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Abstract

A business teamwork discussion is one of necessary actions in current business circumstances. However, many discussions are ineffective; consequently, time, costs and resources are wasted. The objective of this study is to identify factors that can enhance the effectiveness of a teamwork discussion, through the focus group method. Six focus groups of participants from different types of business and organizational positions were conducted. The results from these focus groups indicate many factors influencing the success and failure of teamwork discussion. These factors, then, were summarized in four dimensions. The study also noticed that, in a teamwork discussion, a bulk of messages is ordinarily delivered among participants. These messages not only contain the contextual information, but also the implicit knowledge of the senders. The exchange of knowledge causes new knowledge and insight to be created in the receiver's mind. We believe that the traditional knowledge creation concept of "ba" can be adapted in a teamwork discussion to remedy the impact of some factors and improve the efficiency of the teamwork discussion. Hence, the characteristics of ba were linked to our four-dimension results and the areas in which ba can play its roles were identified.

Keywords: Teamwork Discussion, Knowledge Flow, Knowledge Creation

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, a team meeting is one of the most important activities in an organization. Developing an effective team meeting involves several mechanisms as a general process of teamwork. There are four types of meetings: Information-giving meetings, Instructional meetings, Problem-solving meetings, and Information-seeking meetings (Kirkpatrick, 2006). Despite the different objectives for each type, one common characteristic of these four meeting types is the communication between participants in a meeting. Effective communication enables the effective flow of information and involves both the sender and the receiver taking their own responsibilities in creating a satisfactory climate of communication that allows information flow across all organization levels (Tukiainen, 2001; Krizan, Merrier, Logan, and Williams, 2005).

Communication can be one-way or interactive, between individuals or within a group. It is achieved when the messages a sender sends are received and understood by the receiver (Fisher, 2002), and change the receiver's behaviour (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971). In an organizational communication, information and knowledge are passed through the messages sent and received. When an individual shares his or her knowledge with another person, this knowledge is combined with other personal dimensions such as experience and insight, and becomes the basis for action (Grover and Davenport, 2001). In the sharing of information and knowledge, the participants who have insufficient information can assess each other's knowledge (Carlile, 2004). Therefore, at the end of the communication, they can gain new knowledge and insight from the experience.

Formal communication needs participants to interact in order to share their information. The place the communication takes place can be a physical place like a meeting room, or virtual space such as in teleconference. The participants can be drawn from many different roles in an organization and the topics can be varied. Nonaka (1991) mentioned four different forms of knowledge conversion: Socialization, Externalization, Combination and Internalization, and the spaces where these four conversion forms occur (or ba in Japanese) differ (Nonaka and Konno, 1998). These forms and spaces can be linked to organizational communication, with regard to the discussion type and objective of the discussion, to reduce an impact from prohibitive factors on the information flow. In this study, we conducted focus groups to explore possible factors that can impact on organizational knowledge flow. The factors can be collected and categorized into related dimensions. Then we link these related dimensions in a classic knowledge creation model (Nonaka, 1991; Nonaka and Konno, 1998).

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1   Communication Style in Teamwork Discussion

In teamwork discussion, communication among participants is crucial. Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) distinguished communication as having four styles: direct versus indirect, succinct versus elaborate, personal versus contextual, and instrumental versus affective.

 The direct versus indirect style concerns the degree of explicit communication a sender intends to communicate. The direct style shows more disclosure, honesty and is more obvious than the indirect communication style which represents the ambiguity and indirect articulation in order to save the other's face. The succinct versus elaborate dimension represents the quantity of messages to be communicated. People with the succinct style talk little, are concise or quiet in the meeting whereas elaborate people express more and try to elaborate on the content. The personal versus contextual dimension determines if the speaker places stress on the individual or organizational position. The personal style concentrates on individual identity while the contextual is on the organizational position. The former accounts for differences between people whereas the latter uses language defining as general properties. The instrumental versus affective dimension reflects the perspective of communication. An instrumental sender focuses on goal attainment while an affective sender focuses on the interpersonal processes (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988). Teamwork productivity relies

on how participants communicate through teamwork discussion. Therefore, to manage the communication styles for transmitting knowledge within a meeting needs study and attention.

1.2 Ba and Knowledge Conversion Model

The information flow in an organization is simply viewed as a conversion between tacit and explicit knowledge among two or more people. Nonaka (1991) mentioned four forms of conversion: Socialization, Externalization, Combination and Internalization or SECI.

Socialization is the form where one person's tacit knowledge (aka the sender) is converted to tacit knowledge for the other (aka the receiver). It is quite a limited form of knowledge creation as the knowledge is not made explicit or leveraged to increase organizational value. Socialization can be in a formal team meeting or in an informal chat during a coffee break. In the combination form, discrete pieces of explicit knowledge are combined to form fresh explicit knowledge. For instance, a company combines sales reports from all branches to produce a consolidated sales report. However, with socialization, the combination does not extend total company knowledge (Nonaka, 1991).

Externalization is the form that the sender's tacit knowledge is converted to be explicit and is articulated by the receiver. Some literature calls this 'Articulation'. For example, an expert can write a manual from his experience and insight. This document will then be further used by others. In this form, knowledge and know-how and, in some cases, know-why and care-why are articulated (Dalkir, 2005). The internalization, however, is the opposite of externalization. The receiver augments his tacit knowledge by learning from the explicit written document. (Nonaka, 1991)

Nonaka and Konno (1998) proposed the concept of 'ba' (which means 'place' in Japanese). 'Ba' is the place where the knowledge creation activity takes place. Participants in ba freely interact and share with each other their concepts to collectively create new knowledge. The boundaries of ba are not only limited to the company's physical organizational structure, but can also cover unofficial places, outside the working area or between different places via the telecommunication. Typically, ba can be one of four types: 1) originating ba, 2) interacting ba, 3) cyber ba, and 4) exercising ba.

Originating ba is the place where people share their feelings, emotions, experiences and mental models. People show empathy with others in this ba. Hence, subjective value can play the dominant role in the originating ba. Socialization is a related form to this ba. Interacting ba is the place where people convert their mental models and skill into common terms through conversation and dialogue. As it is the place where tacit knowledge is made explicit, it is suitable for the externalization form. The critical success factors of the knowledge creation process in this ba are the translation of messages from the tacit to the explicit and the willingness of people to make knowledge explicit (Nonaka and Konno, 1998).

The cyber ba can be thought as a world of virtual interaction. It is the place where explicit knowledge from many sources is collected to generate fresh explicit knowledge. The knowledge can be sent over via advanced communication technology such as email or groupware, and a computerized database system is designed to store the outcome. This ba is related to the combination form. The last ba, exercising, by definition means a place where participants can practice and understand new knowledge. An example of the type of activity in this ba is training with senior mentors. This ba is suitable for the internalization form. (Nonaka and Konno, 1998)

In our study, we have found that there are many challenges that can disturb or prohibit information flow in the teamwork discussion. As this information flow is considered to be new knowledge converted among the participants, we believe that the advantages of the SECI knowledge conversion model and the application of ba can be related to these challenges.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Focus Group (FG) is a formal and structured group that brings together individuals to discuss a specific topic in the defined time (Marczyk, DeMatteo, and Festinger, 2005). In FG, the participants

feel comfortable in sharing their experience, perceptions and ideas with the other participants (Blackburn and Stokes, 2000).

This study applied FG to gain knowledge of information flow between organization levels in a team discussion. Six mutually exclusive FGs were established to discuss factors affecting the organizational communication. The participants were randomly selected from postgraduate students who took the Knowledge Management in Organizations module between 2006 and 2008. The participants worked in a multitude of businesses at the time of participation in these FGs; including being self employed, family businesses, local firms and multinational organizations. There were nine participants in each of the FGs. One of the participants was assigned as the moderator and the other as the recorder. Therefore, only seven people really participated in the discussion. During the discussions, both audio and video recordings were made.

The discussion layout was the same for each of the groups. The meetings commenced with a pre-group briefing by the moderator in order that all participants could understand the objectives of the meeting. In turn, participants were asked to introduce themselves briefly in terms of their positions in their organizations and their work experience. Then, they were asked to share challenges, barriers, potential issues and support they had experienced in the flow of information in their organizations. In addition, the moderator also enquired as to how they had remedied the described threats. When the discussion was completed, the groups were asked to conclude their findings and their views on the FG questions in the group report.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

There were many challenges in the team discussions. These challenges can be classified as both objective and subjective. For example, the lack of meeting facilitators or a proper agenda are obviously objective issues. However, more critical issues relate to the subjectivity. One of the important tasks in FG is the extraction of subjective tacit substances such as individual attitudes, personality and the hidden power, synthesizing them and externalizing them as objective (Nonaka and Toyama, 2005).

The results from the FG discussions in this study also indicate both objective and subjective challenges. We can group them into four dimensions:

- The external environment which indirectly impacts on a teamwork discussion (Environment)
- The format of a teamwork discussion (Format)
- The teamwork discussion process (Process)
- The inherent characteristics of participants (People)

1.1   Environmental Dimension

Environmental Dimension consists of any surrounding factors that can either support or restrict the knowledge flow in the team discussion. Although some of the environmental factors are hidden, they can be reflected in other physical substance. For example, some corporations reflect their culture in terms of company facilities (Larson and Kleiner, 2004). This study encompasses business type, corporate and national cultures, adherent, and management characteristics in the environmental dimension. Each element is listed as follows:

1.1.1   *Business Type:* Type of a business such as family business, local or international can influence participants' thought of independency in knowledge sharing.

> *"The factor influencing knowledge flow is the atmosphere within the organization. The family business tends to have more people sharing ideas during the discussion. On the other hand, in a government organization, those in lower levels have less chance to air their views, and only listen to their bosses (Participant Group 04, No. 06)".*

1.1.2   *Culture:* A wide range of cultural factors such as ethnic, national and organizational factors can influence an individual's thought (Schein, 1992). Schein (1993) explained that the culture of a company is the core ability to manage, control and improve organizational behavior. It can be a central force in issue selection and the defining of actions for such issues (Howard-Grenville, 2007). Some participants in our FGs mentioned that their company cultures did not allow free speech and the sharing of their ideas. Furthermore, national culture is also another cultural factor that can drive a meeting. Thai culture, for example, influences its people to be collective.

> *"When we have different status levels in the same meeting, something that occurs in Thai culture, or in a Thai company, is that subordinates cannot object to, or disagree with their boss. Maybe they have different opinions or different answers but when the boss says yes I agree with it, everyone in the meeting room says they agree but in actual fact, they don't … (Participant Group 01, No. 06)".*

1.1.3   *Adherent:* The adherent can be considered as if the meeting is conducted within the same function or department or across the unit. Moreover, if the meeting venue is an internal or external is also a consideration. Our FGs result elucidated that people tend to be more relaxed when they have an internal meeting among colleagues from the same function, but more nervous if they need to meet with people from outside their organizations.

1.1.4   *Management characteristics*: Management characteristics can be thought of as the managers' attitude and personality, and their decision making style. The attitude is a component of their ability to support work accomplishment (Mumford and Gold, 2004). The FGs consented that a manager's attitude and personality can result in an individual's different perception and characteristics in the meeting. Decision making style can be centralized and decentralized.

1.2   Format Dimension

The second dimension, Format, consists of two factors: a discussion occasion and a discussion type.

1.2.1   *Discussion Occasion is* defined as the frequency at which the meeting is to be conducted, such as weekly or monthly; whereas, the discussion type determines the way in which the discussion can occur.

1.2.2   *Discussion Type:* The discussion type is varied. Rather than the ordinary meeting, the type can be a one-on-one discussion, or brainstorming among a number of people. The discussion type can be divided into team meetings or company meetings, formal or informal discussions, and same level or mixed level discussions.

"The group discussion is basically a group of people; it doesn't have to be formal. You know it can be informal, or formal for communication. You know, it could be talking in the cafeteria, in a group, or it could be a focus group, meeting in the meeting room (Participant Group 02, No. 03)".

1.3   Process Dimension

The third dimension, Process, contains the factors relating to the arrangement of a discussion process. Unproductive meetings with a poor plan and poor meeting run, waste time, and participants gain nothing from the meetings (Davis, 2001). In general, the purpose of meetings is to review and discuss past events, decide on future actions and agree among the participants on the course of action (Leigh, 2002).

1.3.1   *Meeting Structure:* The meeting structure involves discussions in three periods – before the discussion starts, during the discussion and after the discussion. Before the meeting, the agenda lists individual items that participants can follow and ensure that their aim to meet is achieved (Leigh, 2002). Our FGs argued that an unclear or sketchy agenda caused participants to misunderstand topics included in the meeting. Moreover, lack of a proper agenda made the meeting ineffective.

"My company just set up in the last year. The first meeting that was set up had no chairman, no agenda, nothing. At that time, we were all very confused. We drew no conclusions, we had no solutions. Everyone tried to speak out and offer only opinions. Next time, a few months later, we tried with an agenda, but we still thought that it was ineffective if one member in the meeting said less than others. We could not conclude in the correct and proper manner (Participant Group 05, No. 07)".

Ground rules are one of the factors required in a meeting. Ground rules have been proven successful in promoting supportive behavior (Mohammad, Ard, and Ton, 2007). Some FG participants pointed out that some meetings were conducted without ground rules being established. In addition, the number of participants is also a factor. The discussion group should have more than two participants, but should not be too large to control. The objective of meetings can vary. Examples of meeting objectives are sharing ideas and experience, searching for solutions to solve a problem, finding a consensus, gathering information and opinion, and updating project status. FGs mentioned that different objectives can cause an ineffective flow of information within an organization.

"Now, we have a group meeting every Monday, but the meeting is not really effective because we do not know how to set up the meeting objective, but everyone wants to speak or wants you to know about their issues and these issues are of individual interest, are not close to the group, so we have no cause to participate in discussion (Participant Group 02, No. 05)".

During a meeting, there are many factors which can contribute to the success of the discussion. The quality of the discussion leader and/or facilitator is one of the most important. Leigh (2002) mentioned the responsibilities of a good meeting Chairperson as ensuring that the meeting follows its purpose and agenda; the meeting time is well managed, constructive debate is encouraged, and being aware of the fact that that each participant's value should not be overlooked. Our FG participants experienced that these people could not always handle or control these situations.

"I have the issue that we had an agenda but did not have a leader to control the meeting. Then people try to speak out about everything that they would like to throw into the meeting. They come up with hundreds of problems, but no solutions. Nobody tried to summarize things, people got cut off, and there was no exchange of information, so the information did not flow (Participant Group 05, No. 03)".

Worse, some participants argued that these positions had not been defined in some discussions at all. Another issue related to meeting structure is the lack of authorized person who can make decisions on the topic of the meeting.

"In a really boring meeting, sometimes there is no one of authority to make decisions and everyone in the meeting just says what problems they had. There is no one to make a decision (Participant Group 02, No. 02)".

After the meeting, follow up actions are required. Often, there is no apparent change or improvement after the meeting. Worse still, the follow up on the progress of agreed actions had not been performed.

"When we face a problem we want people in the organization or in the team to discuss it and find a solution. Then, when we have found a solution, no action is taken after that or there is no support budget and then the result or the outcome is nothing. And then afterwards, we face the problem again and another meeting again and nothing again (Participant Group 01, No. 05)".

1.3.2   *Organizational level:* The FGs also stated many issues related to individuals' organizational positions, roles and status in the organization. Some participants attempted to propose or say whatever their bosses wanted to hear, or never objected to the boss' ideas.

"On the different level in the same meeting, people from the lower level don't give the boss the true picture of things. For example, a product that was market launched but failed. The customers and the staff knew the performance was very low, but when the boss asked them about the performance, they said it was doing well. They didn't tell the truth because they were afraid that the boss would blame them and say it was their performance that was bad. However if the product is bad and your performance is good it still will not save the bad product. The staff do not say the product was bad because they fear it's like they are measured by a KPI (Participant Group 01, No. 06)".

On the other hand, some supervisors play dominant roles in meetings by showing bias toward ideas raised by someone, or ignore involvement of lower level people during the meeting. Additionally, some people might be forced by their supervisors not to tell the truth in a meeting.

"He called the meeting and the meeting is more like he is telling everyone what he thinks and then me and the marketing manager tend to argue with him a lot. Ok, he thought he listened sometimes, but then in the end he changed everything and he said ok I listen and then you know I still want my way… That's the trouble between levels I guess to a certain degree. Yes, but there is more, I think it's that, you know, the boss just says that he's right, and they know more and have more experience (Participant Group 01, No. 04)".

1.3.3 *Group pressure and meeting atmosphere* are also critical factors for the success of a teamwork discussion. A common factor found in all discussions is stressed out participants. The stress can be caused by the topics for discussion or superior participants. Sometimes, topics are too difficult or the results are potentially enforced by senior participants or supervisors. The size of a meeting room can help in reducing stress. One of the FG participants recommended to conduct a likely stress- free meeting in a big room to psychologically reduce the individual pressure as people would feel like they had more space.

"I have little tips about the size of the room. In my company, if the topic is so stressful, we will have the meeting in the big meeting room. Everyone will feel free that they have more space. If the topic is broad, and everyone will have difficulty focusing on the topic, we will have the meeting in the small room to enable people to focus on the topic. It's psychology to create the best possible atmosphere (Participant Group 05, No. 09)".

1.3.4 *Time Management:* The other critical factor for the teamwork discussion is time management. The FG participants agreed that the meeting conducted at the wrong time could hardly harness the meeting topic efficiently.

"I found that if we set the meeting for 11 o'clock, the meeting was very effective. People tried to say things that very hit to the point because they wanted to have lunch. My boss tried again and set the meeting for 2 o'clock, and again it was very effective because if it had been later than 5 o'clock, they would have had to stay over time (Participant Group 05, No. 03)".

1.4 People Dimension

The people dimension consists of personal factors that influence or inhibit the effectiveness of the meeting. As people are different, they can adopt different communication styles in the meeting. There are four pairs of styles identified in communication: direct versus indirect, succinct versus elaborate, personal versus contextual, and instrumental versus affective (Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1988). The acting of these styles can be driven by factors in this dimension.

1.4.1   *Personality Type:* People driven factors are diverse. The first factor is their attitude and personality. The observed FG participants exemplified many of the personality barriers to the teamwork meeting such as scared to be viewed as stupid, confrontation avoidance, knowledge hoarding, lack of confidence, language barrier, etc. An extrovert tends to speak more in a team meeting compared to an introvert. It, as a result, turns into one of the challenges in encouraging the introvert to share his or her knowledge with the group.

"The personality of each person, like who I'm dealing with right now, is that they don't want to help others. They are just happy to do their own work. If there is somebody comes to them, they just reject him/her all ways (Participant Group 03, No. 01)".

1.4.2   *Experience/Background:* Obviously, the individual's experience, background and prior knowledge also impact on the success of the teamwork meeting.

"Educational background and knowledge can be a problem during the discussion since people with lower education and experienced have less chance to talk during the discussion, and it is not going to be a 2-way communication (Participant Group 04, No. 04)".

1.4.3   *Role & Responsibility:* Furthermore, some personal characteristics related to assigned positions in an organization such as job level, roles and responsibilities can also be the factors that drive the teamwork discussion. FG participants mentioned that job level is defined in terms of its level of equality amongst the participants.

1.4.4   *Stage of Emotion:* Other factors in this 'People' dimension are individual interests, readiness, satisfaction, stages of emotion, mindset, communication skills, etc. Some seemingly immaterial matters such as a good sleeping pattern or drinking too much coffee can also affect the teamwork discussion.

"I think it is a lot to do with the people, who are in the room and there are states of emotion and stressfulness, and so on. If they are relaxed and in a good mood then the meeting can be of help to the others. What do you do with emotion and a state of energy when you are awake? You just have a coffee and a good night's sleep, or you work the whole night, and then you come to the meeting (Participant Group 01, No. 02)".

KNOWLEDGE FLOW IN TEAMWORK AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION

The Japanese ba supports the synthesizing of subjectivity. To gain the advantage of knowledge creation, participants are allowed to talk freely, understand the subjective concerns of others via their shared values, and show rapport with each other (Nonaka and Toyama, 2005). Information flow can be the subset of knowledge creation and shared activities. Hence, we can conclude that we can gain the advantages of ba to enhance our process of information flow within an organization. Typically, ba is not just limited to the physical space, but it can also be utilized in virtual or mental space. To establish the appropriate ba, we have to consider a relevant knowledge conversion form (Nonaka and Konno, 1998). This consideration can help in defining a suitable discussion type and the objective of said discussion. The result from the focus group can be described in the diagram as follow:
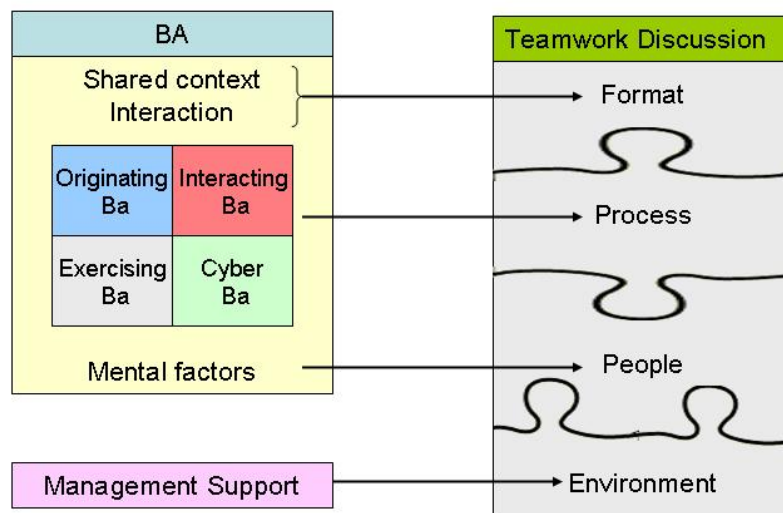
Figure 1: BA and Teamwork Discussion Diagram

In ba, participants concentrate on the organizational knowledge assets and the process to apply, create and integrate that knowledge. Therefore, we can say that knowledge is the baseline for ba creation and the outcome to be sought from ba (Nonaka and Konno, 1998). Comparing with our four-dimension model, knowledge can embed in any of the dimensions, but the majority is in the people dimension. Such factors as experience/background, interests, prior knowledge and satisfaction are obviously declared as the tacit knowledge that participants can share in a meeting. However, a threat from certain undefined factors dissuades them from doing so. First, is participants' attitude, personality and mindset. In spite of knowing the topic well, a person will be scared to appear stupid, and instead makes the choice to sit quietly in the meeting.

Second, a person with a lower job level than other participants may be disregarded in the meeting. Consequently, his/her ideas and knowledge may not be taken into account. Prior discussion activity is the third threat to knowledge creation and sharing in the meeting. For instance, inadequate sleep before the meeting may cause a person to be distracted from the topic and therefore be unable to share his/her ideas. The state of emotion, especially a negative mood, can obstruct the knowledge creation and sharing in a meeting. A problem with communication skills can also cause failure in knowledge sharing. The last threat identified in the people dimension is the state of energy. When people have no power and enthusiasm; such as not joining a meeting near to lunch time or in the evening, their concentration on the topic drops off.

Concerning the concept of ba, many issues in the process dimension can be remedied (Nonaka and Konno, 1998).

- Ba allows participants to share both objective and subjective views. This context can be defined in the ground rules and emphasized by the facilitator.

- Participants have the independence to share their knowledge in ba. When people participate in ba, their organizational roles have to be relieved. Therefore, the organizational level concern ought to be minimized.

- The place for ba is not necessary the official meeting room. It can be a coffee corner or virtual space.

- Ba can be sectioned into layers and combined to be a bigger ba. This context brings us to the idea of appropriate meeting size with the right participants. Instead of involving too many people, the meeting can be divided into smaller ones; each of which can have only the relevant people for the topics to be discussed. Once each meeting has produced a result, each result can

be merged to achieve the desired goal. Another benefit of this splitting is the avoidance of confrontation between rivals.

In conclusion, we can classify the information flow issues acquired from our FG discussion into four relevant dimensions. We reveal that the concept of ba and knowledge creation form have some similarities to elements in these dimensions. With the mapping them to elements in the four dimensions, we anticipate that they can enhance the capability for information flow in an organization.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

In the four-dimension model, problems in organizational teamwork discussion can be classified into the appropriate dimension(s). Through these dimensions, Ba concept is easily adopted to remedy the severity of the problem. If the problem deals with the limitation in team meeting process such as group pressure or inappropriate meeting structure, the changing in type of ba from originating ba to interacting or cyber ba may be considered. If the problem falls under the people dimension, the fostering of mental factors e.g. trust and care needs to be considered so that the participants in the team discussion can feel comfortable enough to share their tacit knowledge in the discussion.

Moreover, the individuals' shared context and interaction are also the main characteristics of ba. Via the defining of components in a format dimension, a team can determine if the meeting agenda and format serve these ba characteristics.

The various sort of leadership with different roles and responsibilities is the mandatory factor for the success of ba implementation (Nonaka and Konno, 1998). Likewise to the teamwork discussion, the environment dimension can reflect the degree of management caring in achievement of the discussion. If many serious problems are revealed in this dimension, the solution can be beyond the hand of business unit's team. Thus, the involvement of upper managerial layers to redefine business strategy and policy may be required.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the factors that influence the information flow in an organizational communication system. These factors are laid down in the four-dimension model consisting of Environment, Format, Process and People. Moreover, we have analyzed these dimensions and revealed that they could be mapped to the classic SECI model of knowledge creation. Typically, many characteristics of ba can be paired to elements in the Process dimension. For instance, if the topic of the meeting is to brainstorm, in which an interaction among the people is required, the Socialization form should be the appropriate knowledge conversion form and an originating ba should be established for this purpose. In addition, we revealed that the knowledge as an asset is buried in many elements of the People dimension such as experience, background, and prior knowledge. However, we could also identify many knowledge inhibitors in this dimension. The examples of these inhibitors are attitude, mindset, prior discussion activity and job level. With the right ba established, its advantages can be exploited to reduce the impact of the inhibitors and bring about more effective communication.

Although focus group (FG) is useful in data collecting, an individual's opinions can be influenced by dominant participants or majority of the group (Marczyk et al., 2005). We observed that some of the participants in our FGs had seldom shared their ideas, and always consented with groups' solutions. The possible causes can be from their own personalities to avoid the confrontation with others. Since the FG discussions were video recorded, some of them might not want others to realize that some major issues belong to them. Consequently, this study may be absented the sharing of some factors. The other types of data gathering may be considered to dispose or minimize FG drawbacks.

Moreover, the data from this study was collected from various businesses ranging from small family business to international business. Due to the deviation is much wide, some specific problems may be

overlooked or generalized. The further study may concentrate on a particular type of business to identify this sort of problems.

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