

# Emotional intelligence – the unseen face of the sustainable knowledge based organization

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**Abstract.** *Since the failure of traditional business models determined practitioners and academics from the management field to focus their attention on the intangible aspects of an organization, we aim to determine if emotional intelligence could be the missing part from the sustainable knowledge based organization (SKBO) development. In order to achieve this goal, we employed an ethical and empirical research that focused on identifying the characteristics and influence factors of SKBO. First, we made a critical analysis of 70 articles that had been published, from 2000 until 2012, in international databases. Then we developed a survey based on questionnaire that focused on identifying SKBO's characteristics and influence factors. Using a snowball sampling, we collected 268 questionnaires from Romanian and Spanish knowledge management specialists. After data analysis, we have noticed that the most important characteristics of SKBO focus on human resources. When it came to identifying the influence factors, the respondents emphasized the importance of employees' adaptability, satisfaction, education and also work relationships. Using an inductive – deductive approach, we demonstrate that emotional intelligence is taken for granted and not perceived as an independent variable. None of the 268 knowledge management specialists present emotional intelligence as a characteristic or a strategic factor of SKBOs. But, all of them highlight the importance of an open organizational culture, transformational leadership, human resources adaptability, and employees' satisfaction. Each and every one of these is linked to emotional intelligence development.*

**Keywords:** *emotional intelligence; knowledge management; sustainability; human resources; transformational leadership.*

## Introduction

In the context of a dynamic, complex and uncertain economy, the traditional business models and principles have failed. As a result, managers and researchers attention switched from tangible to intangible

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assets. Some concentrate on creating, disseminating and using knowledge (Drucker, 1988; Millar and Choi, 2010) while others focus on developing and using employees' emotions (Gardner, 1983; Goleman, 1995) in order to increase company's performance.

The first aspect represents an interesting topic for the knowledge management researchers. On the one hand, they highlight that knowledge is a critical organizational resource that may increase company's value. On the other hand, they emphasize the processes that stimulate knowledge creation, dissemination and use namely, creating a trustful environment in which employees can feel free to share their knowledge, ideas and experience; organizing the activity around teams; developing open organizational culture etc.

The second aspect constitutes a research theme for the psychology and management specialists. They present the concept of *emotional intelligence* as "an array of non-cognitive skills, capabilities and competences that influence a person's ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures" (Martinez, 1997, p. 72). It's main characteristics – self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills – are determining the success factors in individual's career and personal life (Goleman, 1995) and also are improving work performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and leadership (Gooty et al., 2014; Papathanasiou and Siaty, 2014).

These two elements are correlated since each organization is based on knowledge and is usually described as an "emotional place" (Armstrong, 2000), "incubator of emotions" (Muchinsky, 2000) or "emotional arena" (Fineman, 2000). Besides, we must take into account that creating and disseminating knowledge implies using abilities, skills and emotions. In order to create and disseminate knowledge, people need a proper work environment (an open and trustful culture etc.) and also must have developed specific abilities and skills (teamwork abilities, initiative, communication skills etc.). Starting from this point, we ask ourselves what is the place of emotional intelligence in a sustainable knowledge based organization?

The answer to this question will be presented in the following sections. Next, we will highlight the nexus between emotional intelligence and knowledge management. Then we will bring forward the research methodology that we used and we will continue by presenting the main results. We will emphasize what a sustainable knowledge based organization is and how it is related to emotional intelligence. In the end, we will close this article with a couple of conclusions and further research directions.

**Emotional intelligence – a tool for knowledge management**

Since 1990 when the concept of “emotional intelligence” was coined, four types of models have been developed in order to facilitate its analysis. These included: traditional models (Cheung and Tang, 2012; Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Wong and Law, 2002), trait models (Petrides and Furnham, 2003; Petrides et al., 2007), mixed models (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1998) and modern models (Maul, 2012; Schutte et al., 2013). Although the perspective from which the concept is addressed (Table 1) varies from a situational level (according to the traditional models) to a complex one (in the modern models), from a cognitive approach to a social one, they all bring forward the necessity of recognizing and understanding individuals’ emotions.

**Table 1. Popular approaches on defining and analyzing the concept of “emotional intelligence”**

Type of model	Emotional intelligence		
	Perspective	Dimensions	Description
Traditional model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emotional intelligence reflects individuals’ ability to recognize and control their emotions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-emotion appraisal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it reflects individuals’ ability to understand their own emotions.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>other emotion appraisal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it reflects individuals’ ability to understand and be sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regulation of emotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it highlights individuals’ ability to control their own emotions.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of emotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it emphasizes individuals’ ability to use their emotions to improve their performance and achieve personal goals.</li> </ul>

Trait model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emotional intelligence is a personal trait that reflects individuals emotion-related disposition and self-perception of emotional experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it reflects individuals' generalized sense of being in peace with themselves, happy and fulfilled.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it emphasizes individuals' capacity of regulating external pressure, stress and impulses.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emotionality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it describes individuals' sense of perceiving and expressing their emotions in order to develop close relationships with others.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sociability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it reflects individuals' capacity of listening and communicating clear and confident with people from diverse backgrounds.</li> </ul>
Mixed model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emotional intelligence combines personality traits, motivation and affects in order to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and in others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it describes individuals' ability to identify emotions in one's physical states, feelings and thoughts.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-regulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it reflects individuals' ability to control and redirect impulses and moods, to prioritize thinking by focusing on important information that explains why feelings are being experienced.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>motivation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it reflects individuals' inner vision of what is important in life.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>empathy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it is the ability to identify emotions in other people, design, artwork etc. through language, sound, appearance and behavior.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>social skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it describes individuals' proficiency in developing and managing relationships.</li> </ul>

Modern model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emotional intelligence is a set of competencies of perception, understanding, using and managing emotions effectively in the self and others comprise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>competency in perception of emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it involves recognizing the emotions incorporated in the body state, facial and voice cues of himself/herself and others.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>competency in understanding emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it emphasizes the capacity of identifying various emotions and anticipating their causes and consequences.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>competency in using emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it involves putting emotions into action and harnessing their effects.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>competency in managing emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>it highlights the capacity of regulating emotions in order to make them compatible with certain situations or individuals' goals.</li> </ul>
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Emotions occur at individual level, are engraved in behaviors and influence groups' dynamics (Blattner and Bacigalupo, 2007; Brunetto et al., 2012). As a result, the researchers from organizational studies concentrate on analyzing the influence of emotional intelligence in the workplace. They demonstrate that emotional intelligence extends employees' trust, loyalty and commitment within their selves, their teams and their firm and it is correlated with *job satisfaction* (Brunetto et al, 2012; Chiva and Alegre, 2008; Papatthanasious and Siati, 2014; Weng et al., 2011), *job performance* (Gooty et al., 2014; O'Boyle et al, 2011; Shih and Susanto, 2010), *transformational leadership* (Hess and Bacigalupo, 2010; Lam and O'Higgins, 2013; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012), *motivation* (Christie et al., 2007), and *organizational commitment* (Brunetto et al., 2012). These relations are usually moderated by organizational culture, structure, practices and policies (Dumbravă, 2011; Hess and Bacigalupo, 2010).

Given their importance in the organizational environment, emotions and emotional intelligence are taken into account by knowledge management researchers. Brătianu (2007) brings forward the concept of emotional knowledge in order to describe the role of emotions in decision making and mental processes while Hess and Bacigalupo (2010) describe emotional intelligence as an organizational development tool which increases employees' responsibility in meeting the needs of the organization. But what is the purpose of emotional intelligence in a sustainable knowledge

based organization? What inputs does it use and what outputs does it generate?

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this research is to identify the position that emotional intelligence is occupying in a sustainable knowledge based organization.

From a methodological point of view, we used a documentary study – represented by a review of the literature in the knowledge management and emotional intelligence field – and an exploratory research that concentrated on the Romanian and Spanish knowledge management specialists.

In order to achieve the research goal, we employed an ethic approach and realized a review of the articles and studies from the knowledge management and emotional intelligence field. First, we had searched in the Emerald Publishing, ScienceDirect, EBSCO and Sage databases articles that had been published during January 2000 – March 2012 and had included in title, abstract or key words at least one of the next phrases: “sustainable organization”, “knowledge based organization”, “sustainable knowledge based organization”, “emotional intelligence”. Then we analyzed the articles in order to determine their relevance for the research problem and we identify 70 articles. In the next phase, we applied a content analysis to the selected articles in order to determine what a sustainable knowledge based organization may be and what could be the role of emotional intelligence.

The goal of the exploratory research was to identify the position that emotional intelligence should have in the process of developing SKBOs from knowledge management specialists’ point of view.

During February 2011 – March 2012, we conducted a survey based on questionnaire. This included 29 items that were focusing on five major aspects: defining the sustainable knowledge based organization, identifying its characteristics and influence factors, determining the most important elements that can guarantee company’s sustainability in the current economic environment and identifying the respondents’ socio-

demographical characteristics. For the first, fourth and last aspects, items were designed using a multiple choice scale. A five point Likert rating scale was used for identifying the main characteristics of the sustainable knowledge based organization. In this case, 1 represented “little importance” and 5 “extremely important”. The questionnaire reliability was proved using Alpha Cronbach coefficient which had a value equal with 0,873.

Since national culture includes sets of values, beliefs, ideas, attitudes and morals that guide individuals (Vitell et al., 1993), we assumed that it may influence the way in which the concept of “sustainable knowledge based organization” is perceived. As a result, the investigated population was represented by the knowledge management specialists from Romania and Spain, two countries that share almost the same cultural profile (Table 2), according to Hofstede’s dimensions (1980).

**Table 2. Comparative analysis between Romania and Spain, based on Geert Hofstede’s dimensions (Itim International, 2012)**

Country Dimension	Romania	Spain
Power distance	90	57
Individualism	30	51
Masculinity / Feminity	42	42
Uncertainty avoidance	90	86
Long term orientation		19

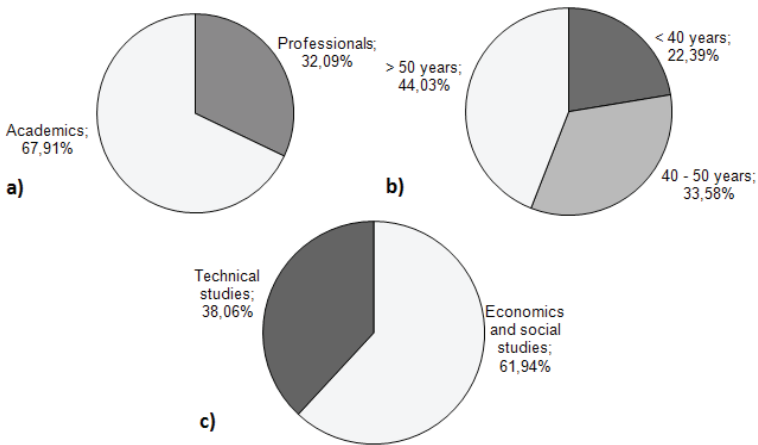
A starting point in selecting the Romanian subjects of this study was represented by Romanian Knowledge Management Community database. According to this, from 2009 until 2011, 170 persons had been certified as knowledge management specialists.

In the case of Spain, we identify 548 specialists that were members of the Research Center of Knowledge Society (Centro de Investigación sobre la Sociedad del Conocimiento); the University Institute of Business Administration from Autonomous University of Madrid (Instituto



Universitario de Administración de Empresas de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid); the Spanish Association of Accounting and Business Administration (Asociación Española de Contabilidad y Administración de Empresas) and the Scientific Association of Economy and Management (Asociación Científica de Economía y Dirección de la Empresa). They were selected based on their experience in investigating subjects of knowledge management or managing activities or department from the same area. Each of them was invited to submit the questionnaire – that was distributed using Google Docs application – and to offer the contact details of another person that could be interested in participating to this research. So, a snowball sampling was used and data were collected from 268 persons: 134 Romanian specialists and 134 Spanish specialists.

The distribution of Romanian and Spanish samples by occupation, age and type of formation were similar and is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Sample distribution by occupation (a), age (b) and formation type (c)**

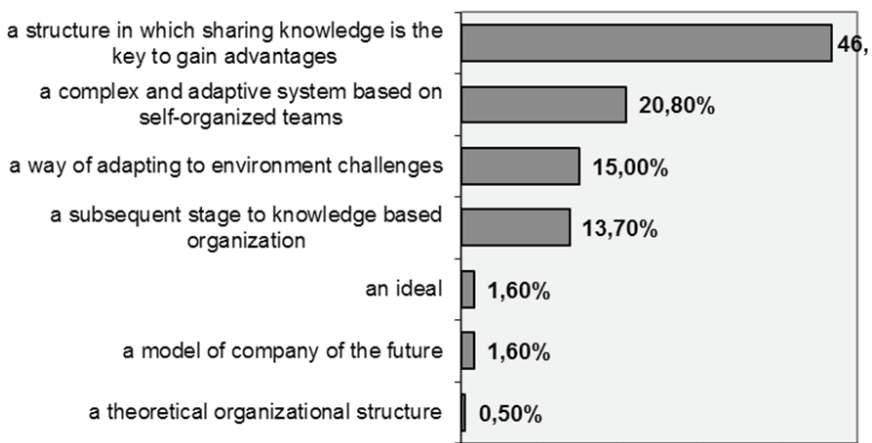
*Source: Bueno and Leon, 2012*

Despite all these, we recognize that the number of keywords searched in the international databases limits the research. What we found in the literature is just a fraction from what had been written about the role that emotional intelligence has in the development of new companies but still is capable to reflecting the evolutionary processes that occurred.

The research is also limited by the fact that the respondents share almost the same cultural profile and area of specialization. Another issue to consider is that the research took place in the time of an economic recession. Due to these aspects, respondents tended to focus more on the intangible elements of the business environment, the aspects that influence the processes of knowledge creation, dissemination and use. As a result, they valued more the human resources and technological factors than the social and political issues. The situation could have been different if the respondents would have been specialized in the area of environmental protection, sociology, natural resources management etc. or they would have belonged to different cultures.

### **The sustainable knowledge based organization (SKBO) from the emotional intelligence perspective**

According to knowledge management specialists, SKBO is a formal entity that combines economic, environmental and social aspects in order to adapt to the micro- and macro-environment challenges (Figure 2). Hence, most of the respondents (46,80%) present it as a structure in which sharing knowledge between employees is the key to gain competitive advantages at economic, environmental and social levels while 20,80% described it as a complex and adaptive system based on self-organized teams. Only 15,00% of the specialists sustain that it is a way of adapting to the current economic environment.



**Figure 2. Possible definitions of the sustainable knowledge based organization, according to the Romanian and Spanish knowledge management specialists**

*Source: Leon, 2012, p. 276*

Synthesizing all these responses, we claim that the sustainable knowledge based organization is an economic entity that concentrates on increasing its market value (on short, medium and long term) by dealing with knowledge, economic, social and ecologic issues. Its main characteristics focus on short, medium and long term planning; organizational culture, leadership and motivation; organizational structure; resources and reputation (Table 3).

1. *Table 3. SKBO’s specificity*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
<i>Planning on short, medium and long term</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing knowledge, economic, social and ecologic objectives for short, medium and long term.</li> </ul>
<i>Organizational culture, leadership and motivation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open organizational culture;</li> <li>• programs and activities that stimulate knowledge sharing among employees and also develop their capacity of taking decisions;</li> <li>• transformational and charismatic leadership.</li> </ul>
<i>Organizational structure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activity is structured around self-organized and interdependent teams;</li> <li>• reduced number and roles of first and middle managers;</li> <li>• flexible organizational structure;</li> <li>• outsourcing secondary activities.</li> </ul>
<i>Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specialized employees preoccupied with developing themselves and the environment in which they live;</li> <li>• an internal knowledge base;</li> <li>• investments in research and development activities;</li> <li>• an increased level of innovations’ absorption.</li> </ul>
<i>Reputation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• programs that bring benefits to employees, customers, suppliers and to other members of the community.</li> </ul>

On the one hand, each and every SKBO’s characteristic encourages the development of emotional intelligence competencies at the organizational level (Table 4). Some of them highlight the conditions that must be met

in order to sustain emotional intelligence development (namely, flexible organizational structure, self-organized and interdependent teams, open organizational culture, transformational and charismatic leadership etc.) while others are presenting the effects of using it (like, internal knowledge base, reputation).

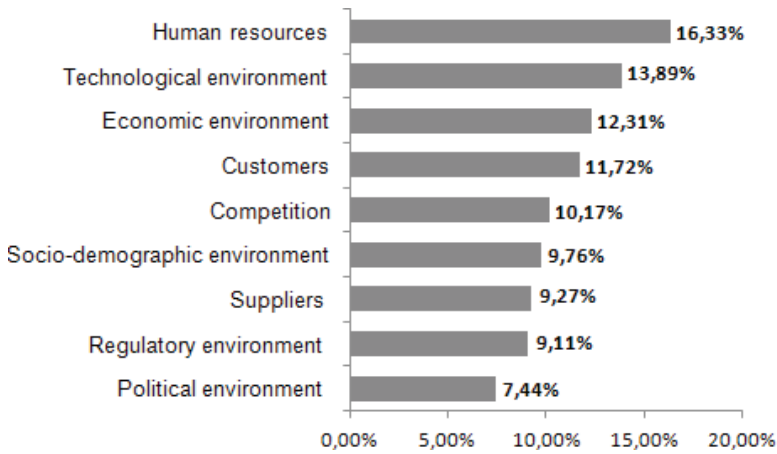
**Table 4. Common points between emotional intelligence and SKBO**

Dimension of emotional intelligence	Using emotional intelligence in a SKBO	
	Inputs	Outputs
<i>Awareness of own emotions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open organizational culture;</li> <li>• trustful environment;</li> <li>• employees' interest in developing their abilities, skills and competencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge creation;</li> <li>• employees' development.</li> </ul>
<i>Ability to discuss own emotions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activity based on self-organized and interdependent teams;</li> <li>• open organizational culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing knowledge;</li> <li>• developing the internal knowledge base.</li> </ul>
<i>Ability to control own emotions to facilitate thinking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employees' interest in developing their abilities, skills and competencies;</li> <li>• open organizational culture;</li> <li>• activities that develop employees' capacity of decision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge creation;</li> <li>• employees' development.</li> </ul>
<i>Ability to recognize emotions others</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activity based on autonomous and interdependent teams;</li> <li>• open organizational culture;</li> <li>• activities that develop employees' capacity of decision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge creation and sharing;</li> <li>• developing an internal knowledge base;</li> <li>• employees' development;</li> <li>• transformational and charismatic leadership.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Ability to manage emotions of others</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transformation and charismatic leadership;</li> <li>• open organizational culture;</li> <li>• activity based on self-organized and interdependent teams;</li> <li>• flexible organizational structure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge sharing and using;</li> <li>• developing the internal knowledge base;</li> <li>• improving company's relationships with its stakeholders.</li> </ul>
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As we may notice transformational and charismatic leadership acts as both output (from employees' perspective) and input (from organization's perspective) of emotional intelligence. This is a consequence of the fact that it is emotion-oriented and is based on leaders' self-awareness. So, first of all, leaders need an environment in which they can develop themselves. They need an open organizational culture, a trustful environment in which they feel free to express themselves, to share their ideas, their emotions without being criticized. This type of environment may be found in a SKBO where employees are valued for their interest in developing themselves (where development becomes synonym with sharing ideas, emotions, knowledge and acquiring new ideas, emotions and knowledge). Second of all, leaders need their followers and a context that will allow them to develop their followers' self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem. This context is provided in a SBO under the form of a flexible organizational structure and organized activity around self-managed and interdependent teams. These facilitate both leaders' and followers' development.

On the other hand, taking into account the specificity of this kind of firm, the knowledge management specialists consider that the most important categories of strategic factors are the ones that focus on the owners of the critical resource – knowledge – and on the environment in which this will be capitalized (Figure 3). We remark that the first three positions are occupied by human resources (with an importance coefficient of 16,33%), technological environment (13,89%) and economic environment (12,31%). The first one provides the “raw material” of the sustainable knowledge based organization while the other two capture the environment in which knowledge becomes action.

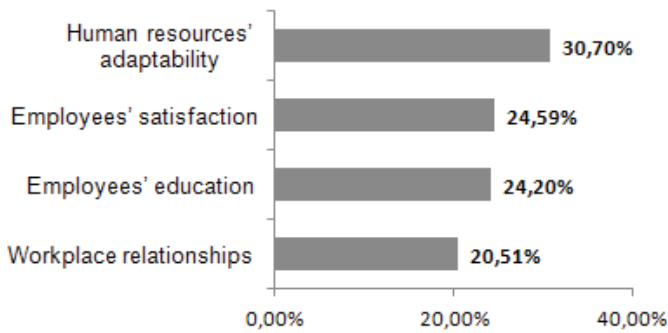


**Figure 3. The importance coefficients of the most important strategic factors, according to the Romanian and Spanish knowledge management specialists**

Placing customers on the fourth position reflects that SKBO's managers are not oriented towards hunting their clients but rather on attracting them with better goods and/or services. They are aware that company's existence and their success depend on the category of customers they attract. Besides, they know that improving continuously their goods and services is the best way to succeed in a context in which customers' preferences are changing faster than it used to do.

Last but not least, we notice that the importance coefficients that had been distributed to the nine categories of strategic factors are oscillating in a range of almost ten points (from 7,44% to 16,33%). This reflects the close connection that exists between them and also the strong impact that each and every one of them has it on SKBO's development. Everything that is related to company's human resources defines the firms' strategic capacity but it may be useless if it is not correlated with the changes that occur in the technological and economic environment. On the other hand, knowledge enjoyment and exploitation is useful only if it allows anticipating and addressing customers' needs. This requires focusing on customers and on the changes that may occur in the socio-demographical environment.

Human resources seem to be the core of the SKBO since it owns the most critical organizational resource – knowledge – and at the same time, is the engine of emotional intelligence. Hence, in order to react to the challenges that may appear in the internal and external environment, employees must possess the characteristics that are usually associated with emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Therefore, the Romanian and Spanish knowledge management specialists are pointing out four elements that are fundamental for company's adaptation to environment and knowledge sharing (Figure 4) namely, human resources' adaptability (30,70%), employees' satisfaction (24,59%), employees' level of education (24,20%) and workplace relationships (20,51%).



**Figure 4. The most important strategic elements that focus on human resources, according to the Romanian and Spanish knowledge management specialists**

The identified elements concentrate directly and indirectly on knowledge. On the one hand, we have the employees' level of education which certifies a certain variety and volume of explicit knowledge. On the other hand, we have employees' adaptability, satisfaction and workplace relationships that describe individual's affinity for knowledge creation, dissemination and use and the organizational environment in which this could happen. The elements included in the second category are related to individual's emotional intelligence (Table 5).

**Table 5. The relation between the SKBO's strategic factors and emotional intelligence**

SKBO strategic factors	Aspects regarding emotional intelligence
<i>Human resources' adaptability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• according to Reuven Bar-On (1997), it is a dimension of emotional intelligence which reflects individual's capacity of being flexible, realistic and capable of solving problems in the moment that they appear;</li> <li>• highlights employees' need for more complete and accurate knowledge about themselves and for maintaining an equilibrium between a clear sense of self and appropriate responses to the challenges that appear in the environment;</li> <li>• its development depends on the level in which employees are involved in problem solving, activities that imply sharing ideas with others and learning from mistakes, taking decision in uncertain situations.</li> </ul>
<i>Employees' satisfaction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• represents a positive emotional state that appears as a result of a job experience;</li> <li>• employees with a higher level of emotional intelligence are more satisfied with their job;</li> <li>• the relation between satisfaction and emotional intelligence is mediated by organizational culture, interactions with external environment, communication, collaboration, the level of involving employees in decision making.</li> </ul>
<i>Employees' level of education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offers information regarding employees' knowledge and competencies;</li> <li>• reflects the area in which the employee is specialized;</li> <li>• there are no previous research concerning the relationship between emotional intelligence and education.</li> </ul>
<i>Workplace relationships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are guided by emotions and reflected by the quality of teamwork and cooperation with other firms;</li> <li>• are supported by the organizational culture and employees' capacity to communicate with others, to be flexible and to deal with the perceptions, views, attitudes and responses of their colleagues.</li> </ul>



Human resources' adaptability reflects their ability to adapt to changing situations and to overcome obstacles. It also emphasizes their capacity of being flexible, realistic and capable of solving problems in a timely manner. Employees with a high level of adaptability are capable to gather important information from the internal and external environment, to respond appropriately to workplace conditions (by collaborating with their colleagues and producing the necessary changes) and to the emotional behavior of their coworkers (disseminating and creating knowledge). In other words, human resources' adaptability is an emotional intelligence input that supports company's adaption to a turbulent environment and also, facilitates knowledge creation, dissemination and use.

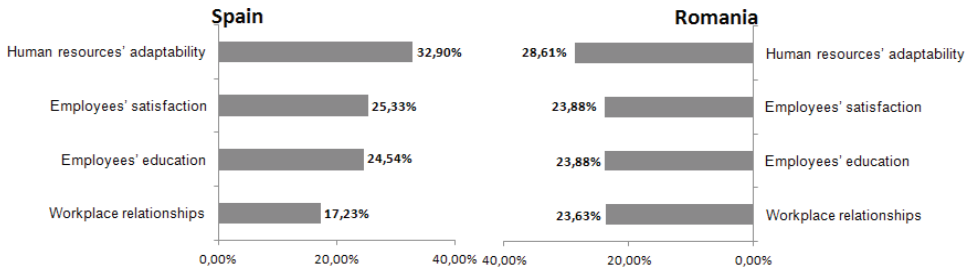
Employees' satisfaction is an emotional state that appears as a result of a positive job experience. Although it is based on emotions, it may be correlated with emotional intelligence only if the relation is mediated by organizational culture and climate. In other words, people have a higher level of job satisfaction when they have the opportunity to use their skills and competences (both personal and social) in a propitious work environment. If the organizational culture encourages teamwork, risk taking, dialog, commitment etc. and the employees have self-confidence, initiative and team capabilities then they will be satisfied. They will be capable of using their knowledge in company's purpose. As a result, they will contribute to their own development and also to firm's development.

As we have noticed earlier, SKBO offers an auspicious work environment for developing employees' and organizational emotional intelligence. It is built on an open organizational culture and teamwork, two elements that facilitate the appearance of transformational and charismatic leaders and also the development of employees' self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Employees' level of education guarantees the existence of a certain quantity and diversity of knowledge and certifies the development of social skills while the workplace relationships reflect the efficiency of using emotional intelligence. In other words, based on these, the employees will be able to develop relationships with their coworkers, to communicate and to

collaborate with one another. They will be capable of accessing their colleagues' knowledge and disseminate their own.

Although some differences appear between the Romanian and Spanish samples (Figure 5), regarding the value of the importance coefficient, the order remains the same.



**Figure 5. Comparative analysis between the Romanian and Spanish sample regarding the human resources' strategic factors**

*Source: Bueno and Leon, 2012*

Besides, the differences between the Romanian and Spanish samples are not statistically significant (Table 6), although Spain has a greater history in analyzing and investing in knowledge management issues than Romania. This situation emphasizes that human resources adaptability, employees' satisfaction and education, and workplace relationships have a powerful impact on the process of managing strategically the human resources of a SKBO.

**Table 6. Analyzing the differences between the Romanian and the Spanish sample**

Strategic factors regarding human resources	Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ )	Df.	Sig.	Chi-Square theoretic ( $\chi^2_{\alpha}$ )
Employees' education	0,163	1	0,688	0,161
Human resources' adaptability	4,965	1	0,026	4,956
Employees' satisfaction	0,021	1	0,892	0,018
Workplace relationships	13,035	1	0,001	10,827

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping variable: nationality

So, when we analyze SKBO from the emotional intelligence perspective, the emphasis is on employees' capabilities and resources – knowledge, skills and abilities –, on developing a conducive environment for knowledge creation, dissemination and use but also on creating and developing emotions. It is envisaged that any experience or knowledge employees possess can remain dormant if they do not have a proper environment in which to exploit it.

### **Conclusion and further research**

Through this methodological approach, we found that SKBO is an economic entity that focuses on increasing its market value on short, medium and long term by dealing with knowledge, economic, social and ecological issues.

In order to adapt to a dynamic and uncertain environment, managers of these companies have to know what is happening inside and outside company's boundaries and they have to develop robust and resilient strategies. So, it is necessary for them to take a closer look to company's human resources, to the changes from the technological and economic environment.

Human resources' importance is reflected by the very nature of the organization, namely – knowledge based. In other words, the fact that the main "raw material" of this type of companies is represented by knowledge – an intangible asset which can be found in employees' mind and which is available only if it's owners are willing to share it – has a strong impact on strategic orientation. Therefore, the manager of a SKBO will focus more on its employees and will take into account their level of education, satisfaction and adaptability. The first one will be based on individual's emotional intelligence and will ensure company's access to a high quantity and diversity of knowledge while the second one will offer the necessary conditions for sharing knowledge. The employees' adaptability is important due to the strong interrelation that exists between individuals and organization; a company cannot react in a timely manner to the changes that occur in the environment if its employees manifest a strong aversion to change or they are unwilling to cooperate.

Taking all these into account, if we compare SKBO with an iceberg, we notice that its reputation, objectives and programs are representing its visible side while the elements that focus on human resources, organizational culture, motivation and leadership sustain employees' and organizational emotional intelligence. As a result, we may claim that the last one represents the invisible side of the iceberg. Hence, the elements that encourage emotional intelligence development at individual and organizational levels (namely, human resources' adaptability, organizational culture, leadership, workplace relationships, employees' satisfaction etc.) cannot be so easily observed from the outside but are fueling the implementation of firm's programs and the achievement of economic, social, environmental and knowledge objectives.

Therefore, we argue that emotional intelligence is taken for granted in the sustainable knowledge based organization since its structure and its strategic factors focus either on the elements that stimulate developing emotional intelligence (namely, organizational culture, leadership etc.) or on the effects produced by its use (like, employees' satisfaction, development etc.). So, emotional intelligence is an implicit dimension of the sustainable knowledge based organization since it represents:

- an input – through the characteristics that employees possess;
- a process – since firm's design (organizational culture, structure etc.) sustains its development;
- an output – because its reflected company's reputation (namely, programs that bring benefits to employees, customers, suppliers and to other members of the community and sustain the firm's collaboration with its stakeholders).

Starting from this point, we aim to evaluate the correlation between emotional intelligence and performance of a sustainable knowledge based organization. In order to achieve our goal we will identify the sustainable knowledge based organizations from the Romanian and Spanish business environment and then we will measure employees' emotional intelligence by using the emotional quotient test developed by Goleman (1995).

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