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Knowledge transfer in interim management projects

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to define the role of knowledge in a triad of factors determining effectiveness in Interim Management (IM) projects. The discussion is based on the authors' research concept, which, in addition to knowledge, also explores the categories of trust and power. A longitudinal study using the empirical-inductive approach was conducted in Poland between 2019 and 2021. It included ten enterprises that implemented IM projects in the studied period. The results presented in this article confirm the importance of the empirically adopted study factors, including the transfer of knowledge between the Interim Manager and the client's (organisation's) project team. A significant relationship between the level of knowledge and the levels of trust and power emerges as particularly evident. Research can be continued to verify the authors' initial findings and include the proposed research tools and entities representing different sectors, management cultures and geographical regions in search of additional variables and their correlations with trust, power and knowledge. The research conclusions may prove applicable to both Interim Managers (IMs) and their clients (organisations). They can be used not only for pre-project planning but also during the IM projects.

KEY WORDS

knowledge transfer, interim management, power, trust

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Introduction

Interim Management (IM) can be defined as a temporary provision of management resources and skills, whereby a verified executive manager is assigned to short-term manage a transition, a crisis or a change in the organisation. IM aims to ensure external managerial staff who is responsible for the IM project — a temporary internal activity with a predefined purpose and scope aimed at achieving specific and sustainable business results (Faber & Till, 2015, pp. 3–9; Metodyka..., 2014, p. 1; Şenturan,

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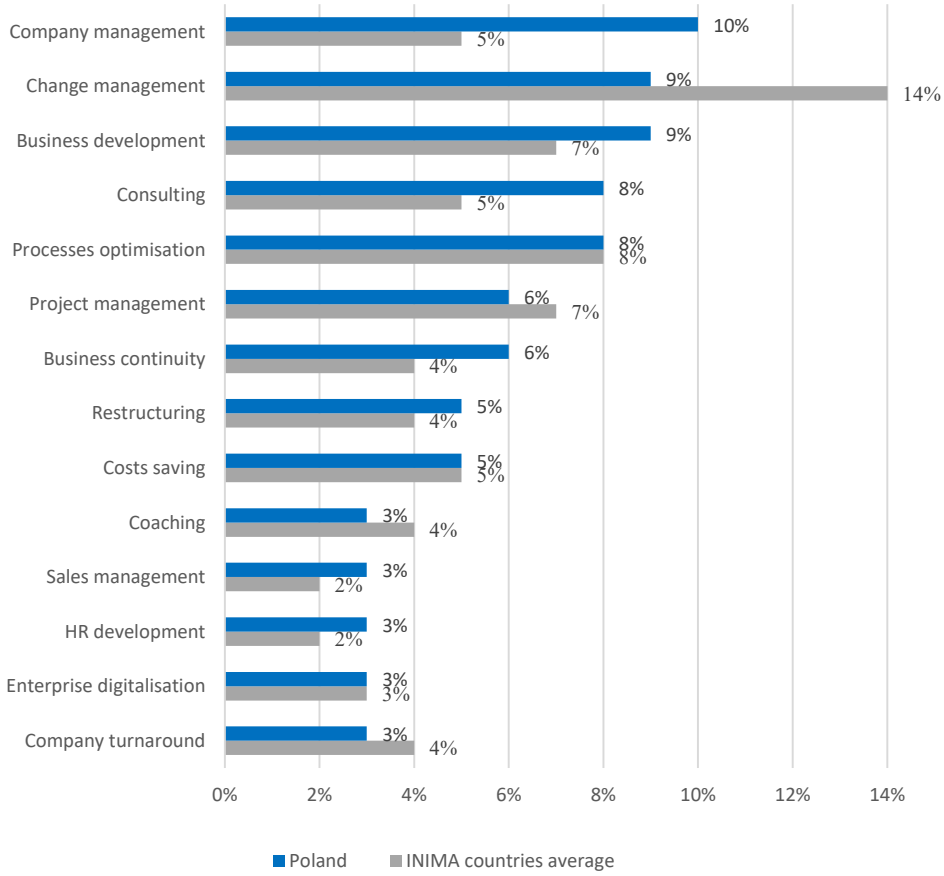

Fig. 1. Business issues managed by Interim Managers in their last project

Source: INIMA (2021).

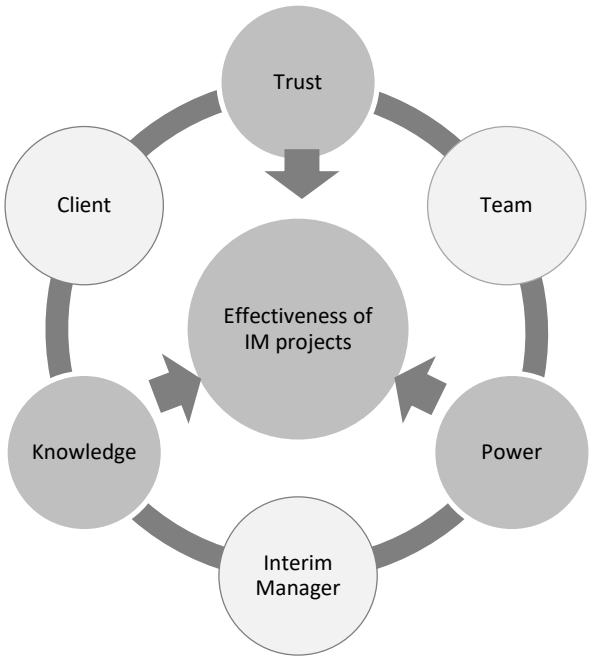

Fig. 2. Research model: three categories of factors and three stakeholders

Source: (Skowron-Mielnik & Sobiecki, 2020).

2018). Interim Management typically relies on flexible working models. Interim Managers (IMs) are highly specialised management experts employed for a specific purpose and a limited period, using various forms of employment from fixed-term work arrangements to self-employment (Eurofound, 2020, pp. 51–52; Inkson & Heising, 2001, pp. 259–284; Isidor et al., 2014; Maritsa, 2021). Employers use IMs to solve short-term problems without the need to take on a long-term employment commitment (Bach, 2015). Interim Managers are predominantly people who opt for this career path, having gained experience in top management positions, i.e., management or supervisory boards. It is a formula that guarantees more flexibility for both parties: IMs can build their professional careers while organisations can work out human resources (HR) strategies that are effective for them (Russam, 2005; Urbaniec, 2022).

Among the reasons why organisations turn to IMs for support are the transformation of the operational model, company growth and, principally, change management, which indicates what types of competencies are missing, both in business and in non-profit organisations using the IM services (Buchenau, 2019; Lang, 2020; Van Hout et al., 2020). They were identified based on research conducted in nine European countries (Fig. 1): Poland, France, the United Kingdom (UK), Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Italy and Spain.

The significance of IM projects for the organisation, the positions IMs originate from, and the prospect of a relatively short time they have at their disposal (the average duration of an IM project is 11 months; International Network of Interim Management Associations, INIMA, 2021), make it necessary to look into factors determining the effectiveness in IM projects. It is an important issue for clients who want to achieve organisational goals and IMs for whom success implies good references and potential future projects with the next clients. Woods et al. (2020) reviewed individual characteristics conducive to the effective preparation for and commencement of IM-related assignments, activities and outcomes during and upon leaving the project (2020). This article proposes a more holistic approach based on a research programme that combines three categories of factors determining the effectiveness of IM projects (Fig. 2): Trust, Power and Knowledge while highlighting three perspectives of analysis: (1) the perspective of the client that employs the Interim Manager; (2) the perspective of the client's team with whom the Interim Manager cooperates; and (3) the perspective of the Interim Manager.

This article focuses on the scope and methods of using Knowledge in implementing IM projects[1]. To this end, the following research questions are asked: (1) Is Knowledge a factor that can largely determine the effectiveness of IM projects? (2) How does Knowledge relate to the other two categories of factors: Trust and Power? (3) What is the impact of Knowledge from the perspective of the client, the team and the Interim Manager?

Research questions were addressed in consecutive chapters. Literature review indicates that Knowledge is indeed a subject of interest among researchers and is considered a factor in the efficiency of achieving managerial outcomes. Drawing upon the publications, the authors present a proposed knowledge transfer process. The research methodology outlines how the authors explored the suggested process from a statistical perspective, including the proposal of a research questionnaire (see Appendix). Moving on to the chapter Research results, the authors demonstrate the consistency of their study's observations with the literature and suggest the practical applicability in planning and implementing Interim Management projects. They also illustrate the relationships between Knowledge, Trust, and Authority. Discussion of the results concludes the article, indicating theoretical implications and the potential application of the research findings in the everyday practice of Interim Management for various stakeholders.

1. Literature review

Literature offers no uniform definition of knowledge as a field — perhaps because, as Hunt (2003, p.100) said, "Knowledge is a concept — like gravity. You cannot see it, but can only observe its effects".

The same author also argued, "Since knowledge, itself, cannot be directly observed, it must be inferred from observing performance on a test" (Hunt, 2003, p. 102).

[1] The remaining categories of factors and the general concept of the study are discussed in other articles by the same authors. Data can be made available on request. The authors would like to thank the CEOs of the companies that participated in the surveys, the teams implementing interim projects in these organisations, and the Interim Managers for their valuable input and time invested in this project. The authors declare no conflict of interest. Both authors contributed equally to the development and writing of this article. This research received no specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

The authors' literature query for a research tool applicable to this study was based on three postulates. First, given that the study sought to establish the relationship between the categories of Trust, Power and Knowledge, as reflected in the architecture of the research model (Fig. 2), the instrument itself was expected to be related as closely as possible, to the other two elements, i.e., Power and Trust, or at least to one of them if no literature sources could be found that would cover both elements simultaneously. Second, the tool had to enable the measurement of knowledge transfer as an effect rather than a theoretical abstract. Third, the choice of the tool was motivated by its concurrence with the Interim Manager's actions.

Regarding the first postulate of the research model architecture (Fig. 2), i.e., the extent to which the elements of Trust, Power and Knowledge, or Knowledge and Trust, or Knowledge and Power were covered as a single research construct in the literature, Trust was found to be combined into one with Knowledge in a study by Hill and Lineback (2012, p. 1). These authors highlight the key role of competence in building trust already in the title of their work. They argued that "you need to know not just what to do and how to do it, but also how to get it done in the organisation and the world where you work" (Hill & Lineback, 2012, p. 1). The article identifies three elements of competence:

- Technical knowledge;
- Operational knowledge;
- Political knowledge.

Examples of situations related to using the respective elements are listed in columns A and B in Table 1. It is characteristic that the authors discuss the contextual use of these three types of knowledge. Given that the context for IMs changes intrinsically from project to project, Hill and Lineback's approach emerges as particularly interesting for developing the knowledge-oriented research tool and research questions to be covered.

Columns C and D in Table 1 propose to holistically assign the three types of knowledge labelled by Hill and Lineback to two types of trust defined by McAllister (1995), i.e., affective trust and cognitive trust (discussed in our previous publication). In the context of this study, no literary source was found where the category of Knowledge would be simultaneously related not to one but two other categories (Power and Trust).

In compliance with the second postulate regarding the research tool development, the literature query also focused on measuring knowledge transfer. The latter has gained wide coverage in recent years,

Tab. 1. Technical, operational and political knowledge and its relationships with trust

Technical, operational and political knowledge (Hill & Lineback, 2012)			Trust McAllister (1995)	
Types of knowledge	A. Assignment basics	B. Management basics	C. Affective	D. Cognitive
Technical knowledge WHAT to do?	The manager does not need to be an expert; needs to know enough to: - make decisions, - set priorities, - plan assignments	The manager needs to know enough in terms of: - planning skills, - employee performance appraisal, - delegating	_	X
Operational knowledge HOW to do it?	An example from the article: The manager may be familiar with the concept of capital budgeting but must also know how it is organised in the company: the management stages involved, who approves what, and indicators to be achieved	Technical knowledge is necessary, e.g., to pass an exam; however, even if the work is delegated to other people, the manager will need the operational knowledge to manage them effectively	X	X
Political knowledge HOW TO GET IT DONE in the organisation?	Preparation of strategic proposals Political knowledge is essential to exercising influence effectively in the specific political environment of the organisation	How to ensure approval? To obtain approval, the manager must: - Be able to justify a given strategy; - Know the decision-makers; - Include the project in a larger strategy	X	–

Source: elaborated by the author based on (Hill & Lineback, 2012; McAllister, 1995).

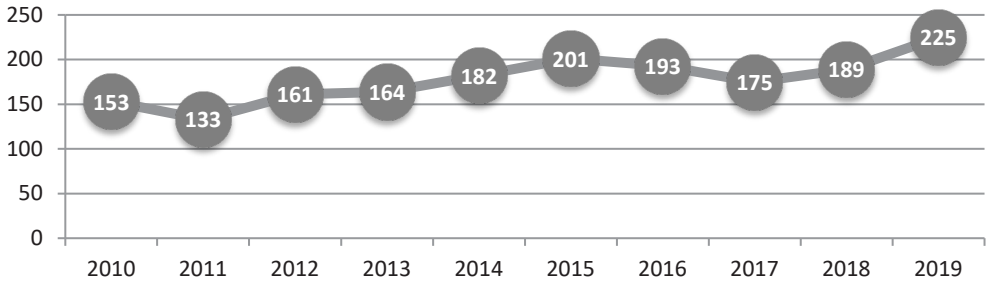

Fig. 3. Number of publications on knowledge transfer over time

Source: (Gu, Meng, & Farrukh, 2021).

which indicates the growing importance of the concept (Fig. 3). The bibliometric study by Gu et al. (2021) highlighted the evident increase in the number of publications on knowledge transfer released between 2010 and 2019, adding credence to this discussion.

This increase can be associated with a greater demand for knowledge in the daily operations of enterprises driven by new technologies and business trends. The four interpenetrating waves of technological progress coincided with the discoveries in the field of microprocessors and their progressive miniaturisation (Sobiecki, 2020), enabling the widespread use of cutting-edge solutions. The first wave, conventionally dated between 1990 and 2000, brought the emergence and then the commercial growth of the Internet. With the second wave, in early 2010, came cloud computing, and the omnipresent collection of data turned into information turned into facts for the first time connected outside the human brain (e.g., object, face, and voice recognition technology). Since then, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been growing for commercial purposes. All these changes coincide with an increasing number of publications on knowledge transfer since 2010.

Knowledge transfer is frequently discussed as part of a broader construct — knowledge management. Because of this and based on the literature review, it was proposed that the study described in this article should focus on the final phase of knowledge management, i.e., knowledge transfer, and address the entire knowledge management process. Goldoni and Oliveira (2006, p. 3) divided knowledge management processes into five stages:

- Creation — the existing knowledge is organised, and new knowledge is produced;
- Storage — knowledge is codified and then submitted to databases;
- Dissemination — knowledge is communicated or distributed within the organisation;
- Utilisation — knowledge is used;
- Measurement (results) — the effectiveness and the results of the respective knowledge management stages are evaluated.

Goldoni and Oliveira (2006, p. 3) listed sources whose description of knowledge management processes corresponds, to varying degrees, to these stages. The processes of knowledge management are presented in Table 2. Hunt (2003) argued that various authors proposed several models presenting knowledge as a non-one-dimensional construct. Table 2 appears to confirm this observation.

According to Thomas and Pretat (2009, p. 9), "a common definition [of knowledge] does not exist". Instead, they discussed it by associating such elements as data, information and knowledge. Based on this logic of the data-information-knowledge process (row 10 in Table 2), a synthesis of proposals from various authors regarding knowledge management is presented in row 11 of Table 2. Considering the third postulate for the concurrence of the research instrument with the Interim Manager's actions, the process shown in row 11 of Table 2 has been supplemented with an additional item — Teaching Adults (step F in Table 2).

The process of teaching adults is represented in the literature, e.g., by Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (ELM) and the G.I.I.A. — a four-stage model of the organisational learning cycle and experiential learning cycle for adults (Dixon, 1999, p. 65), where G.I.I.A. stands for:

- G — Generate experience: create situations at work to learn through experience and make time for it;
- I — Integrate: ensure time for the incorporation of the new experience into the old ways of working;
- I — Interpret: create opportunities/time to translate the "Integrate" stage into new working methods;

Tab. 2. Knowledge management — process stages

1. Demarest, 1997	Construction		Embodiment		Dissemination	Use			
	Management and Measurement								
2. Burk, 1999	Creation		Organisation		Sharing	Utilisation and Reutilisation			
3. Armstead, 1999	Creation				Transfer	Embedding			
	Measures								
4. Lee, Lee & Kang, 1999	Creation		Accumulation		Sharing	Utilisation	Internationalisation		
5. Ahmed, Lim & Zain, 1999	Creating				Sharing	Measuring	Learning and Improving		
6. Tiwana, 2002	Acquisition				Dissemination	Utilisation			
7. Darroch, 2003	Acquisition				Dissemination	Utilisation			
8. Bose, 2004	Create	Capture	Refine	Store	Disseminate				
9. Chen & Chen, 2005	Creation	Conversion			Circulation	Completion			
10. Thomas & Pretat (2009)	Data								
			Information						
					Knowledge				
11. Proposed process	A. Creation		B. Storage		C. Dissemination	D. Utilisation		E. Results	F. Teaching Adults
	Measurement								

Source: elaborated by the author based on (Goldoni & Oliveira, 2006, p. 3; Thomas & Pretat, 2009, p. 9; Dixon, 1999, p. 65).

Tab. 3. Comparison of the literature review and the authors' research concept

Srisuksa, Wiriyapinit & Bhattarakosol		Skowron-Mielnik & Sobiecki			Srisuksa, Wiriyapinit & Bhattarakosol	Skowron-Mielnik & Sobiecki			1998	1998	2000	2000	2003	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2008	2009	2009	2011	2011	2015	2015	2016	2020	2020	2021	Number of publications per single factor	Percentage of all 25 publications
Factors affecting only knowledge transfer (nine components)		Factors of effectiveness of interim project			Knowledge transfer stakeholders	Interim project stakeholders			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
		Knowledge	Power	Trust		Interim manager	Client	Team	Davenport & Prusak, 1998	Quinn et al., 1998	Argote & Ingram, 2000	Osterloh & Frey, 2000	Sarker et al., 2003	Reagans & McEvily, 2003	Simonin, 2004	Zampouski & Griffis Conn, 2006	Eskerod & Skriver, 2007	Lockett et al., 2008	Ajmal & Koskinen, 2008	Liyanage et al., 2009	Porrawatpreyakorn et al., 2009	Ali et al., 2011	Al-Ghanbsh, 2011	Karlsen & Gottschalk, 2015	Zhao et al., 2015	Hallini et al., 2016	Ibrahimi et al., 2020	Bacon et al., 2020	Glaser et al., 2021		
1	Competency and knowledge transfer level	Teaching adults	–	–	Messenger	Interim manager	–	–	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	10	48%
2	Motivation and intention to transfer knowledge	Dissemi-nation	Power	Trust					0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	29%
3	Clear knowledge detail, clustering, and context	Storage	–	–					0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	7	33%
4	Absorptive capacity level	Teaching adults	–	–	Recipient	–	Client	Team	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	8	38%
5	Motivation and intention to receive knowledge	–	Power	Trust					0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	29%
6	Trust in messenger	–	–	Trust					0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	10	48%
7	Similarities of messenger's and recipient's culture	–	–	Trust	Environment	–	Client	Team	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	8	38%
8	Knowledge transfer technology level	Teaching adults	–	–					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	19%
9	Open communication level	Dissemi-nation	–	–					0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	19%
Number of factors (1–9) per publication									2	1	2	2	4	1	3	5	1	5	1	6	6	4	3	2	4	2	2	3	4	–	
Percentage of all nine factors affecting only knowledge (transfer as discovered by Srisuksa, Wiriyapinit & Bhattarakosol)									22%	11%	22%	22%	44%	11%	33%	56%	11%	56%	11%	67%	67%	44%	33%	22%	44%	22%	22%	33%	44%		

Source: elaborated by the author based on (Srisuksa et al., 2021; Skowron-Mielnik & Sobiecki, 2020).

- A — Act: apply new knowledge in practice and return to the first stage.

This concept was confirmed in a study by Srisuksa et al. (2021), who reviewed worldwide publications and included 63 of them in the analysis intended to "identify factors from the literature that influence knowledge transfer among (interim) projects at all levels" (Srisuksa et al., 2021, p. 211). In Table 3, the model resulting from this review is juxtaposed with the factors of effectiveness (Trust, Power and Knowledge) and project stakeholders (clients, teams, IMs) based on this research concept (Skowron-Mielnik & Sobiecki, 2020). It leads to the following findings. While the research constructs, as well as the factors and stakeholders, appear to be largely consistent for both models, comparing their distribution across the principal 25 publications and the nine factors affecting knowledge transfer requires further analysis. This finding becomes evident when Table 3 is read like a map of scattered research projects. The bottom row of Table 3 indicates that none of the 25 publications (listed in the top row covers all nine factors influencing knowledge transfer, with a coverage ratio of 67 % found only in two cases. The last column specifies the percentage of publications that refer to the nine factors. It never exceeds 50 %, and in most cases it is lower than 30 %. Considering the chronology of the analysed sources, since 2009, a growing increase can be observed in the number of publications recognising the nine components of knowledge transfer (the bottom row in Table 3).

As a result, it was established that the research tool for the study of Knowledge should have the following characteristics:

- It should focus on effect measurement rather than theory.
- The effect to be measured should be knowledge transfer through Kolb's learning cycle and the G.I.I.A. cycle, and more broadly, through process.

The tool should be based on the Likert scale questionnaire results with questions intended to reveal the use of both learning cycles in the client's organisation — learning and the incorporation of new work methods (effect).

2. Research methodology

The empirical part of this study originated from grounded theory, where hypotheses are based on the analysis of empirical data, with the theory emerging from systematically conducted field research (Oktay,

Tab. 4. Description of IM projects included in the study

Project	Functional area	Duration	Result – type	Result vs. objective	Respondents (IM – Interim Manager)	Research tool	
#1	IT / IT	6 months	Implementation of the IT system	Achieved 100 %	Client	Questionnaire	Interview
					IM	–	Interview
					Team	Questionnaire	–
#2	Logistics / Rail vehicle repairs	12 months	Implementation of a logistics management system	Achieved 100 %	Client	Questionnaire	Interview
					IM	–	Interview
					Team	–	–
#3	Production / Mobile device repairs	5 months	Technology transfer	Achieved 100 %	Client	Questionnaire	Interview
					IM	–	Interview
					Team	Questionnaire	–
#4	Finance / Consulting	6 months	Implementation of a financial reporting system	Achieved 100 %	Client	Questionnaire	Interview
					IM	–	Interview
					Team	Questionnaire	–
#5	Operational / Construction	8 months	Improved ability and effectiveness of contract performance	Achieved 100 %	Client	Questionnaire	Interview
					IM	–	Interview
					Team	Questionnaire	–
#6	Operational / Sales in retail stores	6 months	Process improvement	Achieved 100 %	Client	Questionnaire	Interview
					IM	–	Interview
					Team	Questionnaire	–

#7	HR / Surface treatment and anti-corrosion coating	12 months	Replacement for the duration of the planned leave	N/A	Client	Questionnaire	Interview
					IM	–	Interview
					Team	Questionnaire	–
#8	Finance / Surface treatment and anti-corrosion coating	6 months	Covering the vacancy until a full-time employee could be hired permanently	N/A	Client	Questionnaire	Interview
					IM	–	Interview
					Team	Questionnaire	–
#9	Operational, furniture industry	6 months	Improved effectiveness of managers' work	Achieved 100 %	Client	Questionnaire	Interview
					IM	–	Interview
					Team	Questionnaire	–
#10	Purchasing, construction industry	8 months	Improved effectiveness of the purchasing processes	Achieved 100 %	Client	Questionnaire	Interview
					IM	–	Interview
					Team	Questionnaire	–

2012). This research programme required repeated surveys of interim projects implemented in actual business organisations to determine to what extent the use of IM solutions influenced project effectiveness, defined as meeting the organisation's needs. The study included 10 IM projects (Table 4). An important condition that affected the study implementation time was that all enrolled projects had to be completed (finished at the final stage of our research at the latest), which was expected to guarantee a relative objectiveness of all respondents (clients, IMs and teams) when assessing the projects. All surveys were conducted in the period between 2019 and 2021.

The study was carried out in two stages. First, surveys were conducted among IMs, their clients and the teams managed by IMs. To this end, a specially designed questionnaire was used with 30 questions divided into six groups of five questions each. The groups corresponded to the six stages of the knowledge management process. Appendix 1 presents the coded questionnaire (the key to the questionnaire can be obtained at the written request of the interested parties).

Second, after collecting and analysing the questionnaires from the clients and teams in all companies listed in Table 4, interviews were conducted with the clients and IMs in the respective companies to portray a more complete picture of knowledge and its importance in implementing IM projects. The anonymity principle was applied to all organisations and respondents to avoid response bias.

3. Research results

The survey obtained high scores for all three categories of factors (Trust, Power and Knowledge). Based on descriptive statistics, the category of Trust was found to have the highest score, corresponding to the median value for the "Strongly agree" responses, and was followed by Power and Knowledge, for which the score was the lowest (Fig. 4). The high scores confirm the correct selection of the categories of factors determining effectiveness in IM projects adopted in this research. At the same time, it allows for the conclusion that very high levels of Trust are essential to obtain a relatively high level of Knowledge (and thus ensure the effect and the project's sustainability).

Two of the six elements analysed in the category of Knowledge proved to be of the greatest importance for project effectiveness: (Knowledge) Dissemination and Teaching Adults (Fig. 5). The scores for both were equivalent to the "Agree" responses, indicating that the sharing of knowledge by the Interim Manager plays a fundamental role. These elements were then followed by (Knowledge) Storage and Results (of Knowledge Use), both of which were evaluated at the level equivalent to the "Rather agree" responses.

A comparison of the scores for two categories of entities — clients and teams — reveals differences in the perception of the Interim Manager's knowledge and its importance for the effectiveness of IM projects (Figs. 6 and 7).

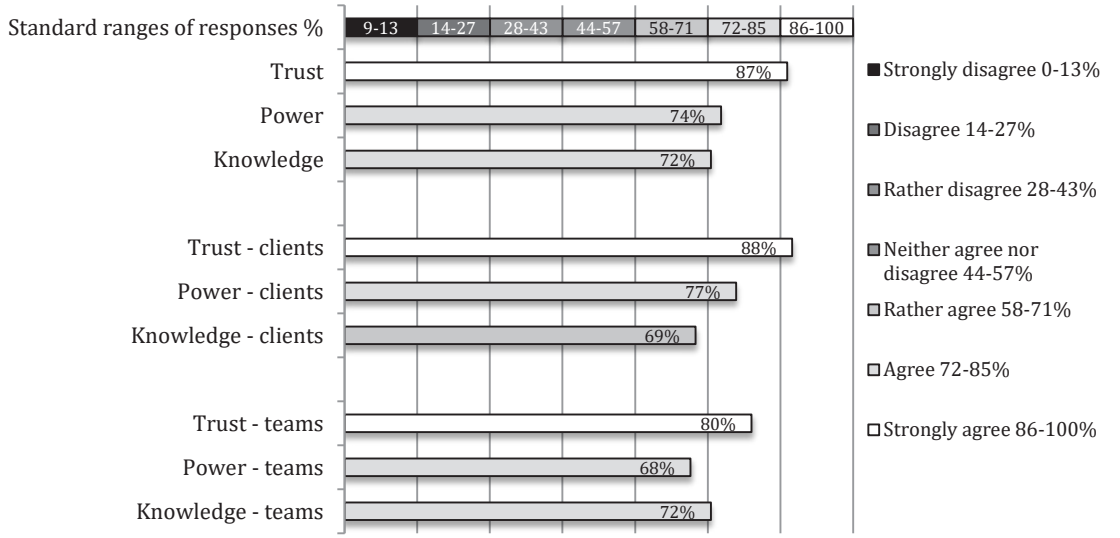

Fig. 4. Importance of effectiveness factors (median values — clients and teams altogether)

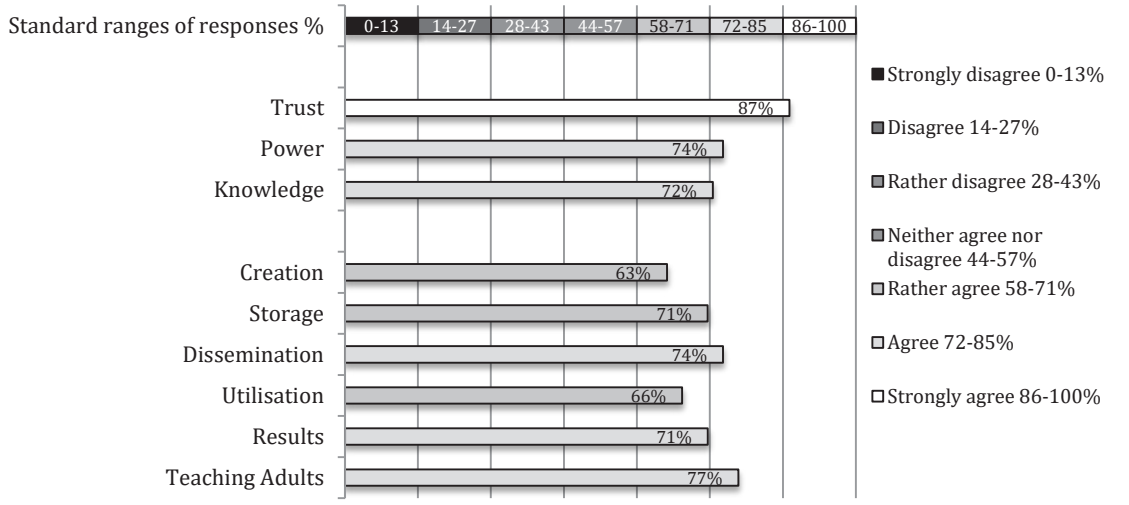

Fig. 5. Importance of Knowledge components (median values — clients and teams)

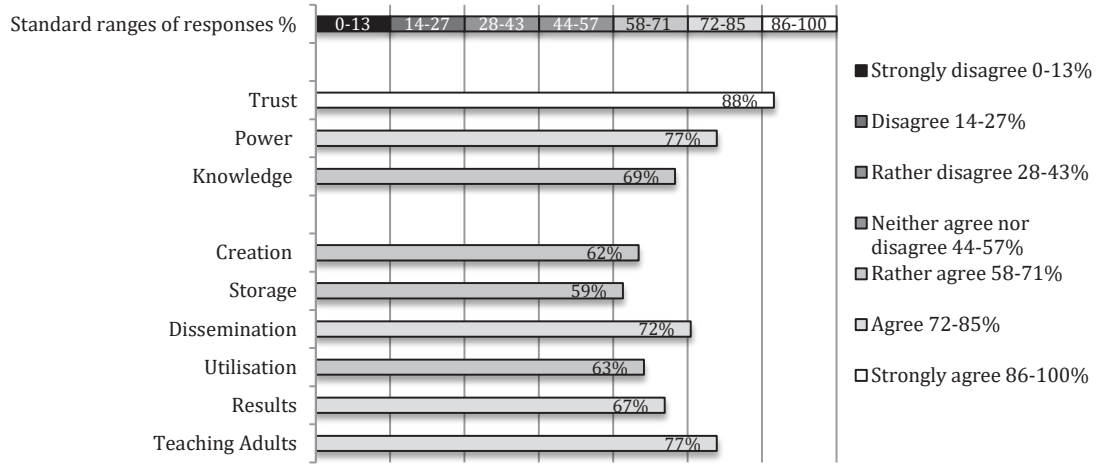

Fig. 6. Importance of Knowledge components (clients)

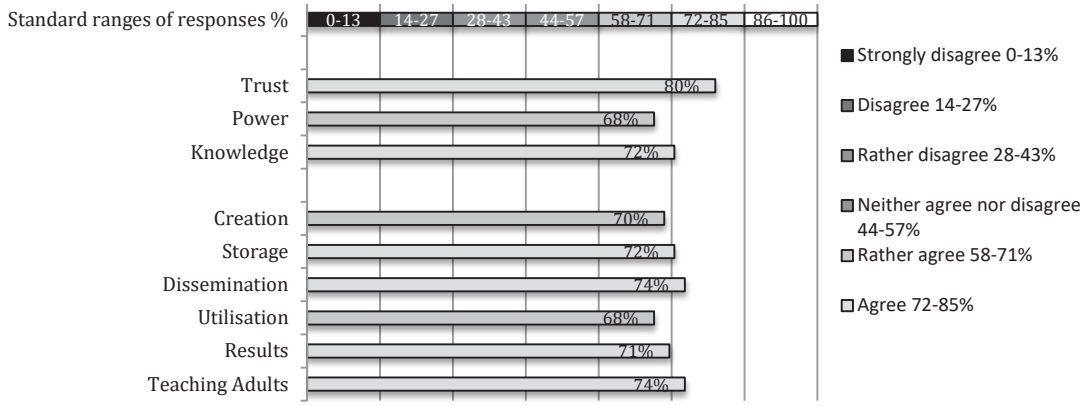

Fig. 7. Importance of Knowledge components (teams)

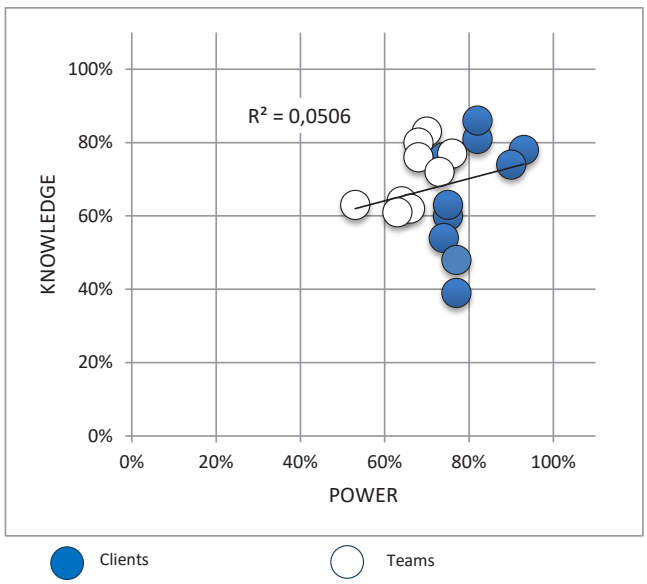

Fig. 8. Relationship between the levels of Knowledge and Power (clients and teams)

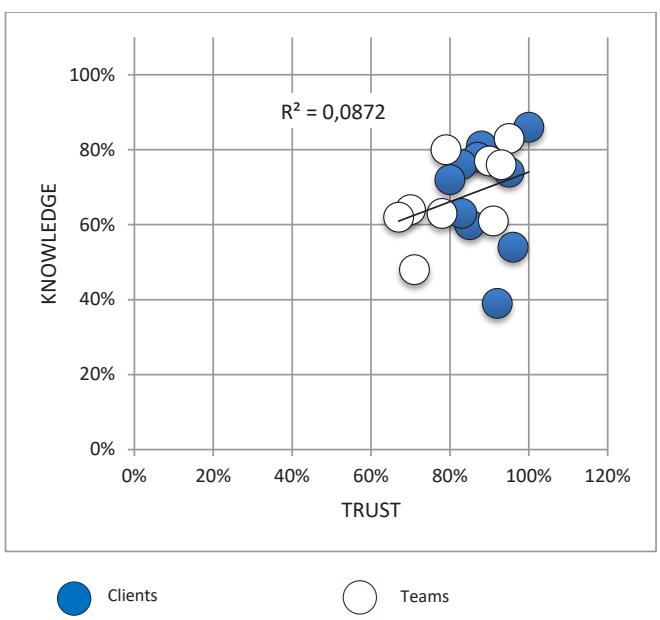

Fig. 9. Relationship between the levels of Trust and Knowledge (clients and teams)

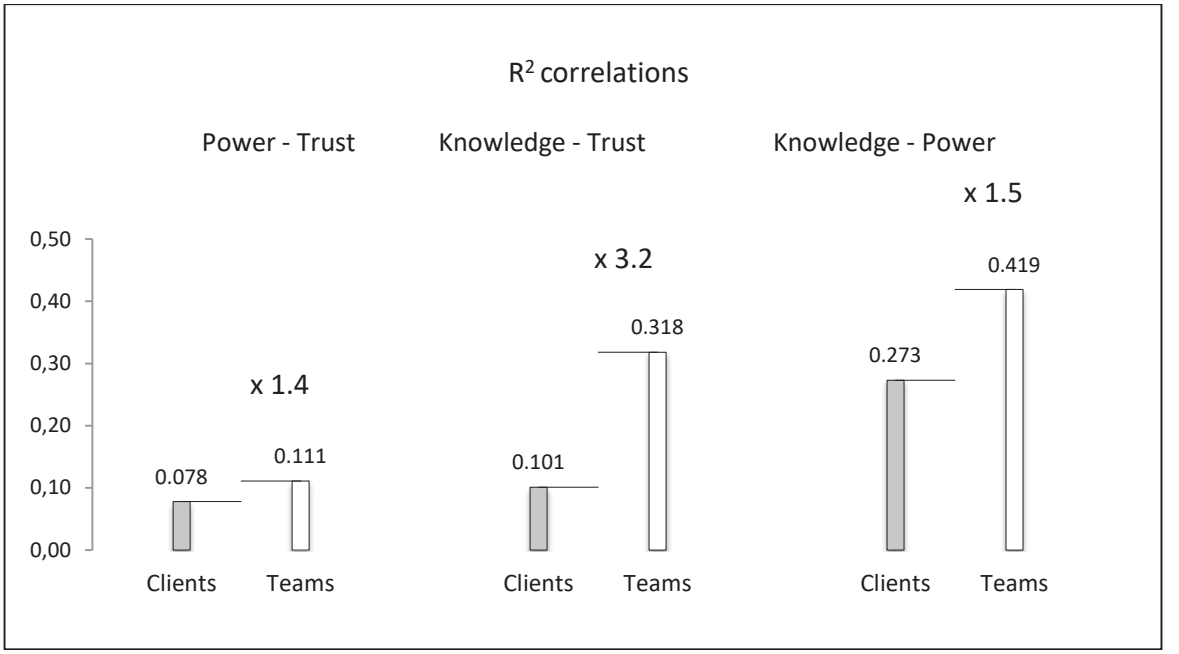

Fig. 10. Correlations between the categories of factors

The score for Knowledge among clients was equivalent to the median values for the "Rather agree" responses, with two factors emerging as the most important for effectiveness, i.e., Adult Teaching and (Knowledge) Dissemination, both assessed at the level equivalent to the "Agree" responses. In contrast, the score for (Knowledge) Storage proved to be the lowest, ranking within the lower range of the "Rather agree" responses or slightly higher but still within the same range as (Knowledge) Creation, Utilisation and Results. The low score for Creation and Utilisation among clients could imply a lesser focus on the "operational" elements of knowledge transfer in favour of performance monitoring. This would indicate their lower awareness of the Interim Manager's contribution to (Knowledge) Creation and Utilisation.

Regarding the scores for Knowledge among teams, descriptive statistics revealed a disturbance in the pattern observed among clients. While Trust also emerged as the highest-ranking category among teams, it was followed by Knowledge and then by Power. The score for the latter (Power) proved to be equivalent to the median values for the "Rather agree" responses, while that for Knowledge corresponded to the median values for the "Agree" responses. In the category of Knowledge, three of its components seem to be the most important for ensuring effectiveness: (Knowledge) Storage, Dissemination and Teaching Adults. All three were assessed at the level equivalent to the "Agree" responses. The remaining components — (Knowledge) Creation, Utilisation and Results — corresponded to the "Rather agree" responses. While the scores among teams proved similar to those among clients, a clearly smaller data dispersion (variability) was observed in the former population compared to the latter. Figs. 8 and 9 present the distribution of the correlation test results for the individual IM projects[2].

Fig. 10 presents an additional comparison of correlation values, different for the populations of clients and teams. The strength of the relationship between Power and Trust was found to be similar for both populations, i.e., the greater the trust, the higher the power levels.

In summary, it can be noted that knowledge significantly impacts the effectiveness of projects, and this observation is particularly evident in the case of teams. Therefore, it seems vital for the Interim Manager to gain the team's trust in a short time and incorporate into the client's organisation the experience in teaching adults obtained thus far.

4. Discussion of the results

Based on the comparison of the study results from two perspectives (clients and teams) and across

[2] The chart is based on the data from all ten projects. However, as no feedback could be obtained from the team in Project No. 2, the total number of scores from teams presented in the chart is nine.

three categories of factors determining effectiveness in IM projects (Table 6), it can be noted that lower levels of Trust in teams (80 % vs. 88 % among clients) were also related to lower levels of Power in teams (68 % vs. 72 % among clients), while the scores for Knowledge were higher in teams (72 %) than among clients (68 %). Therefore, Trust and Power appear to be more significant for clients commissioning an interim project, while teams working directly with the Interim Manager find Knowledge more important.

In terms of Power and Trust, clients who trust IMs more than teams do (field A.1) tend to also give IMs more power (field A.2). Guided by this approach, clients complement it with another perspective and focus during the implementation not so much on the initial phases of the knowledge management process (fields A.I – A.III) as on the effects, i.e., Knowledge Dissemination (field A.III) and Teaching Adults (field A.VI). In contrast, teams — where trust levels, while also high, are lower than among clients (field B.1) — tend to adopt a different approach to power when cooperating with IMs. A broader discussion of the five types of power analysed in our research, i.e., coercive power, reward power, legitimate power, expert power and referent power, is beyond the purview of this article. However, the results of the authors' previous studies (Skowron-Mielnik & Sobiecki, 2021) imply a significant preference for IMs to use expert power (an option marked by 80 % of respondents) and referent power (77 %) together with legitimate power (77 %) over the use of reward power (68 %) or coercive power (69 %). By leading the IM project team through the power types listed above and managing knowledge transfer processes (fields B.I – B.VI in Table 5), the Interim Manager can obtain effects from the team that will ensure similar levels of scores for all elements of knowledge management in the team.

Considering different ways of working with the client or the team and the Interim Manager's stronger or weaker focus on these perspectives, the median values for the category of Knowledge among clients and teams are similar (respectively, 69 % and 72 %; field A.3 in Table 6). This observation may suggest the applicability of the author's conclusions in planning a selective approach to each project by the Interim Manager and the client while paying attention to other general relationships revealed in the research.

Descriptive statistics in Fig. 11 show that trust towards IMs in the studied projects was assessed comparably high both among clients and teams (respectively, 88 % and 80 %), which corresponds to the majority of respondents marking the "Strongly agree" and "Agree" options. In most projects, clients assessed the importance of Trust higher than teams. A positive relationship can also be noticed between the levels of Trust and Power; however, clients and teams differed in their assessments of what determines effectiveness in IM projects. The former (clients) found the power they provide to the Interim Manager more significant (77 %) compared to the latter (teams), while teams reporting to the Interim Manager pointed to a greater importance of Knowledge (72 %) compared to clients.

While the leading theme of this article is knowledge as a factor of effectiveness in IM projects, the

Tab. 5. Combined and comparative conclusions (clients and teams)

			A.	B.
		#	Clients	Teams
Categories of factors determining effectiveness — median values	Trust	1.	88%	80%
	Power	2.	77%	68%
	Knowledge	3.	69%	72%
Category of Knowledge — median values	Creation	I.	62%	70%
	Storage	II.	59%	72%
	Dissemination	III.	72%	74%
	Utilisation	IV.	63%	68%
	Results	V.	67%	71%
	Teaching Adults	VI.	77%	74%

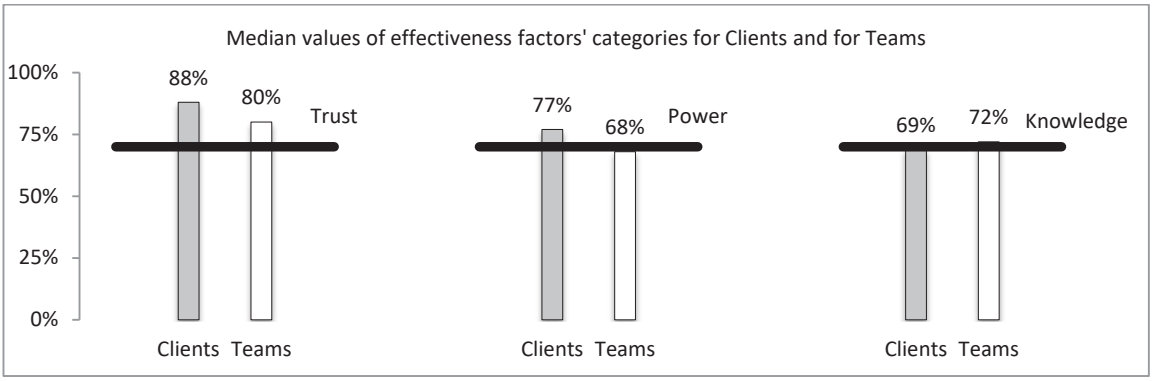

Fig. 11. Levels for the categories of factors — median values from ten projects

starting point for the research model included two more categories of factors — Trust and Power — as well as stakeholders represented by three populations: clients, teams and Interim Managers (Fig. 2). These three factors and three types of stakeholders were related by three research questions pertaining to knowledge:

1) Is knowledge a factor that can largely determine the effectiveness of IM projects?
2) How does knowledge relate to the other two categories of factors: trust and power?
3) What is the impact of knowledge from the perspective of the client, the team and the Interim Manager?

While already covered to a certain extent, academic diligence requires that clear and explicit answers be provided to these questions:

1) Regarding the first research question, the study results imply a positive answer. Based on Fig. 4, the median value of knowledge for clients and teams together was 72 %, corresponding to the "Agree" responses. Therefore, the result was statistically significant.
2) There is a clear relationship between knowledge and the other two factors of effectiveness in IM projects:
   a) The results presented in Fig. 4 indicate a cascading decrease in the median values for the three factors:
      i. Regarding Trust, the total median value for both clients and teams was the highest, and at 87 %, it corresponded to the "Strongly agree" responses.
      ii. Regarding Power, the total median value for clients and teams was lower than that of Trust, and at 74 %, it corresponded to the "Agree" responses.
      iii. Regarding Knowledge, the total median value for clients and teams was lower than that of power, and at 72 %, it corresponded to the "Agree" responses.
   b) The results presented in Fig. 5 indicate the following as the most statistically significant components of knowledge:
      i. Teaching adults (median value of 77 % — the "Agree" responses) implies a relationship with trust as a circumstance that fosters not only knowledge transfer but also its "voluntary" acquisition by the team with which the Interim Manager works. As a result, the Interim Manager can implement new and more effective practices in the organisation's daily operations or improve the effectiveness of those currently in use. Given the "voluntary" character of the process, it is conducive to self-development and, consequently, continuous improvement through an inspired rather than instrumental approach to the organisational learning cycle and individual learning.
      ii. Dissemination (median value of 74 % — the "Agree" responses) determines the broadly defined distribution of knowledge and the popularisation of the mentioned practices across the client's organisation.
3) A deeper analysis of the results aimed to study the differences in the impact of Knowledge and its relationships with Trust and Power separately for clients and teams leads to the following conclusions:
   a) The value of the coefficient of determination (R2) for Knowledge and Trust in the ten studied projects was more than three times higher for teams compared to clients (Fig. 11). This strengthens the observation made in point 2bi regarding the statistically signifi-

cant relationship between Trust and Knowledge, and its impact on the development of more effective practices through interim management.

b) For the effective implementation of the project through Knowledge transfer, the Interim Manager must gain Power over the team at a level higher than that provided to them in the client's opinion. Fig. 11 indicates that the R2 value for Knowledge and Power was one and a half times higher for teams than for clients.

Conclusions

Reverting to the previously mentioned analysis by Srisuksa et al. (2021) and the comparison of both research approaches in Table 2, it can be noticed that this deductive research based on international literature and the inductive-empirical study of ten projects led to similar conclusions about knowledge transfer. This observation could imply that the research conducted in Polish organisations is consistent with international research. The difference in favour of the empirical approach is that this study demonstrates the mutual impact of the effectiveness factors such as trust and power on knowledge (knowledge transfer). In summary, it could be argued that the research providing the foundation for this article makes a practical contribution to or at least complements research on knowledge transfer in interim projects. Therefore, the findings may be treated as a point of reference for the future continuation of research.

The surveys have been conducted on a sample of clients and teams in interim projects implemented exclusively in Poland, where Interim Management is a less known and less frequently applied concept than in Western Europe. Therefore, research conducted in countries other than Poland would certainly constitute a vital contribution to this discussion. Also, the relatively modest number of projects does not allow for the findings to refer to the nature of the participating organisations measured by factors such as company size or culture (corporations, ownership companies). Moreover, the projects included in this research thus far were largely conducted by male interim managers, which at this stage precludes a gender-based analysis of the effectiveness factors in IM projects — an aspect explored by other researchers (Kişi, 2021). Lastly, beneficiaries of this study can include not only academics but also management practitioners: Interim Managers, clients and companies that have used Interim Management for years, as well as those considering it to address their problems. The findings may prove to be particularly beneficial for employees involved in projects supervised by Interim Managers.

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APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

RESEARCH TOOL DEDICATED TO KNOWLEDGE

Dear Respondent,

- By completing this questionnaire, you participate in scientific research on Interim Management (IM).
- The research is conducted as a joint effort of the Poznań University of Economics and Business and the Interim Managers Association (SIM) of Poland.
- As a person who has been part of an IM project, you are invited to share your valuable insight with us by answering these questions and thus contributing to the discovery of factors that may have an effect on IM projects and their outcomes.

Instructions for completing the questionnaire

- Please mark your answer for each question by circling a number from 1 to 7.
- Choose the number that best represents your opinion regarding the issue asked in the question (1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Rather disagree, 4 – Neither agree nor disagree, 5 – Rather agree, 6 – Agree, 7 – Strongly agree).
- Choose the answers spontaneously, to the best of your knowledge.

Anonymity

- Your personal data and answers, as well as the data and answers of other respondents, will not be disclosed.
- Your answers will be statistically processed in a pool of data along with the answers from other respondents. As a result, only the aggregated observations will be published regarding the factors that, statistically, can have an impact on IM projects and their effectiveness.

NO.	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS						
1	During the project, employees receive a bonus for developing new ways to streamline their workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	During the project, employees are informed that new ways are being developed to streamline their workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	During the project, employees are trained in new ways to improve performance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	During the project, employees receive a bonus for using new ways to improve performance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	During the project, employees receive tasks related to the implementation of new ways to streamline workflow in their department	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	During the project, employees can independently try out new ways to streamline their workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	During the project, employees develop new ways to streamline the workflow in their departments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	As part of the project, a database is created of new ways to streamline our workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	During the project, employees are informed what knowledge, where or from whom they can obtain at different levels of the organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	During the project, employees are shown how to use new ways to streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	During the project, money is allocated to implement new ways to streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	During the project, employees are allowed to make mistakes when trying to implement new ways to streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13	During the project, employees create new ways to streamline their workflow together with colleagues from related departments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	During the project, employees are informed how they can independently access the database of ways to streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	During the project, employees share knowledge with colleagues in their department, which encourages them to adopt the same attitude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	During the project, employees use new ways to improve performance invented by colleagues from related departments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	The implementation of new ways to streamline the workflow in our department brings measurable effects	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	During the project, employees are asked to share their opinions regarding the implementation of new ways to streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	During the project, employees are given assistance in developing new ways to streamline their workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	During the project, employees can independently add to the database their own ways to streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	During the project, employees recognise the acquired knowledge as the common good of the organisation rather than an element of personal advantage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	During the project, employees receive clear communication on how to use new ways to streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	The implementation of new ways to streamline the workflow between related departments brings measurable effects	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	During the project, employees are given assistance in implementing new ways to streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	During the project, all employee ideas, even the small ones, are approached with an open mind and respect in order to check whether they can be implemented and thus streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	During the project, employees learn new names for new ways of streamlining the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	During the project, employees share new ways to streamline the workflow with colleagues from other departments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	During the project, employees are given assistance at their workplace in implementing new ways to streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	During the project, employees receive tasks to carry out together with colleagues from other departments related to the implementation of new ways to streamline the workflow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	During the project, employees are informed which colleagues can help them implement new ways to improve work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7