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Abstract

Transfer of technology is a widely studied subject. However, the role of cultural differences in the transfer of technology has been studied relatively little. This is surprising since culture is the collective programming guiding our behaviour and the way we act and communicate. Furthermore, significant differences in cultures have been recognised and thus, these are bound to affect the transfer of technology as well.

Transfer of technology consists of three major dimensions (content, communication and context) that affect the transfer's outcome. These dimensions consist of several elements that are of great importance to a successful transfer of technology and, thus a successful transfer of technology is a process where these elements are taken into account.

Culture is a multi-faceted issue that has different dimensions and levels (organisational, occupational and national culture); and differences in these variables across cultures create cultural differences. The effect of cultural differences on the transfer of technology comes in the form of effects on the three dimensions of transfer of technology. These differences include e.g. communication differences; that the management and leadership of an expatriate are nationally and culturally bound, different working cultures, motivation patterns, leadership-subordinate relationships etc.

The role of these differences can vary significantly depending on the type (inter- or intra-firm transfer), mode of transfer, relationship of the transferor and recipient etc. However, cultural differences always play an important role in the transfer. The role of cultural differences does not need to be a negative one however. In addition, the transferor can affect significantly whether the cultural differences become a problem or not.

In this study a theoretical framework for cultural differences in transfer of technology was created and it was tested on a case company. Many of the differences predicted by the theory were found in the case transfer. However, the framework requires more empirical testing before more conclusions about its adequateness can be drawn.

Key words	Transfer of Technology, Culture, Cultural Differences
Further information	