
Cross-border transfer of knowledge: Cultural lessons from Project GLOBE

Mansour Javidan, Günter K. Stahl, Felix Brodbeck, and Celeste P.M. Wilderom

Executive Overview

Distant cross-border business is on the rise. It necessitates effective transfer of knowledge across geographic and cultural borders. In this article we present the key results from the GLOBE study of 62 cultures and apply them to a real-life case of a North European business school designing and offering a substantial executive development program for a large South Asian corporation. We show how cultural differences can complicate the successful transfer of knowledge across borders and make recommendations on how executives can better manage the complex task of transferring knowledge across cultures. We provide advice on how GLOBE findings can be used to better manage the content and process issues in such transfers.

Cross-Border Transfer of Knowledge

In line with the rapid globalization of economic activity, cross-border transactions by corporations have exploded over the past 20 years. For example, worldwide foreign direct investment was \$1271 billion in 2000, compared to \$55 billion in the early 1980s.¹ Over this same period, international technology payments rose from \$7.5 billion to over \$60 billion. The number of cross-border mergers and acquisitions in 2000 was over four times the number in 1997 (9,200 transactions vs. 2,100).² According to a recent KPMG study, 41 percent of all mergers and acquisitions in 2000 were cross-border, compared to only 24 percent in 1996. With this huge increase in cross-border business, the need for effective cross-border knowledge transfer is greater than ever and will continue to increase. An example of what can happen when cross-border knowledge transfer is inadequate is General Motors' disastrous experience with acquiring Japanese production processes in 1998.³ It resulted in strikes and production losses of \$2 billion a week. GM failed to take into account that Japanese workers' great loyalty to their employers and the strong culture of worker participation accounts for a large portion of the success of such production systems in Japan. Understanding international knowledge transfer is not only increasingly crucial to the suc-

cess of MNCs, it is also critical to transferring any work-related operation across national or cultural boundaries.

In this article we illustrate and sum up our recent understanding of how differences in national cultures impact the dynamics and outcomes of cross-border knowledge transfer. We portray and analyze a real-life case in which the cross-border knowledge transfer was not well managed. We apply the recent findings of the GLOBE project. They enable us to pinpoint differences and similarities in the two national cultures involved in the case. We also reflect on how the findings from the GLOBE study can be used to inform managers seeking to transfer knowledge across cultural boundaries. Finally, we offer a few suggestions on how executives can better manage the transfer of knowledge across cultural borders, using the insights that the GLOBE data offer.

International Transfer of Knowledge: A Real-Life Case

The case relates the experiences of NORDED, a Nordic European business school seeking to establish a base in South Asia. In 2002, NORDED signed an agreement with TAI BANK to train several cohorts of middle and upper-middle managers over a one-year period. The purpose of this first program

was to teach the participants about leadership and management of change. It provided an overview of what is effective leadership and how the TAI BANK managers could better manage large-scale change in their organization. The top management at TAI BANK had concluded that their strategic and organizational challenges were significant enough to warrant an exploration of how major Western corporations deal with such issues. The bank was facing strong competitive pressures from global banks such as Citibank and HSBC. They wanted to work with a highly reputable Western business school to ensure that they received high quality advice, but they also wanted to make sure that the South Asian cultural issues were not ignored and the advice offered incorporated an understanding of the South Asian culture and provided some insights into how the Western ideas of leadership can be taught hand-in-hand with an understanding of their applications within the South Asian culture. As a result, the Human Resources (HR) Director approached the business school about designing a leadership program to help prepare the bank managers for the organizational transformation being planned by its top management. Never in its history had the bank made such a large investment in training and development. The program's main objective was to facilitate TAI BANK's transition from a local bank to a major regional player and to provide a series of leadership skills that would help TAI BANK's managers to implement the organizational changes required to help the bank achieve its strategic goals. They approached NORDED because of its world-class reputation and because it had historical roots in Asia and had established a physical presence in the region. The project was strategically important to NORDED because it had the potential to generate additional programs for the same client and for other corporations in South Asia.

Although the program started well, fundamental differences in philosophy, styles, and approaches between NORDED and TAI BANK soon became apparent. These differences soured the relationship between the two parties, especially between the academic program directors and TAI BANK's Human Resources group. As will be explained and illustrated later, many of the differences could have been foreseen if both sides had taken a proactive approach and identified their cultural differences. We will offer the GLOBE findings as a tool for taking such a proactive approach to help managers in similar situations.

After the first module, participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the program and the instructors. Open-ended comments were quite

Table 1
Sample Comments from TAI BANK Program Participants

<p><u>After module 1:</u> "Excellent"; "Very inspiring"; "The course materials and cases are highly relevant"; "Useful training for leaders"; "Best program I have ever attended"; "Valuable knowledge"; "Very practical"; "I want to go back to work and use the leadership tools we have learned"; "They [the instructors] know our [TAI BANK's] challenges"; "I gained valuable new insights"; etc.</p> <p><u>After module 3:</u> "Too far removed from our reality"; "Too theoretical"; "Not all the professors understand the challenges that we are facing at TAI BANK"; "The assignments were very confusing"; "Interesting concepts but how can they be implemented?"; "It will be frustrating not to be able to put into practice what we have learned"; "This may work in theory but not in our [TAI BANK's] organization and culture"; "How can we empower our employees when all important decisions are made by top management?" etc.</p>
--

complimentary and indicated a high degree of potential relevance to the challenges facing TAI BANK managers. However, as the program went on, ratings of participant satisfaction declined. Open-ended comments from participants at the end of module 3 (five months into the program) suggested frustration in applying what they had learned to their work environment. Table 1 presents sample comments from participants at two different stages of the program.

The drop in participant satisfaction was of grave concern to NORDED's program directors. They identified the TAI BANK culture and the attitudes of senior management as major barriers to delivering a successful program. They believed that while the TAI BANK senior executives, including the CEO, valued the abstract notions of employee empowerment, transformational leadership, and change management that were being taught by the NORDED instructors, the realities of the organization's culture and operations were impeding the program's value. As a NORDED program director noted, "The hierarchical culture and authoritarian style of TAI BANK's senior executives create an atmosphere of top-down autocracy that stifles the growth of managers from lower down." Informal conversations with participants confirmed that they faced major barriers to implementing their newly acquired knowledge and skills in their work environment. Many complained about senior management's top-down communication and decision-making style, organizational inertia, and resistance to change. Middle managers were seen merely as discipline enforcers and information links rather than as partners in the search for new ideas and improved processes. These factors cre-

ated enormous frustration among the participating managers and led the NORDED program directors to conclude that TAI BANK was not ready or able to adopt the leadership styles promoted in the program.

These problems were intensified by what the program directors saw as unexpected and undiscussed curriculum changes by TAI BANK's HR executives. For example, the HR group, without consulting with the NORDED program directors, decided that all program participants were required to take a daily exam to assess what they had learned (and, thereby, determine the effectiveness of the program); in addition, each participant had to make a personal recommendation to the TAI BANK top management, and groups of participants were expected to work on a project and share their conclusions with top management on the last program day. These changes caused a great deal of stress and confusion among the participants, because of their concern that their presentations and personal recommendations might not satisfy the newly introduced expectations of the TAI BANK top managers (who were, in some cases, their direct superiors).

The NORDED program directors were dismayed and frustrated by TAI BANK's abrupt decision-making and lack of consultation. As experts in the field, they felt that their views should be given more consideration and that the last-minute changes imposed on the participants effectively destroyed their program design. What made things worse was that the TAI BANK HR executives were quite vocal when something was less than satisfactory to them, but not very vocal when things were going well. As a result of these difficulties, communication between the program directors and TAI BANK's HR executives broke down almost completely.

We will return to NORDED and TAI BANK's experiences shortly, to discuss what the program directors could have done better to manage their relationships with the TAI BANK HR executives. We emphasize that our intent is not to criticize any party but to illustrate that cross-border transfer of knowledge is affected by foreseeable cultural differences that are typically underestimated, regardless of the good intentions of all members of the parties. To better convey the impact of culture and cultural differences on cross-border transfer of knowledge, we offer the key results of a recently completed landmark study of national cultures (GLOBE) as a way to gain insight into what went wrong in this case.

Understanding Differences in National Cultures: Project GLOBE

GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) is a research project involving 62 societies around the world. Over 160 social scientists and management scholars representing all major regions of the world are engaged in this programmatic series of cross-cultural leadership studies. The GLOBE findings presented here are based on surveys of over 17,000 middle managers in the banking, food processing, and telecommunication industries in 62 cultures. In the mid-1990s, participating managers were asked to report their perceptions of the cultural practices and values in their countries. *Practices* were measured with survey items assessing "what is" or "what are" common behaviors and institutional practices in society. They represented the way things were currently done in a culture. *Values* were expressed in response to the same questionnaire items in the form of judgments of "what should be." They reflected the respondents' desires and aspirations in terms of the way things should be done.

The goal of the GLOBE project is to develop empirically based theories to describe, understand, and predict the impact of specific cultural variables on leadership effectiveness and organizational cultures in societies. GLOBE defines culture as "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age generations."³ More detailed information is available on GLOBE's public website at <http://www.thunderbird.edu/wwwfiles/ms/globe/>.⁴

GLOBE developed nine dimensions for comparing the different societal cultures of the world. Table 2 provides short descriptions of these nine dimensions.

Of particular relevance is the double nature of the GLOBE dimensions. That is, on each dimension a society is positioned in terms of both its cultural practices ("As Is"-scores) and its cultural values ("Should Be"-scores). Cultural practices data tell us something about the current perceptions of each culture. Cultural values tap the respondents' feelings about their cultural aspirations and the direction the respondents want their culture to develop in the future. In short, the "Should Be" scores can be used to estimate cultural visions and the desire of a culture for change. If two cultures have different cultural practices (As Is) but similar values (Should Be), that latter agreement should make knowledge transfer easier than it would otherwise be. Emphasizing similarities in cultural values is a

Table 2
Descriptions of the Nine GLOBE Cultural Dimensions

GLOBE Cultural Dimensions	
Power Distance	Degree to which a culture's people are (should be) separated by power, authority, and prestige
In-Group Collectivism	Degree to which a culture's people (should) take pride in and (should) feel loyalty toward their families, organizations, and employers
Institutional Collectivism	Degree to which individuals are (should be) encouraged by institutions to be integrated into broader entities with harmony and cooperation as paramount principles at the expense of autonomy and individual freedom
Uncertainty Avoidance	Degree to which a culture's people (should) seek orderliness, consistency, and structure
Future Orientation	Degree to which a culture's people are (should be) willing to defer immediate gratification for future benefits
Gender Egalitarianism	Degree to which a culture's people (should) support gender equality
Assertiveness	Degree to which a culture's people are (should be) assertive, confrontational, and aggressive
Humane Orientation	Degree to which a culture's people are (should be) fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind toward others
Performance Orientation	Degree to which a culture's people (should) encourage and reward people for performance

good managerial strategy to minimize the potentially negative consequences of the "As Is" differences for the success of the knowledge transfer. If two groups differ on cultural values and don't know it, a knowledge transfer initiative can be problematic.

In Figures 1 to 9, the scores on cultural values and practices are used to position the cultural clusters identified by GLOBE (for details, see Appendix 1 and 2). Note that while the potential range for each GLOBE dimension is from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest), the scales depicted in the figures range from 2 to 6 which suffices to represent the total distribution of cluster scores. Every point at the beginning of an arrow shows a culture's reported practices (As Is) score. The tip of an arrow shows its values (Should Be) score. The Differences (represented by the arrows) show discrepancies between where a culture is and where it aspires to be. Note that in some instances the arrows of Southern Asia and Nordic Europe point into opposite directions (e.g., for Institutional Collectivism, Figure 3, and Uncertainty Avoidance, Figure 4). This means that the societal cultural visions and potential for change in these clusters point towards opposite ends of each dimension.

While Figures 1-9 compare all the cultural clusters of the GLOBE study, the South Asian - North European comparison is highlighted by bold arrows. Their respective mean scores and ranks are summarized in Table 3. The most notable differences lie in South Asian cultures' higher levels of Power Distance practices (rank 1 versus rank 10), In-Group Collectivism practices (rank 1 versus rank 10) and lower levels of Uncertainty Avoidance practices (rank 7 versus rank 1). Furthermore, there are some marked discrepancies in cultural values (Should Be): As compared to Nordic European cultures, South Asian cultures show higher levels of Institutional Collectivism (rank 1 versus rank 10), Uncertainty Avoidance (rank 1 versus rank 9), and Future Orientation (rank 2 versus rank 10). The managerial implications of these differences for

Table 3
A Summary Comparison of South Asian and Nordic European Culture Clusters (N = 10 Culture Clusters)

Dimension	South Asian Cluster				Nordic European Cluster			
	As Is		Should Be		As Is		Should Be	
	Mean	(Rank)	Mean	(Rank)	Mean	(Rank)	Mean	(Rank)
Power Distance	5.4	(1)	2.8	(4)	4.5	(10)	2.5	(9)
In-Group Collectivism	5.9	(1)	5.8	(1)	3.7	(10)	5.7	(4)
Institutional Collectivism	4.3	(4)	5.0	(3)	4.9	(1)	4.1	(10)
Uncertainty Avoidance	4.1	(7)	5.2	(1)	5.2	(1)	3.8	(9)
Future Orientation	4.0	(5)	5.9	(2)	4.4	(2)	4.8	(10)
Gender Egalitarianism	3.3	(5)	4.1	(9)	3.7	(2)	4.8	(3)
Assertiveness	3.9	(9)	4.7	(1)	3.7	(10)	3.6	(7)
Humane Orientation	4.7	(1)	5.3	(9)	4.2	(4)	5.6	(1)
Performance Orientation	4.3	(4)	6.0	(4)	3.9	(7)	5.8	(7)

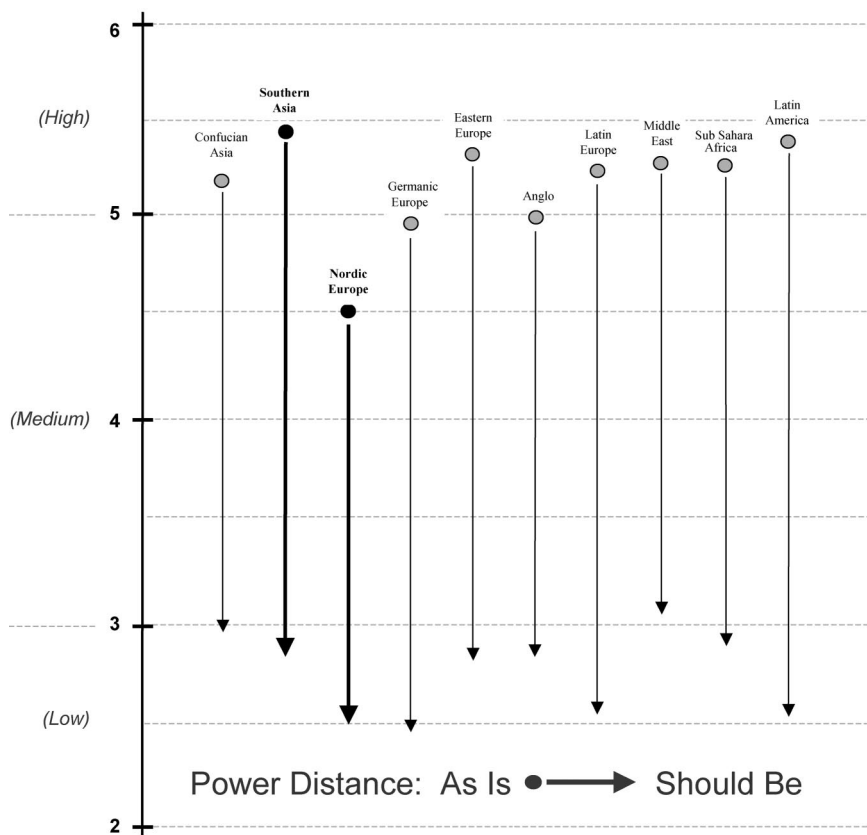


FIGURE 1

knowledge transfer will be discussed in the next section.

National Culture Differences and Knowledge Transfer

A firm's knowledge base is generally seen as its most important competitive weapon.⁵ Knowledge is a resource that exists in an individual or a collective and is embedded in rules, processes, or routines. It is a product of human reflection and experience and is either explicit and codified in formal rules, or tacit and not easily articulated or explained. At its core, knowledge transfer is about how individuals and groups communicate and learn from each other. Since individuals and organizations are part of their societies, it is plausible to expect them to reflect their national culture in their thinking, practices, and values.⁶

Cross-border transfer of knowledge is complex. Culture and cultural differences can have an impact, particularly in the case of tacit knowledge such as leadership skills and management know-how. This type of knowledge is not easily codified and depends on human intuition, but it is often considered the most valuable, complex and cultur-

ally determined.⁷ Successful transfer of knowledge requires that the target unit assimilates the new knowledge and uses it.

Gupta and Govindarajan⁸ suggest that effective knowledge transfer within or between one or more organizations is a function of the following five forces:

1. Value of the source unit's store of knowledge: The greater its value, the greater its attractiveness for other units.
2. Motivational disposition of the unit that sources the knowledge: Organizational politics, inter-unit rivalry, and other barriers may reduce a unit's desire to share its knowledge with other parts of the organization.
3. Existence and richness of transmission channels: Knowledge flows across the organization are facilitated if there are clear communication channels, as well as open and frequent communication among the parties.
4. Motivational disposition of the unit to which the knowledge is directed: Ego-defense mechanisms⁹ and power struggles may lead the target unit's managers to resist adopting knowledge from the source unit. Such resistance is based

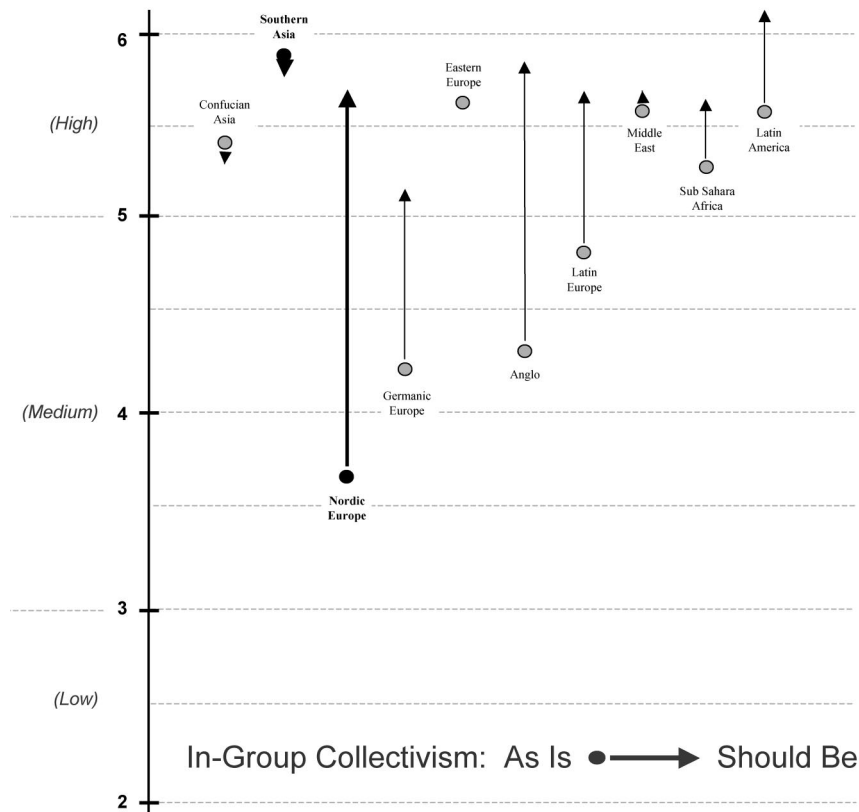


FIGURE 2

on ignorance or underestimation of the value of the knowledge.

- Absorptive capacity or assimilation ability of the target unit: Its "ability to recognize the value of new information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial ends"¹⁰ determines its success in adopting the incoming knowledge. Absorptive capacity refers to the extent the target unit is capable of assimilating the new knowledge and is a function of the unit's prior knowledge and its similarity to the source unit. The closer the new knowledge is to the target unit's prior knowledge and the greater the similarities between the sending and target unit, the higher the absorptive capacity of the target unit.

While a variety of barriers to knowledge transfer can appear in any or all of these five areas, the transfer of knowledge from and to geographically dispersed units within the organization (e.g., from headquarters to a foreign subsidiary) and between organizations (e.g., from an acquirer to the acquired company) is likely to be affected by differences in national cultures.

We will now use the Gupta and Govindarajan¹¹ model and apply, at the same time, the findings

from the GLOBE project to further analyze the relationship between the North European business school, NORDED, and its South Asian client, TAI BANK. We aim to provide insights on how cultural differences might have affected the dynamics and outcome of knowledge transfer. Our intent here is not to criticize any organization or culture. Rather, our purpose is to examine the knowledge-transfer case through a cross-cultural lens and to reach practical conclusions for managers who are involved in similar situations.

National Culture and Cultural Distance Shape the Perceived Value of Knowledge

Research has shown that the greater the cultural differences, the more difficulties people in the receiving unit have in seeing the advantages of adopting knowledge or organizational practices from the source unit.¹² Even if employees in the receiving unit see the value in adopting certain routines and practices from the source unit, the perceived – and often real – costs involved in doing so are likely to be higher when countries are culturally distant.¹³ Differences in cognitive struc-

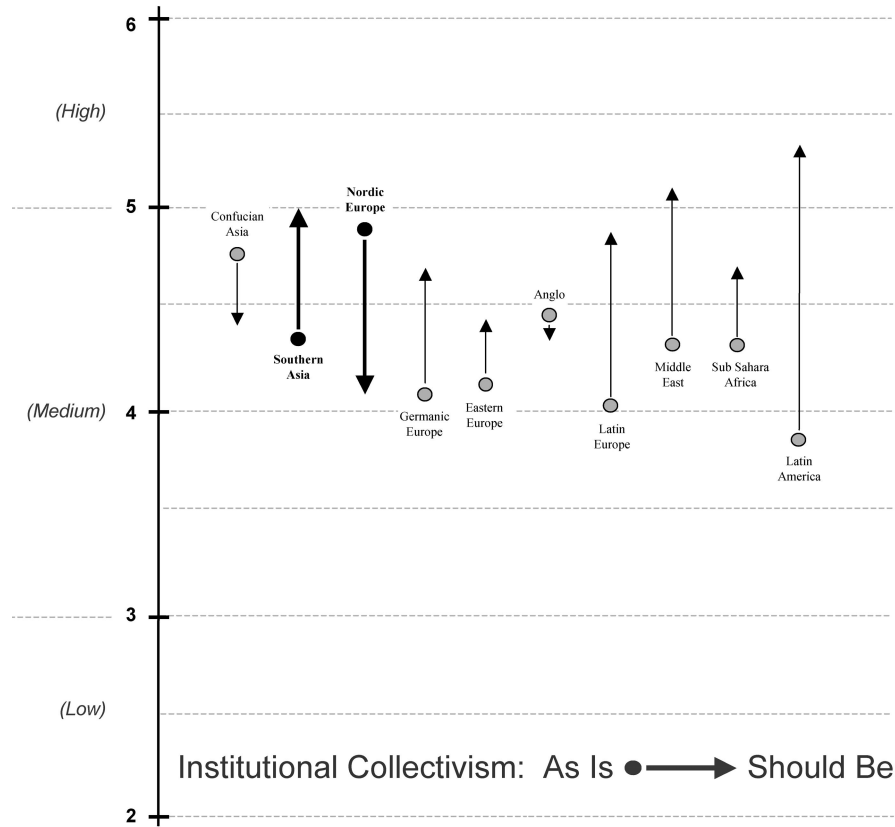


FIGURE 3

tures, values, and practices, as well as language and communication barriers, all raise the costs involved in knowledge transfer.¹⁴ As a result, the parties involved in the knowledge transfer are less likely to share and apply new knowledge.

GLOBE results show that the cultural distance between Southern Asia and Nordic Europe is substantial. Their mean cultural distance, measured by the average difference between the two cultures' rankings on all nine dimensions, computes to 4.4 (for As Is) and 6.0 (for Should Be). In comparison, the mean distance between Southern Asia and Confucian Asia are 3.1 and 3.7 respectively, and between Nordic and Germanic Europe, they are 3.4 and 2.7 respectively. Thus, the visions and the potential for cultural change differ strongly between South Asia and Nordic Europe. As was described above, in the case of Uncertainty Avoidance (Figure 3) and Institutional Collectivism (Figure 4) the practice to value trajectory is in the opposite direction. Applying our cross-cultural interpretation of the Gupta and Govindarajan¹⁵ framework to the case, these findings should have alerted NORDED and TAI BANK to take proactive action. Differences in cultural values are more hidden and require more effort to be adequately un-

derstood and managed. Under these conditions, knowledge transfer requires not only extensive preparation but also close monitoring and timely adjustment at all stages of the project.

In the case presented here, the academic directors at NORDED were primarily concerned about the perceived value of the program to the various decision makers at the bank. Obviously they did a good job in selling the training product to top executives at TAI BANK. However, the European business school designed the leadership program based on a belief that organizations are better off getting their managers and employees involved in decision making because such involvement leads to better-quality decisions and stronger organizational buy-in. NORDED designed the program to educate the participants on how they could be more effective transformational and empowering leaders.

While this goal was consistent with the Nordic European cultural practices of low Power Distance practices, and high Institutional Collectivism practices, it did not fit at all with the client firm's national and organizational culture of high Power Distance practices. As explained earlier, the top management at TAI BANK had approached NORDED to educate

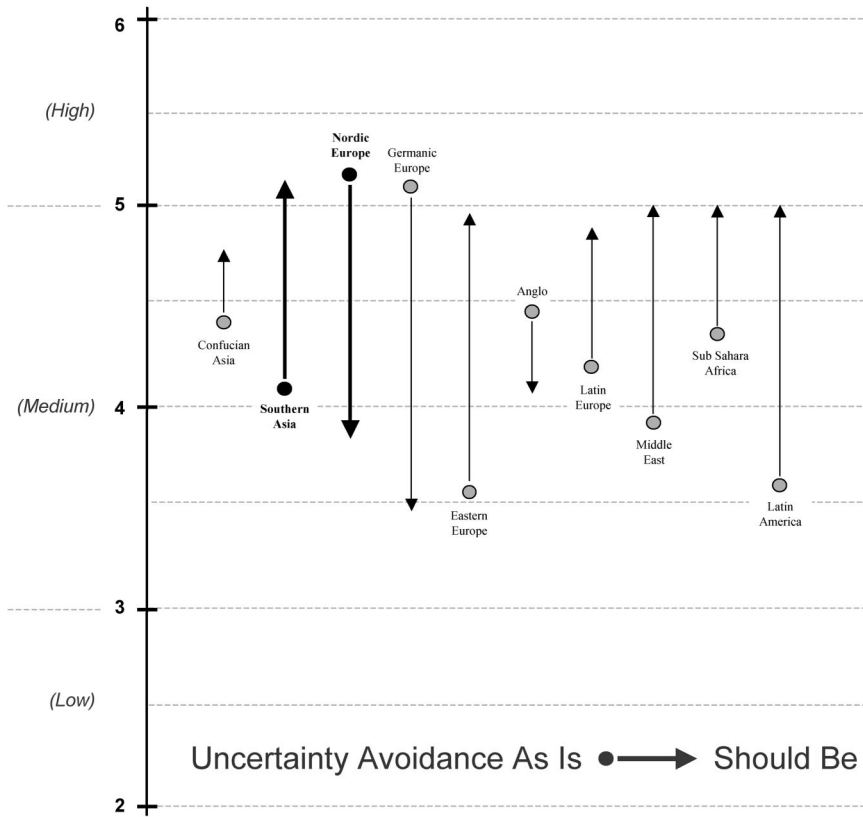


FIGURE 4

its management teams on transformational leadership. But it is not clear that this particular leadership style is effective or desirable in the South Asian culture. Furthermore, even though the top management group had decided to offer such a program to their managers, it is not clear that they fully understood the extent to which the advice offered in the program would be useful and what its behavioral implications were for every manager, including those at the top.

As for NORDED, they incorporated sessions in the program which explicitly discussed the South Asian culture and its implications for transformational leadership, but they did not have sufficient in-depth conversations with the top management at TAI BANK to examine the potential value and application of their teachings for the corporation. The program’s value and applicability was essentially taken for granted and not much discussion took place with the top management.

National Culture and Cultural Differences Shape the Motivational Disposition of the Source Unit

Transferring knowledge is not cost free. It is also very much context bound. Managers and employ-

ees in a source unit must spend time and resources to provide relevant knowledge to the target unit. Their willingness to do this is likely to be affected by their own national culture. Two different types of cultural collectivism, Institutional and In-group Collectivism, are likely to have opposite effects on the source unit’s motivation to transfer knowledge. Managers in a high In-group Collectivist culture are used to working closely with the members of the in-group but are less concerned with knowledge transfer to those outside their own group. They are reluctant to spend the time and the effort to build close relationships with outsiders.¹⁶ In contrast, managers from a high Institutional Collectivist culture tend to promote and encourage more system-wide information systems and knowledge transfer to encourage greater organization wide communication and collaboration.

Now let’s apply our cross cultural interpretation of the Gupta and Govindarajan¹⁷ framework to the case of the European business school and its South Asian client. The NORDED academic directors were initially highly motivated to deliver a great program. However, the TAI BANK’s HR executives’ approach in dealing with them and the participants’ lack of voice in program changes were per-

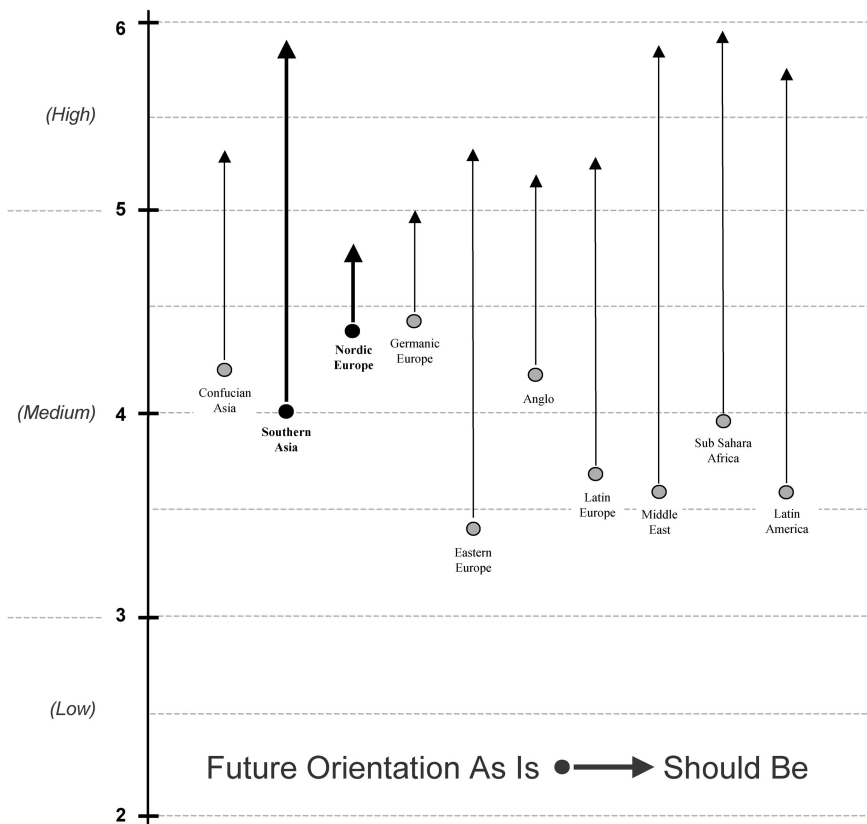


FIGURE 5

ceived as a constant source of frustration. In part, this may be due to the extremely high In-group Collectivism evident in TAI BANK's societal culture (Rank 1 for "As Is" and "Should Be", see Table 3), perhaps leading the HR group to not anticipate the potential negative impact on their outside partners. At the same time, the respective practices in NORDED's societal culture rank lowest (Rank 10, see Table 3) which may have led to misunderstandings about the reasons why there was lack of communication and involvement.

Furthermore, coming from a high Power Distance culture, the client probably expected the business school to implement its instructions immediately without much discussion. The middle and upper-middle managers attending the program had little to say about any aspect of the program. The TAI BANK's HR group believed that the program participants should merely follow instructions without discussion – and the participants obviously met those expectations. In contrast, NORDED representatives, who operated on the basis of low Power Distance practices (As-Is, Rank 10) and values (Should Be, Rank 9), were expecting more feedback and communications from TAI BANK's HR group and the program par-

ticipants. They also viewed themselves as the experts in the field and felt that their views were not taken into consideration and that the quality of the program was negatively impacted by the HR group's directive and exclusive style of decision-making. As a result, even though the program was of great strategic and financial importance to NORDED, as discussed by the Gupta and Govindarajan¹⁸ framework, its program directors soon stopped investing much time in building and sustaining the relationship. Such a loss of motivation is counterproductive to any project's success. However, as was pointed out above, the high societal cultural distance between NORDED and TAI BANK requires extra effort to monitor and adjust project activities. Under these conditions, lack of motivation which impedes further development of relationships is particularly dysfunctional.

Cultural Differences Affect the Richness of Transmission Channels and Create Communication Barriers

Any form of knowledge transfer requires substantial, high-quality communication between the parties. In cross-border cases, this is both important

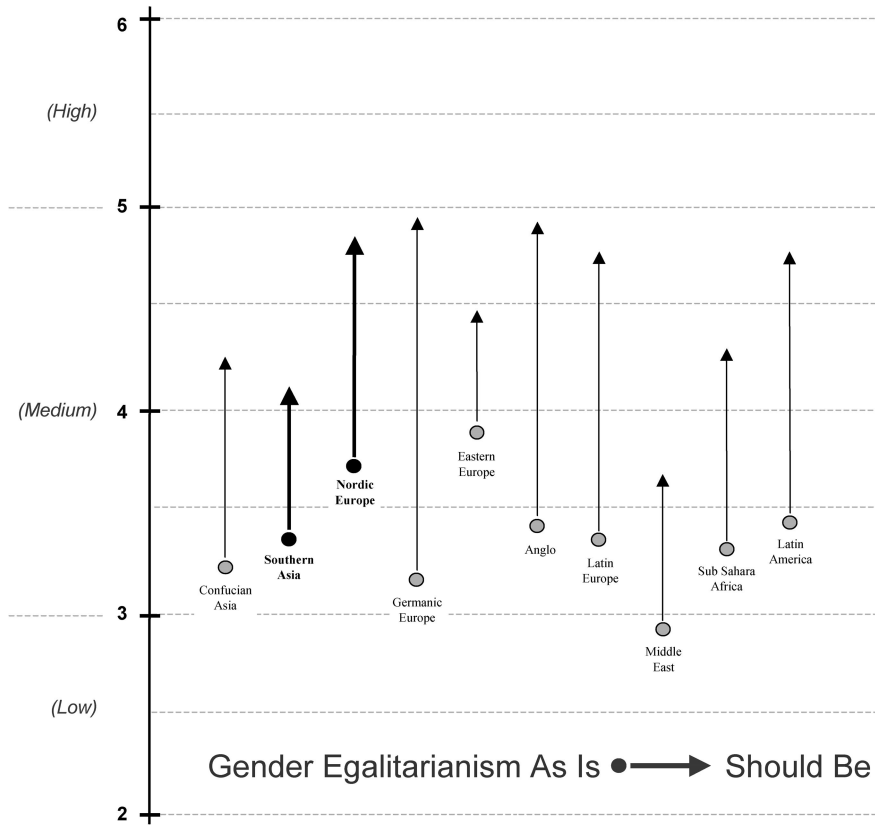


FIGURE 6

and hard to achieve. The most basic barrier is language. Even though English is the predominant language of cross-border communication, managers in many parts of the world do not have a good command of English. This can cause communication problems, especially in cases of non-face to face communication. One way to deal with such problems is to increase the level of face-to-face contact. However, this is relatively time-consuming and expensive in most cross-border settings.

Another important issue related to communication is the methods used by the source unit to transfer knowledge. Differences in cultural practices can play an important role here. When the transferor is from a high uncertainty avoidance culture and the receiving unit is from a low uncertainty avoidance culture, the two parties may find the knowledge transfer process frustrating. This is because the former will emphasize organized, formal, and structured forms of communication while the latter will prefer informal, unplanned, and unstructured approaches.

The South Asian cluster's low score on Uncertainty Avoidance practices seems to reflect a lack of attention to due process and a tendency to make abrupt decisions. For example, emails were sent to

NORDED program directors to inform them of changes taking place in the program just as the program was scheduled to start. And little instruction or explanation was provided to the directors or the participants about what was expected of them under the new directives. This resulted in confusion during the program among NORDED representatives and visible stress among the participants because of their concern that their presentations might not match the expectations of their superiors.

On the one hand, NORDED's high Uncertainty Avoidance cultural practices made them invest more time and effort in anticipatory planning and the design of the training program, along with high attention to detail and organization *before* the actual delivery of the program. On the other hand, TAI BANK's low Uncertainty Avoidance cultural practices made them invest more time and effort *during* program delivery, by monitoring, and adjusting — if felt necessary, and exploring opportunities for quick change when problems appeared or as they developed new ideas. From NORDED staff's perspective, these practices appeared as "abrupt decisions" and "unannounced changes," which compromised their well-planned program.

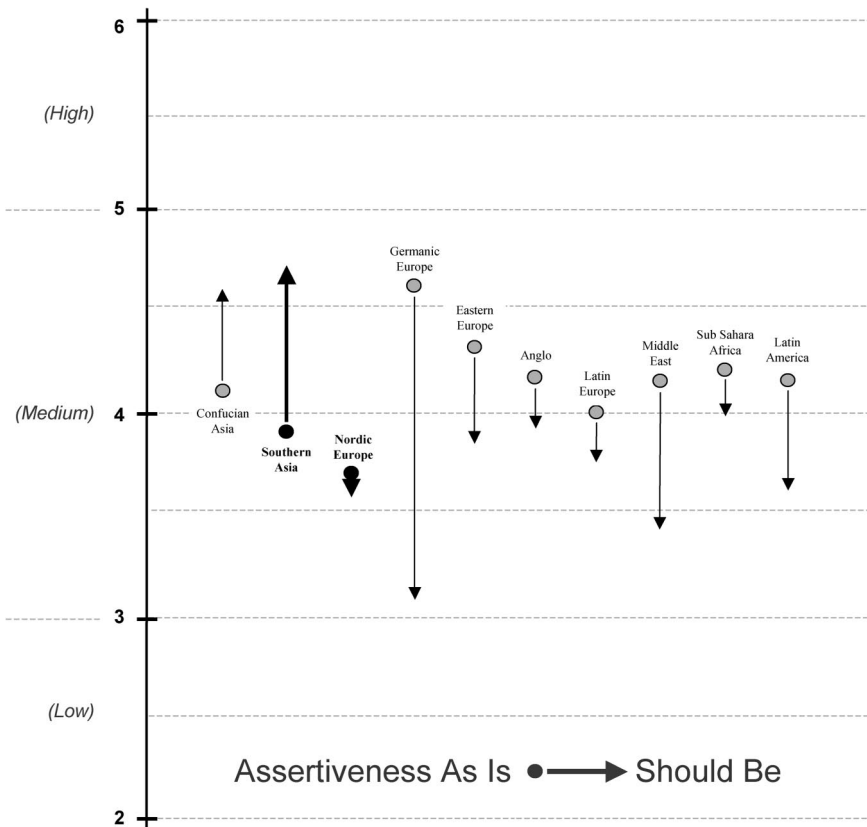


FIGURE 7

From TAI BANK's perspective, the more the leadership program unfolded the more they felt they needed to make changes and adjustments, as a result of the reasons described above. Moreover, they may have perceived NORDED's staff as probably not (yet) trustworthy enough to be fully in the decision-making loop, and thus, TAI BANK's top executives (who have the authority – high Power Distance) decided to take direct action for adjustments.

TAI BANK executives, being from a high In-group Collectivist culture, were probably not predisposed to coordination and consultation with an external partner such as NORDED and more comfortable working with groups they already knew and had worked with.¹⁹ NORDED was unsure about a continuing relationship with the South Asian client. The school was not certain that the client was finding the experience of sufficient value, but had not taken much of a proactive approach to dealing with the issues. While there had been internal complaints at NORDED about the client, the attitude had been somewhat passive and not many solutions had been identified. A possible cultural explanation for this is provided in Table 3. The Nordic European and South Asian cultures are

both low on Assertiveness practices (As-Is). This may explain why NORDED was not very aggressive or proactive in maintaining the lines of communication with the client. While TAI BANK also represents a low Assertiveness As Is (practice) score, it has a much higher Should Be (value) score (4.7 vs. 3.6), and was probably expecting a much higher level of proactivity and initiative from NORDED, something which was not forthcoming and was aggravating the cross-cultural challenges.

No one at the business school built strong personal ties with the key people at TAI BANK and as a result, the continuity of the program was in doubt despite the initial expressed satisfaction of the participants. The NORDED leaders could have recognized these cultural realities and talked *directly* to TAI BANK's leadership by tasking one or more top ranked representatives (to accommodate their high Power Distance practices) to build stronger ties with the client. Maintaining a regular high level contact would have reduced obstacles and created stronger mutual support for the program and its administration, but as explained in the Gupta and Govindarajan²⁰ framework, communication channels between the two parties suffered

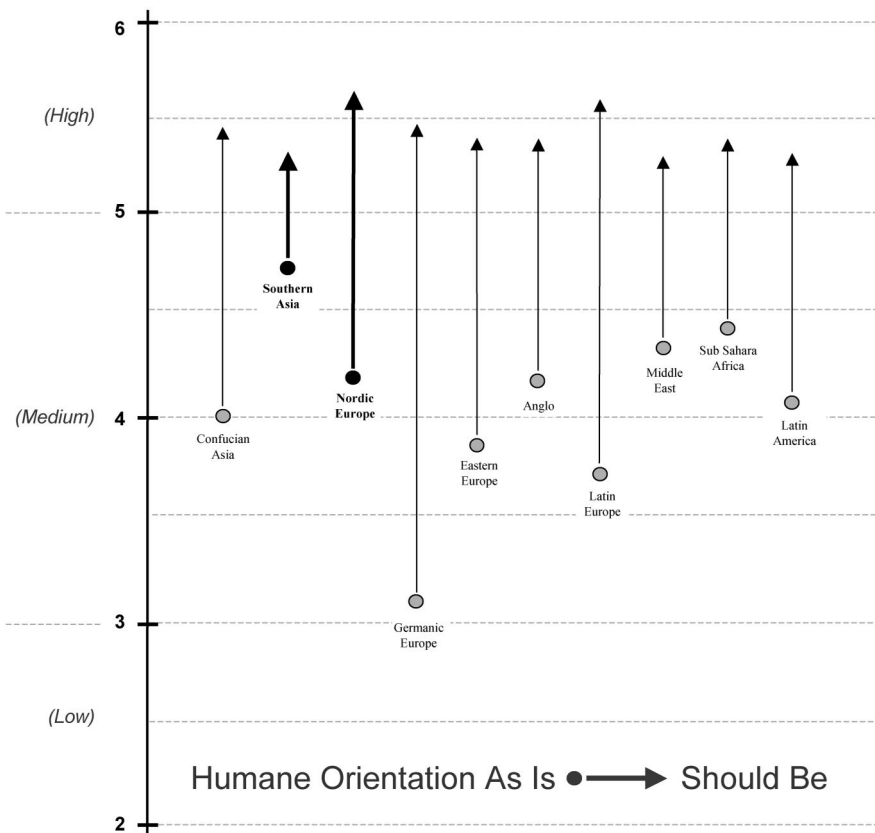


FIGURE 8

as a result of cultural differences and lack of a proactive approach to building rich and open lines of communication resulted in a dysfunctional relationship. A positive atmosphere between NORDED and TAI BANK was not really developed and the initial base of goodwill at the time of signing the agreement deteriorated after the first issues emerged, thus hampering the transfer of management knowledge and acceptance of the NORDED approach—a finding that is also at the core of Holden's model of cross-cultural knowledge transfer.²¹

National Culture and Cultural Differences Shape the Motivational Disposition and Absorptive Capacity of the Target Unit

Research on knowledge transfer has shown that a target unit's absorption of new knowledge depends in part on its stock of prior related knowledge. Knowledge development is path-dependent²² and cumulative in the sense that it consists of a gradual and incremental process of learning; the new knowledge gets connected to the existing related knowledge and builds on it. Totally new knowledge has no anchor in organizational mem-

ory. Therefore, it cannot hook into an existing piece of knowledge. Existing knowledge can thus enhance the target unit's ability and motivation to better understand and evaluate the new incoming knowledge. A target unit faced with totally new knowledge may therefore be unable to determine its relevance and value. The inability to assess the value of the incoming knowledge, in turn, reduces the motivation and ability of the target firm to invest the energy and effort to assimilate and exploit it.

A target unit's absorptive capacity is also affected by the cultural differences between the source and target unit.²³ The degree of similarity between both units, in terms of values and beliefs (among other things),²⁴ is important. This is because when individuals or groups share common meanings, they find it easier to communicate, and the target unit is more receptive to the new knowledge.²⁵ Applying our cross-cultural interpretation of the Gupta and Govindarajan²⁶ framework to the TAI BANK/NORDED case, even though the participants seemed to value getting a Western training program, their ability to implement the new knowledge was in doubt due to cultural obstacles. The academic directors' big-

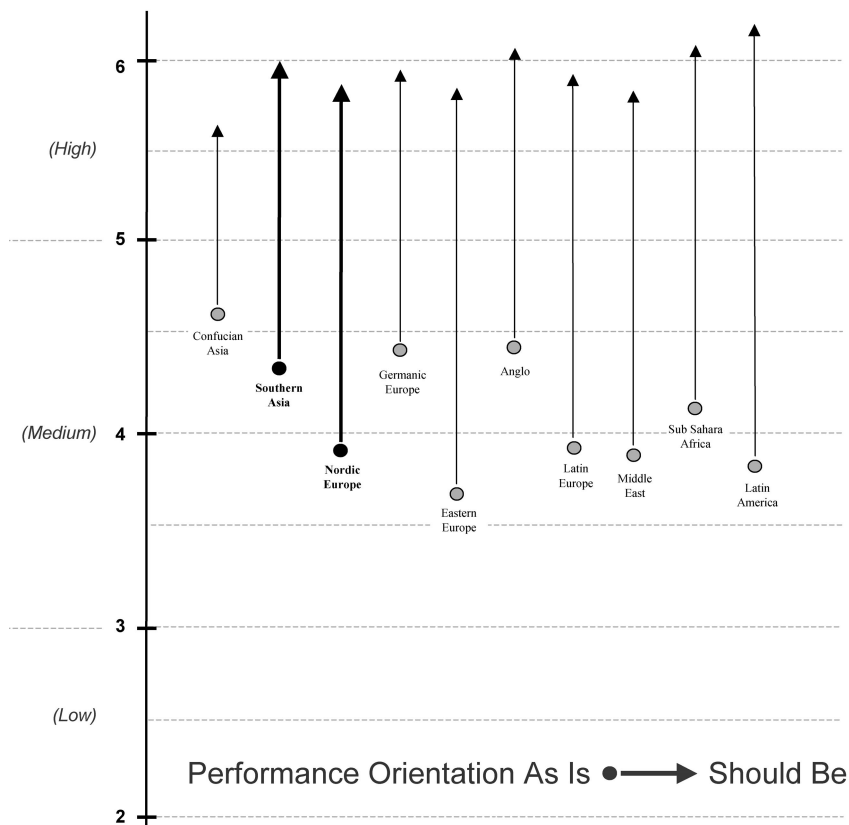


FIGURE 9

gest concern shifted from: are the program participants learning something valuable to: does the client organization have the ability to actually implement the ideas learned. They were unsure whether the client organization was willing and able to adopt the leadership styles promoted. They believed that senior executives did value the abstract notion of leadership. However, they felt that the organization's culture, reflecting the broader national culture, impeded leadership progress. If they had been more proactive, they could have used cultural similarities to build stronger trust and to ensure better understanding and support from TAI BANK. For example, as seen from Table 3, both cultures are very high on Performance Orientation values; their Should Be scores are quite similar. The whole program design and the process of communication and collaboration could have been strengthened if the two parties had been aware of this similarity and used it as the basis of their collaborative work. The similarity in Performance Orientation values could have been used as a strong vehicle for building understanding and support for the program's goals and objectives. The common value of high Performance Orienta-

tion could have been used to invest more time and effort in developing common metrics or criteria to evaluate the success of the program step by step.

How to Manage Cross Cultural Issues: GLOBE Advice on Cross-border Knowledge Transfer

Now we will advise managers on how they can use the GLOBE findings to better manage the transfer of knowledge across cultures.

1. Define Common Goals in Advance of Knowledge Transfer

Foremost, it is important for parties involved in knowledge transfer to agree on a set of common goals and objectives in their joint initiative. Criteria and metrics for defining success need to be identified by parties and agreed to in advance. This is critical because we know that culturally different parties define success differently and, as a result, expect different goals and attach different values to prospective knowledge transfer. If parties agree on the metrics, they are more likely to

converge on how important the knowledge is and what to expect from the process.

An important element in defining common goals is the perceived value of the knowledge content. It is important that the parties understand and agree on the value and applicability of the knowledge to be transferred before they agree on their common goals. A critical success factor in a cross-border knowledge transfer is an agreement on how and why the particular knowledge is of value to the target unit. Such a discussion will result in a better understanding of the target unit's needs and may lead to a change in the content of the knowledge to be transferred.

In the TAI BANK/NORDED case described here, there was little upfront discussion. The GLOBE results would have warned that differences and difficulties would become apparent on: a) the use of hierarchy for organizational communication (high Power Distance, Figure 1); b) the acceptance and implementation of foreign leadership concepts (high In-Group Collectivism, Figure 2); and c) the ample preparations necessary before training results can be implemented widely (high Uncertainty Avoidance, Figure 4). Parties often wrongly assume that their criteria for success and their goals are the same. But clarity on what the different parties expect from the transfer and how they measure its success can go a long way in reducing future misunderstanding and miscommunication. In the case here, had the noted differences been taken more seriously, more effort would have been spent to define the content of the program and their common goals. Members within both parties would then have realized much earlier what exactly they could expect from and do toward effective collaboration. Also it could have helped substantially to enhance the parties' motivation to engage in the knowledge transfer. In the case described here, if NORDED had engaged the senior executives and the HR group in such a discussion, it would have likely achieved a greater common understanding and cooperation. The common goals and the metrics for success could be short-term and/or long-term, and could be defined narrowly and/or broadly. For example, if NORDED and TAI BANK's HR group had initially agreed that an important metric for this program would be the extent to which the participants could better communicate with and motivate their employees, every time the HR group proposed an idea without consultation, the program directors could discuss it within this agreed upon context. Clarity and agreement on common goals and success criteria reduce the chances of future misunderstanding and help provide a common ground to resolve potential cultural misunderstandings.

2. Map the Cultural Profiles

Parties involved in cross-border knowledge transfer must understand their own and the other side's cultural profiles. GLOBE provides the scientifically based tool for doing this. The parties can use the information provided by GLOBE to prepare a cultural map of each country involved in order to clearly identify cultural differences and similarities. The profiles enable an understanding of how they are different or similar. On that basis, key members of the parties to the transfer should engage in a discussion of the different cultures. It is advised to do so very early on in the transfer process. Parties need to discuss the possible ways in which the identified differences can impede or complicate the knowledge transfer process. GLOBE uses nine cultural dimensions to produce cultural profiles. The parties need to identify the subset of cultural differences that can negatively impact the process and explore possible ways to address them. Such a discussion, early in the process, can be helpful and constructive; it prevents an emotional or confrontational debate and facilitates a rational, preemptive, and constructive approach.

Discussions on cultural profiles should not be only focused on cultural differences. A review of the specific cross-cultural *similarities* can help put the parties at ease. It can identify potential areas of leverage to help deal with the cultural differences. One possible area of convergence is similar cultural values (i.e., on the *Should Be* responses). As shown in the nine GLOBE figures, cultures may have different practices but similar values. People in different cultures may share common aspirations about the way things should be in their societies. In terms of identifying common values to start from, in the TAI BANK/NORDED case, despite strong differences between Southern Asia and Nordic Europe in Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and In-Group Collectivism cultural practices, which were discussed above, there is a basis for a common cultural orientation in terms of: 1) Humane Orientation (see Figure 8) and 2) Performance Orientation (see Figure 9). First, taking the time to explore and develop a common understanding of the ground rules of interacting and collaborating with each other on the basis of Humane Orientation should have worked, because here, both cultural clusters are very similar. That is, cultural principles and values of fairness, altruism, generosity, carefulness, and kindness are strongly endorsed. Their enactment surely differs in the two cultural clusters, however, their importance is about equally highly valued. Starting with

these and exploring the differences in enactment should have helped to develop the trust and mutual respect needed to proceed with sufficient care to avoid or identify difficulties in time.

Second, taking the time and effort to articulate the common goals and criteria for success, that is, what TAI BANK and NORDED each mean by high performance, would have been a constructive dialogue. Both cultural clusters are high on Performance Orientation, that is, the degree to which a society encourages and rewards people for performance. Again, the enactment of Performance Orientation differs between cultures, but the emphasis put on this orientation is similarly high, and parties from both cultures would have been willing to invest in common ground on performance criteria. These are just two examples for an area in which upfront investment in terms of time and effort is likely to have resulted in more common ground/space for running the project with less frustration and surprise than was actually the case.

In general, constructive discussions on cultural profiles should lead to better management of the transfer process and lead to insights on how to communicate more effectively. In the case here, the NORDED administrators should have also proactively engaged TAI BANK representatives in a discussion of cultural impediments to building a strong transformational leadership team. The high In-Group Collectivism cultural practices in the South Asian culture served as an impediment. However, TAI BANK had already crossed this line by hiring a European institution to do the job. Still the cultural difference exists and should have been discussed in the sense of "How far are you willing to go against this cultural context?" Another starting point would have been to inform the top management and the HR group of the apparent value differences between modern Western-type transformational leadership and traditional South Asian culture (autonomy, individual freedom, participative leadership, low power distance versus harmony, collaboration, directive leadership, and high power distance). The relative match in the Should Be scores in Power Distance is a solid ground for convergence, meaning that the trajectory of cultural development in South Asia and Nordic Europe is in the same direction, namely lower Power Distance.

3. Assign Relationship Managers in Cross-Cultural Transfers of Knowledge

In the TAI BANK/NORDED case, the knowledge-transmitting process seems under-coordinated, because the two parties did not keep open the lines of

communication. We may even go so far as to conclude that a cross-culturally focused socialization process between members of TAI BANK and the NORDED directors would have been the only way to prevent the culture clash. Given the complexities of cross-border transfer of knowledge, neither party could take anything for granted. All parties should have cross-culturally aware individuals accountable for the success of the transfer. They should also hold regular meetings and discussions to better manage the relationship. A typical cross-border transfer of knowledge involves many individuals and groups from the organizations involved. The larger the number of players and organizations involved, the higher the likelihood of cross-cultural misunderstanding and the less the probability of success. By assigning those responsible for the relationship, each organization involved can help prevent cross-cultural friction.

The parties involved in cross-border knowledge transfer need more than open lines of communications. They need to create a common space where the parties feel comfortable and confident to work together to nurture and develop the mutual relationship. The common space is developed through an understanding of common cultural traits and common goals for the transfer, but it also requires constant contact, in the form of both distant and face-to-face and formal and social exchanges to develop the requisite trust. Especially in the case of a high in-group culture, the challenge for the external partner is to find ways that would help it become part of the other party's in-group. Social and informal gatherings tend to be particularly important in such settings.

Of course, it is the provider of the knowledge, in this case NORDED, which should take the initiative. They should make sure they have their own relationship manager(s) and ask for the creation of such a role within the client side. They may need to explain the importance of this role and how it would help others involved in the actual transfer. The fundamental reason for such a role is to enhance the chances that the client does receive the best value possible in this complex exchange.

4. Learn from Knowledge Transfer

The parties involved in cross-cultural knowledge transfer need to see it as a learning opportunity. The success of organizations is increasingly dependent on productive relationships with people in other culturally different organizations. Cross-cultural knowledge transfer is a fact of daily life for most corporations worldwide. It is therefore critical for managers to view each case of knowledge

transfer not as an isolated situation but as a point in a stream of learning opportunities. Time and money need to be budgeted and spent on this cross-cultural learning. An important lesson from the case presented here is that success in a cross-border transfer of knowledge depends not just on the receiver's absorptive capacity, but on the provider's transformative capacity and its ability to manage the knowledge transfer process. A proactive and culturally sensitive approach by the source can go a long way to improving the chances of success.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we have discussed the issues related to cross-border transfer of knowledge. The essence of our article is that while any case of knowledge transfer may face obstacles and complexities, cases of cross-border knowledge transfer may face an extra challenge of cross-cultural hurdles. But cultural differences do not per se create problems; rather it is the way that cultural differences are managed that often results in poor knowledge transfer outcomes. If managed effectively, cultural differences can be a source of synergy and a stimulus for mutual learning. So the message to executives is not to automatically shy away from cross-border situations in knowledge transfer. Instead, our message is that executives need to take a proactive and systematic approach to dealing with cultural differences. They need to be aware of how the partnering cultures are different and be mindful of their implications. As explained in the paper, the parties need to define their common goals in the transfer and their success criteria, need to understand and discuss their potential cultural challenges, need to ensure they have proper management of the relationship, and need to treat every case of cross-border knowledge transfer as a learning opportunity to improve their chances for the next time.

We also presented GLOBE and its findings as a helpful tool for executives to be more prepared for the challenges and issues they will be facing. GLOBE's nine cultural dimensions and its analyses of cultural values and practices will be the state-of-the-art for many years to come and can help managers develop a global and culturally sensitive mindset. GLOBE provides a rigorous tool to help managers understand the similarities and differences among the various cultures worldwide and to take a proactive and constructive approach to resolving cross-cultural issues. GLOBE can provide valuable assistance in identifying the culturally appropriate content of the knowledge to be

transferred and in effectively managing the transfer process.

Appendix 1

1. **Power distance** refers to the extent to which a collective maintains inequality among its members by stratifying individuals and groups with respect to power, authority, and prestige (sample item: "Followers are (should be) expected to obey their leaders without question."). The range of scores for both practices and values is from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high). A score of 2 means low practices or values of power distance; a score of 6 means high practices or values. The vertical axis represents cultural practices (*As Is*) and the horizontal axis represents cultural values (*Should Be*). Note that in Figure 1 the scores ascribed to practices of power distance (*As Is*) range between 4 (medium) and 6 (high), whereas the scores ascribed to values of power distance (*Should Be*) range between 2 (low) and 4 (medium). Thus, in all studied countries power distance is less valued than it is actually practiced.
2. **In-group collectivism** refers to the extent to which members of a society take pride in membership in small groups such as their family and circle of close friends, and the organizations and units in which they are employed (sample item: "Employees feel (should feel) great loyalty toward this organization"). Interestingly, in all cultural clusters, in-group collectivism is valued quite highly (range between 5 and 6). However, the perceived cultural practices differ more strongly. Most European cultural clusters (Nordic, Germanic, Latin) and the Anglo cluster endorse in-group collectivism to medium (4) or somewhat high (5) extent. They are the most individualistic cultures. In these European clusters we found a desire for more in-group collectivism.
3. **Institutional collectivism** refers to the degree to which individuals are encouraged by societal institutions to be integrated into broader entities. In more collectivist societies, harmony and cooperation are paramount whereas in more individualistic countries, autonomy and individual freedom are more stressed (sample item: "Leaders encourage (should encourage) group loyalty even if individual goals suffer"). There is a negative correlation between *As Is* and *Should Be* scores evident, that is, country clusters with high scores on practices of institutional collectivism tend to score significantly lower on respective values (e.g., Nordic European) and those with low scores on cultural practices tend to desire significantly higher levels of institutional collectivism (e.g., Latin America).
4. **Uncertainty avoidance** refers to the extent to which members of a collective seek orderliness, consistency, and structure to cover situations in their daily lives. It reflects society's reliance on social norms and procedures to alleviate the unpredictability of future events (sample item: "Most people lead (should lead) highly structured lives with few unexpected events"). There is a negative correlation between *As Is* and *Should Be* scores evident. Most prominently, the Germanic and Nordic European clusters score on the high end of the distribution for uncertainty avoidance cultural practices (*As Is*) and show much lower levels (even below medium) for uncertainty avoidance in terms of cultural values (*Should Be*). In sharp contrast, Eastern European, Middle East and Latin American cultures score below medium in uncertainty avoidance cultural practices and high on the respective cultural values.
5. **Future orientation** refers to the extent to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviors such as delaying gratification, planning, and investing in the future (sample item: "More people live (should live) for the present rather than for the future," scored inversely). All country clusters range around the medium between 3.5 and 4.5 for Future Orientation practices and range between 4.8 and 6.0 in terms of their future-orientation values.
6. **Gender egalitarianism** refers to the degree to which a collective minimizes gender inequality (sample item: "Boys are encouraged (should be encouraged) more than girls to attain a higher education," scored inversely). With the exception of the Middle East cluster (which scores below 3.0 for Gender Egalitarianism practices and below a medium 4.0 for Gender

Egalitarianism *Should Be*), all other country clusters range between 3.0 and 4.0 on Gender Egalitarianism cultural practices (*As Is*) and between 4.0 and 5.0 on Gender Egalitarianism cultural values (*Should Be*). In Eastern and Nordic European cultures Gender Egalitarianism seems to be reasonably high and stable, which is indicated by a comparatively small difference between *As Is* and *Should Be* scores.

7. **Assertiveness** refers to the degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others (sample item: "People are (should be) generally dominant in their relationships with each other."). In nearly all country clusters the Assertiveness cultural practices range near the medium of 4.0 (the Germanic cluster scores above 4.5, the Nordic European cluster scores near 3.5). More variance is evident for the Assertiveness cultural values, with the Germanic cultures at the lower end (3.0) and Confucian and Southern Asia on the higher end (near 5.0). For the Germanic cultures one can note a disparity between higher scores for Assertiveness practices and lower values for Assertiveness. In Confucian and Southern Asia cultures we note a trend towards higher Assertiveness (*Should Be*) as compared to the current practices.
8. **Humane orientation** refers to the degree to which a collective encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others (sample item: "People are generally (should be generally) very tolerant of mistakes"). In all country clusters, Humane Orientation cultural values are highly endorsed (all range around 5.5). However, in terms of Humane Orientation cultural practices there is strong variance between the cultural clusters. The highest Humane Orientation *As Is* scores are evident for Southern Asia (near 5.0), followed by Sub Sahara Africa and Middle East (near 4.5). On the lower end is the Germanic cluster (near 3.5). All other clusters range below or above the median value of 4.0.
9. **Performance orientation** refers to the degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence (sample item: "Students are encouraged (should be encouraged) to strive for continuously improved performance"). A clear trend among all country clusters is evident; there are much higher *Should Be* scores in Performance Orientation (between 5.5 and 6.5, as compared to the practices range of about 3.7 to 4.7). Interestingly, Confucian Asia ranges high on Performance Orientation *As Is* (4.6) and comparatively low on Performance Orientation *Should Be* (5.6). This indicates a sensible fit between practices and values. This is especially so when compared to all other cultural clusters which display much higher distances between *As Is* and *Should Be* scores (for example, Latin America: *As Is* = 3.8, *Should Be* = 6.3).

Appendix 2

The GLOBE countries grouped in 10 cultural clusters²⁷

Latin Europe	France Switzerland (French speaking part) Israel Italy Portugal Spain
Germanic Europe	Austria Germany (former East) Germany (former West) Netherlands Switzerland (German speaking part)
Anglo Europe	Ireland United Kingdom
Nordic Europe	Denmark Finland Sweden
Eastern Europe	Albania Georgia Greece Hungary Kazakhstan

Latin America	Poland Russia. Slovenia Argentina Bolivia Brazil Colombia Costa Rica Ecuador El Salvador Guatemala Mexico Venezuela
Confucian Asia	China Hong Kong Japan Korea, Rep. Singapore Taiwan
Anglo (outside Europe)	Australia Canada (English speaking part) United States New Zealand South Africa (white sample)
Sub-Sahara Africa	Namibia Nigeria South Africa (black sample) Zambia Zimbabwe
Southern Asia	India Indonesia Iran Malaysia Philippines Thailand
Middle East	Egypt, Arab Rep. Kuwait Morocco Qatar Turkey

Endnotes

¹ Kumar, N. 2002. *Globalization and the quality of foreign direct investments*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

² Levy, A. 2001. Promises unfulfilled. *Bloomberg Markets*, 10 (4): 37–45.

³ Holden, H. 2002. *Cross-cultural Management: A knowledge management perspective*. Harlow: Financial Times/Prentice Hall.

³ House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P., & Gupta, V. (Eds.) *Leadership, culture, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

⁴ See, E.G., Javidan, M., & House, R. 2002. Leadership and cultures around the world: Findings from GLOBE: An introduction to the special issue. *Journal of World Business* (Special Issue), 37, 1–2.

⁵ Dierickx, I. & Cool, K. 1989. Asset stock accumulation and sustainability of competitive advantage. *Management Science* 35:1504–1514; Lippman, S.A., & Rumelt, R.P. 1982. Uncertain imitability: An analysis of interfirm differences in efficiency under competition. *Bell Journal of Economics* 13: 418–438.

⁶ House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Ruiz-Quintanilla, S. A., Dorfman, P.W., Javidan, M., Dickson, M.W., Gupta, et al. 1999. Cultural influences on leadership and organizations: Project GLOBE. In

W. H. Mobley, M. J. Gessner, & V. Arnold. (Eds.), *Advances in global leadership*. Stamford, CN: JAI. 171-233.

⁷ De Long, D.W., & Fahey, L. 2000. Diagnosing cultural barriers to knowledge management. *Academy of Management Executive* 14(4): 113-128. See also Bhagat, R.S., Kedia, B.L., Harveston, P.D., & Triandis, H.C. 2002. Cultural variations in the cross-cultural border transfer of organizational knowledge: An integrative framework. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(2): 204-221.

⁸ Gupta, A. K., & Govindarajan, V. 2000. Knowledge flows within multinational corporations. *Strategic Management Journal* 21: 473-496.

⁹ Sherif, M. & Cantril, H. 1947. *The psychology of ego involvements: Social attitudes and identification*. New York: Wiley.

¹⁰ Cohen, W.M. & Levinthal, D.A. 1990. Absorptive capacity: A new perspective on learning and innovation. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 35: 128-152. p. 132.

¹¹ Gupta, A. K. & Govindarajan, V. 2000. op. cit.

¹² Stahl, G.K., Bjorkman, I., & Vaara, E. 2004. *National cultural differences and capability transfer in cross-border acquisitions*. Paper presented at the Academy of Management Conference, New Orleans, August 6-11, 2004. See also Szulanski, G. 1996. Exploring internal stickiness: Impediments to the transfer of best practice within the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 17: 27-43.

¹³ Kostova, T. 1999. Transnational transfer of strategic organizational practices: A contextual perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 24: 308-324.

¹⁴ Simonin, B.L. 1999. Ambiguity and the process of knowledge transfer in strategic alliances. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20: 595-623.

¹⁵ Gupta, A. K. & Govindarajan, V. 2000. op. cit.

¹⁶ Glisby, M., & Holden, N. 2002. Contextual constraints in knowledge management theory: The cultural embeddedness of Nonaka's knowledge-creating company. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 10(2): 1-8.

¹⁷ Gupta, A. K. & Govindarajan, V. 2000. op. cit.

¹⁸ Gupta, A. K. & Govindarajan, V. 2000. op. cit.

¹⁹ Javidan, M., & Dastmalchian, A. 2003. Culture and leadership in Iran: The land of individual achievers, strong family ties, and powerful elite. *Academy of Management Executive*, 17(4): 127-143.

²⁰ Gupta, A. K. & Govindarajan, V. 2000. op. cit.

²¹ Holden, H. 2002. op. cit.

²² Cohen & Levinthal, 1990, op. cit.

²³ De Long & Fahey, 2000, op. cit.

²⁴ Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000, op. cit.

²⁵ Rogers, E.M. 1995. *Diffusion of innovations*. New York: Free Press.

²⁶ Gupta, A. K. & Govindarajan, V. 2000. op. cit.

²⁷ Dorfman, P., Hanges, P.J., & Brodbeck, F.C. 2004. Leadership and cultural variation: The identification of culturally endorsed leadership profiles. In R.J. House, P.J. Hanges, M. Javidan, P. Dorfman, & V. Gupta (Eds.) *Leadership, culture, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.: 669-719.

Mansour Javidan is Director of the Garvin Center for Cultures and Languages of International Management at Thunderbird, The Garvin School of International Management. He is a board member and co-author of the first GLOBE book, recently published by SAGE, which won the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology's (SIOP) 2005 M. Scott Myers Award for Applied Research in the Workplace. Contact: javidanm@t-bird.edu

Günter K. Stahl is Assistant Professor of Organizational Behavior at INSEAD. His current research focuses on the link between strategy and leadership, global leadership development, trust within and between organizations, and management of mergers and acquisitions. His most recent co-edited books are "Mergers and Acquisitions: Managing Culture and Human Resources" (with Mark Mendenhall; Stanford University Press 2005) and the "Handbook of Research in International Human Resource Management" (with Ingmar Björkman; Edward Elgar 2005). Contact: guenter.stahl@insead.edu

Felix C. Brodbeck is professor of Organizational and Social Psychology, Head of Work and Organisational Psychology, and Director of the Aston Centre for Leadership Excellence (ACLE), at Aston Business School, UK. His research, manifold publications and consulting cover the fields of HRM, OB, OD, Social and Cross-Cultural Psychology, currently focusing on leadership, teamwork, diversity, and distributed knowledge in organizations. Contact: f.c.brodbeck@aston.ac.uk

Celeste P.M. Wilderom is a full professor in Management & Organizational Behavior (University of Twente, the Netherlands). She obtained a Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo (USA) in 1987. Her main research is on leadership and culture. She is one of the three editors of the award-winning *Handbook of Organizational Culture & Climate* (2000, Sage). Currently she serves as an associate editor of the *British Journal of Management*, previously also: *International Journal of Service Industry Management* as well as the *Academy of Management Executive*. Contact: c.p.m.wilderom@utwente.nl

Copyright of Academy of Management Executive is the property of Academy of Management and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.