
22.	I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them	3.79	0.94	4	4
23.	I motivate myself by projecting good outcome of tasks I take on	3.56	1.13	4	4
24.	I praise others when they have done something well	4.26	0.89	4	5
25.	I am aware of non-verbal messages other people send	3.80	0.94	4	4
26.	When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I feel as I experienced this event myself.	3.45	1.06	3	3
27.	When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas	3.30	1.09	3	3
28.	When I am faced with a challenge, I give up, since I am afraid of failure*	2.16	1.22	1	2
29.	I know what other people feel when I look at them	3.35	1.01	3	3
30.	I help other people feel better when they are down	3.91	0.94	4	4
31.	Good mood helps me to face obstacles easier	3.55	1.04	4	4
32.	I can tell how people feel based on the tone of their voice	3.59	1.05	4	4
33.	It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do *	2.60	1.16	3	3