



TACIT KNOWLEDGE and EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE

**Prepared by:
Dr. Preeti Chopra**



MEANING

- Tacit knowledge is the knowledge that is difficult to transfer to another person by means of writing it down or verbalizing.
- Knowledge based on experience and observation.
- Includes insights, intuitions and hunches.
- It is personal.
- Introduced by Michael Polanyi in 1958.
- “We can know more than we can tell.”
- Example: driving a car, playing the guitar,



Features of Tacit knowledge

- Valuable source of knowledge
- Hard to handle (manage)
- Found in the minds of people
- Cultural beliefs, values, attitudes, skills, expertise etc.



Approaches to capture tacit knowledge

- **Interviewing experts:**
 - structured interviews of experts
 - Most appropriate approach to capture pertinent tacit knowledge.
 - Eg: exit interview
 - Aim is to produce a record of knowledge either in audio or video mode, electronic or paper media.



- **Learning by being told:**
- Task analysis
- An expert teaches the novices the processes of a task.
- It is a process of determining the actual task, breaking the tasks and analysing what needs to be done to complete the task.



- **Learning by observation:**
- Observing the process used followed by experts to solve the problem.



Advantages of Tacit Knowledge approach

- No fear of leaking of knowledge because it is not easily transferable.
- Easy to begin managing the knowledge
- Inexpensive
- Used to improve performance of employees (specialisation)
- Improves the employees satisfaction and motivation as they are officially recognised in the organisation.
- Protection of proprietary knowledge from diffusion.



Limitations of tacit knowledge approach

- Some people are not good at articulating their knowledge or their ideas properly.
- Individuals may claim to have the knowledge that they actually don't possess. May claim to be more knowledgeable than they actually are.
- Moving the people is often costly and time-consuming.



Guidelines for acquiring tacit knowledge

- Organisational culture
- Mentorship programs
- Workplace collaborations (informal social circles)
- Documentation
- Meetings
- Forums and informal groups
- Training
- Professional and social networks (LinkedIn)



Sharing tacit knowledge

- Create a knowledge sharing culture
- Encourage social interaction
- Show your process
- Use an internal knowledge sharing system
- Capture employee stories



Difficulties in sharing tacit knowledge

- Perception and language
- Time consuming
- Value of (tacit knowledge not valued as required)
- Distance (face-to-face interactions are lesser now as compared to virtual or global forms)



Explicit knowledge

- Explicit knowledge can be quantified.
- Can be written down
- Clearly communicated
- No need to gain experience
- Can be conveyed through articles, seminars, videos, etc.
- Stored in documents, databases, websites, emails etc.



- Can be codified
- Can be accessed anywhere and at anytime
- Helps an organisation to discover deficiencies in the knowledge assets
- Knowledge assets include reports, memos, business plans, copyrights, trademarks, drawings, customer lists etc.
- Explicit and tacit knowledge are complementary to each other
- Without tacit knowledge it will be difficult to understand explicit knowledge
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Advantages of explicit knowledge

- Quick dissemination of knowledge once it is articulated
- Can be more carefully codified
- Clearly communicated
- Helps in discovering deficiencies
- Enhances organisational agility
- Faster decision making
- No need to reinvent the wheel
- Reduce errors
- Right to access information
- Prevent knowledge loss



Limitations of explicit knowledge

- Insufficient skills to articulate their useful knowledge
- Information is not safe/secure
- Cost-benefit analysis of knowledge articulated
- Knowledge is useful only if it is actually applied.

EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE

VS.

TACIT KNOWLEDGE



Explicit Knowledge is knowledge that can easily be expressed, codified, and recorded so it can be shared



Definition

Tacit Knowledge is knowledge that cannot be expressed easily and often acquired from personal experience



Objective, logical and technical



Key Characteristics

Subjective, cognitive and experiential



Codified



Codified?

Non-codified



Easily transferable



Ease of Transfer

Difficult to transfer - often requires face-to-face interaction and teaching.



It can be recorded and stored in physical/ electronic form.



Storage

Can't be recorded or stored





Interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge

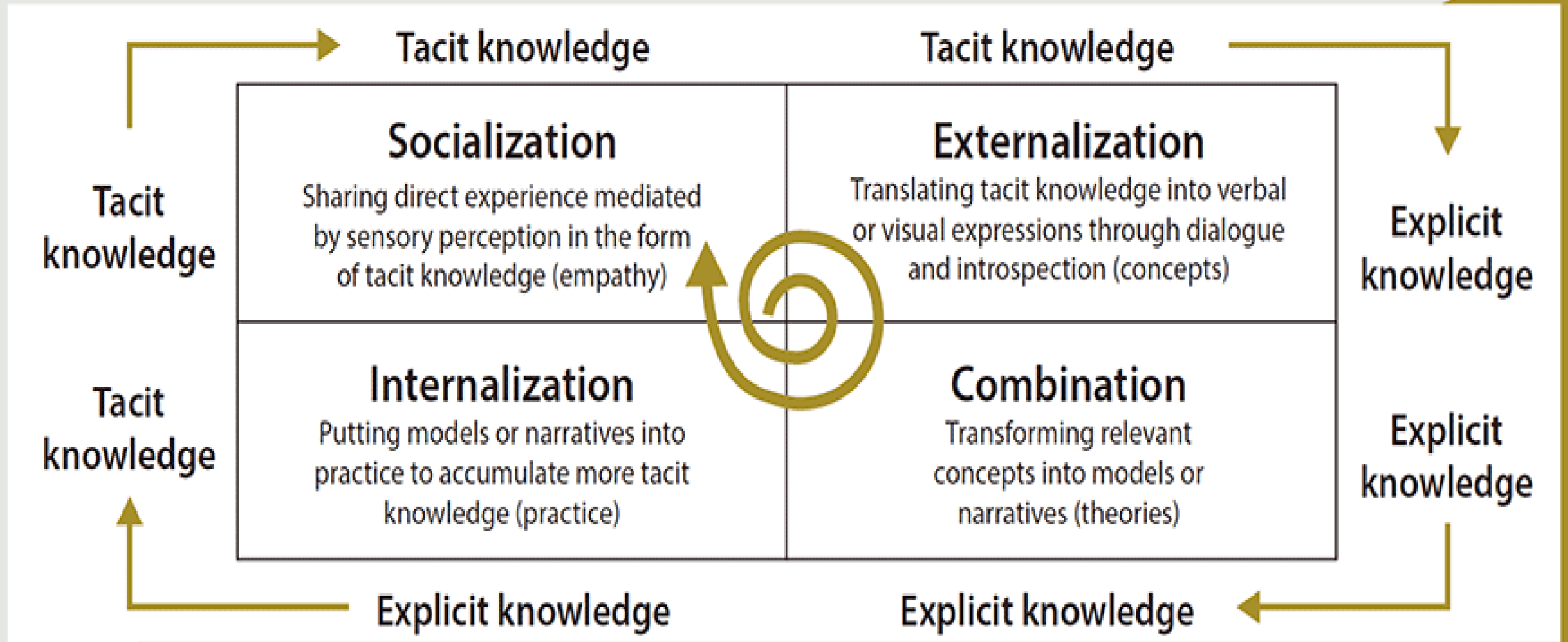
- Personal knowledge can become organizational knowledge through dynamic interactions between tacit and explicit knowledge through the process of “SECI” i.e.,
- Socialisation (tacit-tacit, sympathized knowledge content)
- Externalisation (tacit-explicit, conceptual knowledge content)
- Combination (explicit-explicit, systematic knowledge content)
- Internalisation (explicit-tacit, operational knowledge content)

The SECI Model

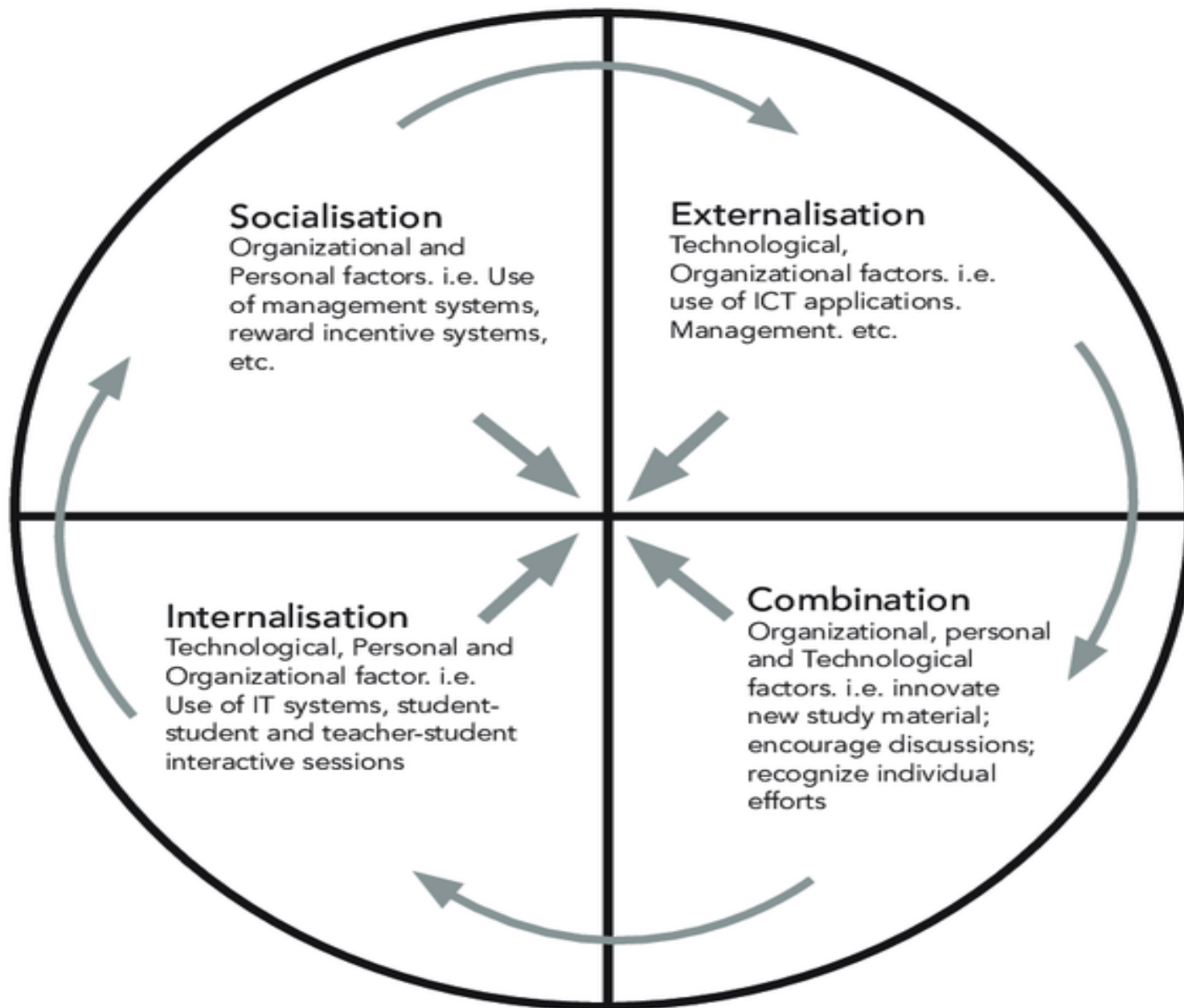
Ikujiro Nonaka & Hirotaka Takeuchi



Scope of tacit knowledge



Scope of explicit knowledge





THANK YOU