All Regis University Theses

Summer 2012

Knowledge Management Across Cultural Boundaries: Global Organizational Knowledge-Sharing

Jeffrey Harling
Regis University

Follow this and additional works at: https://epublications.regis.edu/theses
 Part of the Computer Sciences Commons

Regis University
College for Professional Studies Graduate Programs
Final Project/Thesis

Disclaimer

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ACROSS CULTURUAL BOUNDARIES;

GLOBAL ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE-SHARING

A THESIS

SUBMITTED ON 23 OF AUGUST, 2012

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

OF THE SCHOOL OF COMPUTER & INFORMATION

OF REGIS UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF MASTER OF

SCIENCE IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

BY

Jeffrey Harling

APPROVALS

Dolores Bilo, Thesis Advisor

Shari Plantz-Masters

Ranked Faculty

Abstract

The practice of knowledge management is becoming pervasive in the modern business world.

Yet, as the corporate world globalizes at an alarming rate, the process of how knowledge is

captured and shared does not address the cultural nuances of those new participants spread across

nearly every global region. Academically, knowledge management itself does rely on three

primary pillars for success; those being process, technology, and culture. However, the culture

aspect in the formal knowledge programs is more closely aligned with influencing users to share

knowledge that they would otherwise hold close as an asset of their gained expertise. While this

is also key to the success of this research, the manner in which knowledge capture is performed

does not address those who are already willing to share, but are unable to understand the value

that they can provide due to limitations of their culture and/or background. This study looks at

three things: one, the global propensity of corporate knowledge management programs, two, how

participants of knowledge management programs currently in existence knowledge share with

their peers in other countries through the course of their daily work routine and three, through a

brief survey and qualitative analysis, whether global knowledge management programs are

addressing cultural concerns of their participants as part of their defined process. In addition,

recommendations for further study on this topic are discussed.

Acknowledgements

For the love and encouragement throughout, I would like to thank my wife, Lisa and my children, Brittani, Rebecka, Ian, and Seth. Without them, I would not have reached this milestone. Additionally, I'd like to thank my advisor, Dolores Bilo for her patience during the process of writing my thesis which was concurrent with perhaps the most challenging and overwhelming year of my entire professional career.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The concept of knowledge management is becoming pervasive in the technology

industry. According to Peter Drucker (1999), the "most valuable asset" of the 21st century

business will be its "knowledge workers" and their ability to work in an informed manner.

Taking a cue from this suggestion, an emerging workforce is growing in influence as

workforce globalization links new emerging regions and their people to the modern business

world. With connection to the Internet and corresponding access to a vast array of information,

these new "knowledge workers" are now participating in worldwide collaboration models. Yet

simply having access to the same information resources may not provide consistent business

results from both modern and emerging regions. That is, considering how groups of individuals

study, assess, and employ knowledge differs substantially based on cultural predisposition and

backgrounds according to research by Chang, Mak, Li, Wu, Chen, and Lu, (2011).

Consequently, how knowledge management processes are defined to capture and share

information across diverse, global organizations could exacerbate or resolve this dilemma

depending on whether they have accounted for what can amount to vast cultural differences.

Highly dispersed business models means that knowledge sharing which once took place around

the water cooler, in face-to-face meetings at adjoining cubicles, or through demonstration by co-

located employees sharing a common perspective must now take into consideration not only the

distance between participants, but also cultural differences that may affect how knowledge

transfer interactions occur. This could lead to restrictions on the diffusion of knowledge within

an organization where personal communication biases and cultural limitations to how knowledge

is absorbed and codified is not well understood and accounted for in the formal knowledge

management program.

Knowledge Management in Practice

The practice of knowledge management is pervasive in business today as more and more

companies scatter their operations throughout the globe; the need for a centralized source of

knowledge simultaneously increases. As Hauschild, Licht, and Stein (2009) note, the potential

for innovative results and added "value creation" for nearly any sized business should look

beyond the latest corporate speak or trend in efficiency of operations, instead placing focus on a

cultural revolution within each business embracing knowledge management as a foundation.

Typically dissected into three primary angles of attack, how knowledge management

programs are implemented generally requires addressing separately but in synch the following:

process change, supporting technology, and cultural shift of the generally accepted business

processes and behaviors. As illustrated in Figure 1, the process, technology, and culture

components must be enacted in perfect balance with each equally dependent on the other two for

ensured success. That is, if one of these pieces is not fully engaged or missing altogether, the

knowledge management program is jeopardized. Pee and Kankanhalli (2009) extend this idea to

include measurement as a possible fourth pillar of the knowledge management model, yet submit

that measurement transcends each of the primary themes. The thinking here is that measurement

of the overall knowledge management model demonstrates an inclination to comply with

common process or technology, but any measurement of the third component: culture, is only a

view of how knowledge management program participants are complying within the culture of a

business operational model and not that all individuals are explicitly deriving an identical or

equivalent value from the knowledge management program.
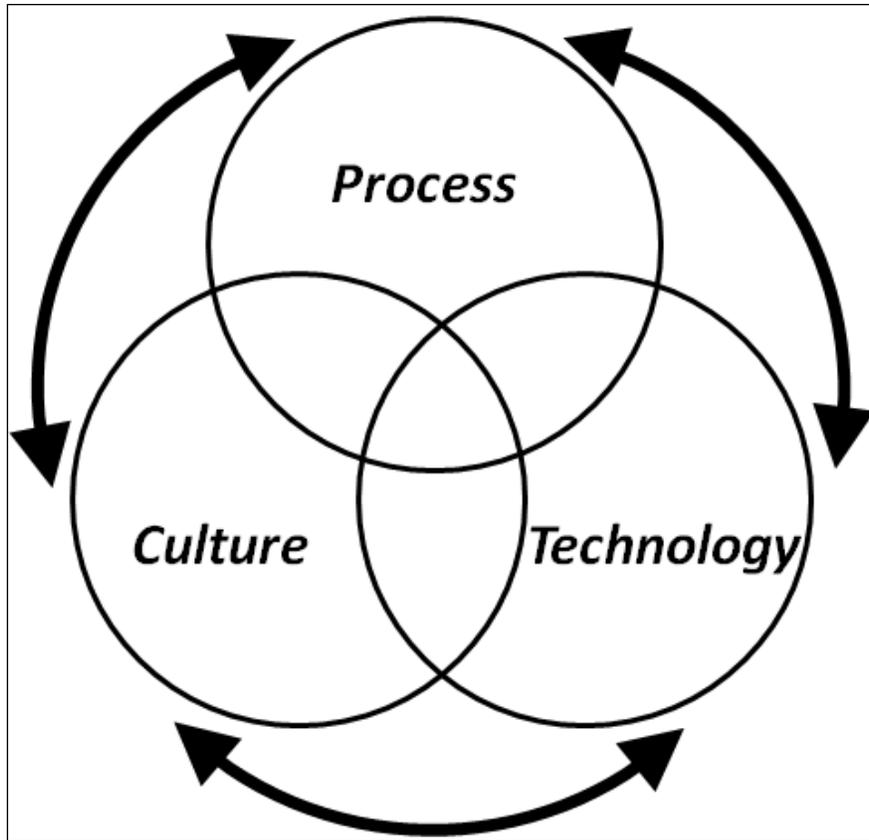
Figure 1. The Knowledge Management Ecosystem of Process, Culture, and Technology
Adapted from "A Model of Organisational Knowledge Management Maturity Based on People, Process, and Technology." Pee, L. G. and Kankanhalli, A., 2009, Journal of Information & Knowledge Management, 8(2), 79-99.

Knowledge Management and Cultural Influencers

Knowledge Management programs in their own right are vastly complex; it can be

argued that the knowledge management program, i.e., the practice of how knowledge is defined,

documented, distributed, and managed must be closely affixed to the business process. Yet as

the world globalizes and knowledge management practices follow, the floodgates of entirely new

tribes of users participating in this practice are now opened. The concept of culture in the

knowledge management ecosystem has come to depend on not just the business hierarchical structure and behaviors of the past, but of the culture of the individuals who make up that hierarchy. Many of these same individuals would be considered novice in their new skill having no long and detailed involvement in the new technologies for which they may soon be supporting.

As Arun-Kumar (2008) points out for example, the booming Indian technology sector has meant that millions of its residents have been thrust into the technology realm over the past 20 years ensuring that there are few, if any, seasoned experts amongst their ranks. In fact, many Indians engaged their first personal computing experience in college or even worse, during their first job after graduation. It would seem that they are best positioned to take advantage of a knowledge-sharing instance. But even in the relative newness of the Indian culture exposure to the global business model, their perspective on adapting to technology that they have hardly interacted with previously in and of itself is cause for added focus on the spoke of culture in the knowledge management wheel.

Knowledge management systems continue to become more commonplace, yet one aspect that is regularly ignored is the simultaneous change in the learning styles of the community of participants. Arun-Kumar (2008) goes on to describe the nature of learning in Indian schools and colleges as generally rote ensuring that their grasp of explicitly defined procedures and tasks are where most of their ability lies. Yet, thinking out of the box or around the implicit would be a difficult concept for many Indians to understand. This combined with their reduced level of practical working and hands-on knowledge going in, makes the scenario of addressing cultural distinctions in knowledge management globalization efforts ripe for discussion.

Perspectives of Knowledge Sharing Across Cultures

The need to share knowledge is based on multiple factors such as current access to knowledge, propensity to share knowledge as a group, and scarcity of knowledge. As Michailova and Sidorova (2010) point out, economies that are involved in a dramatic transition developing new economies, business models, and the like, may place much greater emphasis on sharing knowledge classifying it as a "non-depleting asset."   They make this classification for a number of reasons including gaining advantage amongst a sea of global competitors or working to reach a common goal of enlightenment.

Michailova and Sidorova (2010) go on to write that much of the developed world suffers a dichotomy of approaches towards knowledge management depending on the level of the country's development, political underpinnings, and sense of urgency. These scenarios can amount to a presumed lack of perceived sovereignty by the knowledge worker. This could impact the likelihood of knowledge sharing amongst cultures limited by their desire to risk or take ownership of knowledge or to be associated with it for fear that they will be held out as solely accountable for those statements (p.69). This may have been a result of political structuring in those developing countries which placed every citizen into a uniform class based on centralized planning. The resultant stems many ad hoc knowledge transfer opportunities as well as holding the line on creativity of learning where entire populations are discouraged from openly collaborating about their ideas (p. 74). Effectively, knowledge was controlled by the government and speaking up, sharing knowledge, or contributing information was discouraged, squelched, or even punished.

Conversely, Lang and Steger (2002) propose that Western economies have made broad assumptions around the management of knowledge pointing out that regardless of the adaptation

of knowledge management, there is still no consideration historically for how emerging cultures

outside the Western world and Japan approach the knowledge management process. They

instead follow a unique set of standards, expectations, and pre-defined notions around how

knowledge is dispersed. This limited dispersal of knowledge is attributed to environments that

are "complex, dynamic, and uncertain" on many fronts including political and social (pp. 282-

283). But moreover, the relative scarcity of non-Western cultural surroundings instead drives

knowledge-sharing practices which are more akin to survival techniques as opposed to

mechanisms for solving business-related problems (p. 283).

The variance of mindsets in why knowledge is shared, how it is used, and ultimately what

is gained from its use appears to be significant depending on which tribe of users is observed.

With the current convergence of first and third world countries having almost daily direct or

indirect interaction across thousands of miles and concurrently accessing identical information, it

is not clear that both sets of users have awareness of one another. That is, both the provider and

consumer of knowledge may not always ensure that any prerequisite or background information

is known. For example, information could be presented which states a procedure in general

terms assuming the user of knowledge will extrapolate the information for their purposes

(Western approach), whereas some cultures may consider this confusing if how to use the

information is not spelled out in direct, explicit terms (Non-Western approach).

Problem Statement

With consideration for a rapidly expanding global economy and the coincident need for

cultural awareness in business process, teams separated by great distances yet working within a

common knowledge-sharing space must begin to understand how one another brings explicit

knowledge to bear. The culture of business and the cultural nuances of global knowledge

management programs are unique. To this end, formal global knowledge management programs are not sufficiently addressing the cultural variances of their participants.

Goals and Objectives

In order to determine not only the strategic intent of knowledge management planning within global organizations, but also whether such plans manifest themselves in a homogenous manner without deliberate tuning for unique cultural challenges, the researcher has focused on some key points in gathering the research data. Answers to the following questions were gathered and analyzed as part of this study:

1. Are knowledge managements programs global in reach, i.e., do they transcend more than one country and/or region?

2. Is culture being considered currently within the business or specifically within knowledge management program processes?

3. Are approaches being used to ensure the distance and differences are overcome ensuring no or minimal impacts to knowledge sharing in comparison to traditional business-sharing models?

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature and Research

Knowledge management as a practice is and has been a high growth area of the technology and business world as demonstrated by a multitude of published articles over the past 10-12 years. This review demonstrates an incremental understanding of knowledge management and how it has infiltrated the business world during that same time period and how it has positively impacted the businesses it serves. Secondly, the manner in which knowledge management is implemented will be surveyed including the inclusion or lack of care for enlisting approaches which are culturally sensitive. And finally, this researcher will discuss how culture in an ever and rapidly changing global business model is infiltrating the discussion of how best to derive competitive advantage via knowledge-sharing networks that transcend global boundaries.

Clearly the originator of the "knowledge worker" concept was Peter Drucker (1996) identifying in his 1957 book *Landmarks of Tomorrow: A Report on the New 'Post-Modern' World* that the joint effort of workers to reach a universal goal was dependent on decision-making that resulted from the sharing of knowledge. This knowledge also, as Drucker goes on to state, must be shared at close range amongst like-minded and like-skilled workers. He continues that the organization of both people and their knowledge with respect to the "group effort" required to complete any function was necessary to most efficiently vet out solutions within the workplace (p. 67).

This idea became the basis for what is now the field of knowledge management some five decades later. References to his seminal work abound in nearly every discussion of knowledge sharing and knowledge management principles. But even as knowledge management

can be found in literature in the early nineties it was not until the Information and Data Age booms that followed that it truly gained a foothold within business. During those early nineties, Drucker was further perfecting the idea that working with knowledge was a necessity to the social transformation of Capitalism. In *The Rise of the Knowledge Society* (1993), he detailed a long history of work processes and business development through the centuries as a component of work and not one of management. However, he contrasts that to the systemic and overwhelming need for knowledge in a post-Industrial Revolution world. The idea that management of business has become crucial as a side-effect of Capitalism is paired with the observation that knowledge is the key driver for business. Drucker continues that management itself without knowledge is "generic" and second nature, but conversely with knowledge becomes cardinal to the success of business in the modern age.

In 1991, Ikujiro Nonaka wrote a thought provoking piece for the Harvard Business Journal titled: *The Knowledge-Creating Company* which spoke of terms such as "intellectual capital" and how information gathered via formal and systemic means could be leveraged for the ultimate good of any organization. He went on to cite that much of the surge associated with Japanese companies of the eighties had been due to the creation of new knowledge which was then repurposed to increase a company's strategic advantage for setting up new markets and responding to matters of quality (pp. 96-97). Developing strict knowledge-sharing processes between research and development and the marketing teams, for instance, allowed the rotation of knowledge to directly impact the product development lifecycle creating an awareness between company roles which did not previously exist thereby challenging the worker in each role to think more critically around the needs of their fellow associate and in turn, the greater good of the organization as a whole (pg. 102-103).

While not yet a permanent fixture in business at that point, the term "knowledge management" began to become well known in the late nineties as various management experts began to associate the term more closely with the benefits it could provide. Marshall, Prusak, and Shpilberg (1996) began to write on the merits of knowledge management for the area of risk management as a method of improving the rate of organizational success by placing valuable knowledge in a highly formatted and common location for all corporate employees to access.

The case for knowledge management as a common practice was made outside of the financial and accounting industry which had historically utilized such early, yet still very mechanical methods of knowledge sharing as early forms of hierarchical question and answer pairings known as "case based reasoning."   These knowledge pairings provided the finance and accounting industry with the ability to model outcomes or address proper responses to regulation with little additional thought required (O'Leary, 1992).   However, Marshall, Prusak, and Shpilberg (1996) were able to extend the reasoning of knowledge management drawing associations to knowledge-sharing activities in multiple industries where senior executives were increasingly looking to understand how proper sharing of organizational learning would better prepare their firms to react to major catastrophes or significant fluctuations in market conditions or even to control processes within business to prevent theft (pp. 85-90).

Up to this point, the premise of knowledge management had been commonly referred to in alignment with decision support systems supplying top executives with a myriad of analytics but never brought the same decision modeling based on gathered intelligence down to the business process level (Ruggles, 1998) (Marshall, et al., Pg. 92). Marshall, et al. made the case that companies could not only utilize knowledge management to reduce their risk in adverse situations, but also that improved accessibility to existing knowledge. This premise had strong

similarities to the then popular "Total Quality Management" approach for strengthening business

process at a worker level (Marshall, et al., pp. 94-95).

It was exactly this groundwork that initiated authors such as Rudy Ruggles (1998) to

further extend knowledge management into a more mainstream practice by proposing eight

"categories of knowledge-focused activities" in *The State of the Notion: Knowledge*

Management in Practice which would become a frequently referenced handbook of base

guidelines for subsequent knowledge management writings. Interestingly, while many

technologies were already being developed to address the need to capture knowledge, Ruggles'

work was one of the first to suggest a "mapping" of knowledge management activities within the

business. Yet even from the onset, while the corporate culture and the nurturing of a knowledge-

sharing atmosphere were defined as critical components of the decision-making process

throughout business, the unique nature and background of the knowledge provider was not

reflected (pg. 81). Furthermore, in so-called "best practice" guidelines, the variance of culture is

not addressed beyond the limitation as previously stated that includes the nature and climate of

the business, the opportunities to gather and repurpose knowledge, and the business benefit.

(Zack, 1999) (Best Practice and beyond, 1998).

In the same time period, Yeung, et al. (1999) in defining with great detail how the

organization learns and codifies information, explored the need for focusing on the individual

rather than the organization. This writing sought to understand the organization as a whole and

concurrently understand the manner in which knowledge is shared within those same

organizations. While this understanding is an allusion to varied traits amongst the participant

community, there is no specific association with the cultural significance of this learning

dynamic. In this instance as well as common practice for implementing knowledge management

systems, the knowledge management program participants and their business environment may become well known by the knowledge management practitioners. Yet the reflection of multiple cultures interacting within a knowledge management environment is not a component of the base principle of what Yeung, et al. (1999) were attempting to state.

Around the turn of the century, the global business dynamic accelerated with a greater number of companies using outsourced and distant resources to complement or replace their traditionally localized workforce. This began to create a new model for knowledge sharing between previously disconnected cultures on opposite sides of the globe in many cases. Louise Grenier (1998) suggested that "indigenous knowledge" should be researched and understood in far greater detail. Her work presented a crude knowledge system which gathered generational experiences, learning models, localized understanding of traditions, rights, taboos, and so on for the purposes of better understanding reactions and decisions of the researched community (pp. 3-5). Grenier went into great detail about how cultural diversity could be observed and harnessed through research with sensitivity to the background of the subject (pp. 31-46) and several key pieces were extracted from this discovery. One was a new appreciation for the variances for learning, storing, and sharing knowledge based on a multitude of factors. These factors include the general inability to extract explicit knowledge because much of what is known is embedded in rituals and legend. Also, aptitude is not uniformly spread across less developed cultures and therefore knowledge may be incomplete or outright incorrect (pp. 46-48). And finally more compelling is that Western understanding of indigenous knowledge is largely biased against less developed societies because of the assumption that there is no scientific rigor or due to the overall distrust of "holistic" learning and teaching models in indigenous cultures (pp. 49-51).

The footpath laid by Grenier would not immediately spawn correlations to modern knowledge management principles, but Michailova and Sidorova (2010) take the prospect of indigenous knowledge and speculate that knowledge is always local, relational, and in context. They also remind the reader of their own bias having completed Western educations regardless of their respectively Bulgarian and Russian background (pg. 70). Western theories regarding knowledge management and knowledge-sharing principles can be disputed when compared to transition economies where scarce resources and even scarcer knowledge drives an undeniably different approach to the concept of knowledge sharing. "Micro- [and] macro-level risks" as defined by Michailova and Sidorova abound in addressing the propensity for knowledge sharing in less developed countries including the political, legal, and socially acceptable expectations of each society (pg. 60).

Hocking, Brown, and Harzing (2007) without regard to specific cultural considerations present survey analysis of the learning and knowledge seeking tendencies of globally connected knowledge communities. From this study, they found that indeed the global nature of the knowledge-sharing environment can be impactful to the harvesting and codification of knowledge. Through a series of supported hypothesis, they propose that locally shared information is more commonly assimilated, but later find that this is not necessarily true in all cases. For instance, for explicit knowledge sharing, the survey participants were more likely to interact globally assuming no technology constraints or time-shifting was involved to improve the possibility of learning from a more diverse source. That is, depending on their background, participants are most likely driven by a preference for non-standardized knowledge or information that is not already generally available to stretch the capability for further understanding, whereas for demonstrable or tacit experiential knowledge transfers, local

interaction was the preferred method (pp. 527-528). While their research was split against their

initial positions, they did support Grenier's observation in the ad hoc commentary provided by

the survey participants who called out the uniqueness of the process in which other societies or

cultures different from their own networked, interacted to share knowledge, and drew

conclusions based on the information shared. The participants went on to detail that it required a

modification in their thinking to fully comprehend the knowledge interactions they witnessed or

in which they participated (pp. 525-526).

To further contrast the cultural gap, Burrows, Drummond, and Martinsons (2005) discuss

an approach in the United States of tendency towards being more individualistic in our thinking

and therefore never or rarely considering the collective tribe first when defining a solution. As

proof of this stance, Youngsun and Choi (2005) highlighted failures by large scale global

consulting firm Accenture's attempt to invoke knowledge management without first

understanding societal distinctions of far reaching regions in their implementation strategy.

Simplistic and easy to overlook components which the knowledge management program

leadership based in the United States never factored such as how the requirement to share all

content in the base language of English would fare with their Far East Asian associates who

knew English only as their second language. These same Far East Asian individuals would

never risk the shame or resultant dishonor–an inherently Asian cultural trait–of a poorly written

article meant almost zero adoption from that major region of the world. Ultimately, the

consequence was millions of dollars lost for the company and a halt to the program for

investigation and retooling of efforts.

In 2005, Fischer proposed a variance of indigenous knowledge drawing upon the

concepts of local or traditional knowledge more succinctly characterizing it as "cultural

knowledge" to align it with the practices of sharing rather than the mere information as a tangible object. Fischer later goes on to discuss knowledge as a domain requiring a breath of awareness of actions, cultural structures, and contexts which can collectively instantiate knowledge. This, he concludes, is the difference between "human" and "natural" influenced knowledge (pp. 738-739 & p 749).

Based on published literature, knowledge management has been a practice that has been addressed from many angles, modeled in many different business structures, implemented in nearly every line of business, but yet the culture of the knowledge participants is rarely deliberated with respect to the implementation of a knowledge management program until only recently. The earliest specific associations of this scenario come from Martin Glisby and Nigel Holden (2003) who tie the cultural aspects of knowledge management theory all the way back to Nonaka's seminal *The Knowledge-Creating Company* work. Glisby and Holden traverse the cultural boundary question challenging the lack of this consideration in Nonaka's foundation calling knowledge management a "kind of unitary vacuum" where the traits of culture are not explored nor planned for including language, ethnic background, gender, and so on.

Core duties such as the manner in which knowledge is externalized across cultural divides, whether financial rewards must be set in place to incent, or articulation of unique social skills are all areas where the knowledge management practice is touched in Glisby and Holden's (2003) summation. Specific differences such as the common behavior of Japanese co-workers to utilize after-hours socialization to share tacit information is an excellent example of the nuances left unaddressed with respect to culture (pp. 31-32).

Another example of how cultures uniquely interact to exchange knowledge is pointed out by Delen and Al-Hawamdeh (2009) calling these localized, face-to-face interactions "actionable

knowledge." Traditionally, actionable knowledge and other forms of interaction such as casual conversation happen only in a local setting. This is the seminal form of knowledge sharing through demonstration, discussion, and duplication.

Building on Glisby and Holden's work, Michailova and Hutchings (2006) contrast the collectivist nature of two emerging societies, Russia and China, to better understand their "intensity" of knowledge sharing. Michailova and Hutchings agree with Glisby and Holden that national culture and cultural contexts is under-explored and they likewise go on to argue that a more or less "universalist" approach to the knowledge-sharing process is assumed across the practice.

While each of these published articles support further investigation in the area of cultural impacts to knowledge management, Moss, Kubacki, Hersh, and Gunn (2007) provide a more complete quantitative research analysis showing cross-national differences between Australian and Slovenian survey participants. According to the author, these two societies are polar opposites on the individualism versus collectivism scale, respectively. And the research predictably pointed to the greater likelihood of collective problem solving from the Slovenian group leading to a subsequently higher output when compared to the very individualized style of the Australian group (pp. 388-389). Referring back to the Michailova and Hutchings (2006) writing, such disparity creates a managerial implication that requires unique and separate approaches from a knowledge management program standpoint.

Perhaps the deepest view into the lack of widespread cultural sensitivity in knowledge management practice comes more recently. In their paper *Cross-cultural Knowledge Management,* Albescu, Pugna, and Paraschiv (2009) attested that between the value that a company holds known as business intelligence and the practice of knowledge management

resides a void where the management of cross-cultural balance lies. And without an acknowledgement plus a plan to address this void, elements of the business will suffer and impact profitability, competitive advantage, and even industry sustainability.

Along a parallel vein, intercultural management is a more recently coined term reviewed by Weir & Hutchings (2005) that is occasionally referred to in analysis of how culture is positioned for the sake of knowledge management. While a universal challenge of any knowledge management program is fraught by those who want to provide no more knowledge than absolutely necessary for fear of losing their brain trust advantage, this new management model attending to the "cultural" traits rather that the inherently human need for purpose and importance is in effect pushing the homogenous approach to managing individuals. Such an approach does not give regard to cultures nor their unique needs according to Weir and Hutchings.

Based on an extensive review of literature regarding knowledge management fundamentals, there is some evidence that culture has been considered recently, but not wholly addressed as a key component of the common practice for knowledge management planning.

The next section will discuss the research methodology used to validate the thesis that formal global knowledge management programs are not sufficiently addressing the cultural variances of their participants.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology

In order to gather data to support this thesis, a qualitative research has been conducted to better understand the manner in which organizational knowledge management programs are being implemented in business today. Particular focus has been placed on determining the propensity of businesses to participate in a global knowledge-sharing environment. Also, where participants have regular interaction cross-organizationally, the researcher can discern whether they are involved with others outside their own country, region, and native cultural influences. This will aid in representing cross-cultural dialogue and knowledge-sharing models that are in some way forced to take cultural variances into consideration for the sake of collaboration.

The maturity of the corporate knowledge management program is also surveyed so that this researcher can determine whether mature corporate knowledge management programs are more or less likely to take cultural aspects into consideration. Furthermore, survey group criteria were developed in a manner to ensure the widest understanding of current knowledge management practices and process within business today.

The qualitative research consists of a ten question survey provided to persons who are currently in a role which participates daily in a formal corporate knowledge management program. The target survey group belongs to multi-national companies of various sizes in varying states of knowledge management awareness and program maturity. They also are employed as full time employees and/or consultants to businesses involved in knowledge management practices across nearly every industry including technology, telecommunications, finance, healthcare, government, and transportation.

The survey was conducted online by this researcher using the Kwiksurveys.com survey generating capability and targeted to the LinkedIn Knowledge Manager's Group. This group was selected because it represents more than 2,000 knowledge workers, knowledge managers, and knowledge professionals in the aforementioned target survey group with a vast and diverse audience representing companies of nearly every size and scope and covering roles that range from the foundational provider of knowledge, through the knowledge management program leads, up to and including Chief Knowledge Officers (CKOs).

Responses to Kwiksurveys.com Surveys were kept confidential as revealed in the Kwiksurveys.com Privacy Policy (Appendix B) and are only based on personal, non-identifiable information including their country location.

Survey of Knowledge Management Program Participants

In order to drill down on common usage and materialization of organizational knowledge management plans, ten questions where identified for this survey as necessary to develop a full understanding of each survey participant, the level of maturity of their company's knowledge management program, as well as their interaction with others outside their own sphere of cultural influence.

In developing these questions, it was also important to understand the survey participant's knowledge of cultural diversity through formal training, their frequency of direct collaboration with non-native cultures, and their perception of the value provided by those they were interacting with to ensure a robust context could be provided as background to the survey results. The line of questioning was developed to build from a base understanding of the survey participant company's knowledge management program age through a determination of the participant's location, their degree of involvement in the program, their level of collaboration

outside their culture for completing their duties, and finally an analysis of their own perception

of the value derived from that knowledge management program model.

A formal informed consent provision was provided for each survey respondent for review

prior to entry into the survey line of questioning as presented in Appendix C. Additionally, all of

the enclosed provisions, lines of questioning, and research practices have been reviewed by the

Regis University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and received exempt status.

The ten question survey as presented in Table 1 was created within the Kwiksurveys.com

online survey tool and then a link directly to the survey was provided to eligible respondents for

a period of 30 days. This link was posted to the Knowledge Manager's Group board on

LinkedIn.com with a statement explaining the survey and a direct survey link on the

Kwiksurveys.com website was accessible by all group members. The full survey including

questions and multiple choice answers is provided in Appendix A.

Table 1

Survey Questions

1	How long has your company's knowledge management program been in place?
2	Are you a daily participant in your knowledge management program, i.e., for reuse, creation, or validation of content?
3	In what country are you located?
4	Are participants in your company's knowledge management program located globally, i.e., both inside and outside of your country?
5	Do you interact with other global employees of your company during the course of

your normal work duties? If so, how often?

6   Does your company's knowledge management program provide training on proper

adherence and/or guidance regarding proper knowledge-sharing practices?

7   Does your company offer or require cultural sensitivity training?

8   When problem solving, do you regularly interact with fellow employees who are

globally located other than in your country?

9   Do your company's knowledge management processes address how to share

knowledge with your fellow employees who are located in other global

regions/countries?

10   Compared to knowledge content that is created by your fellow employees in your own

country, do you find the same value from knowledge content created by employees

from other regions/countries? -Is this higher, lower, or about the same value?

Chapter 4 – Results

Survey results data was gathered over a 30 day period after which time, the survey was closed to any further responses. Each question was evaluated for anomalies such as duplicate answers provided or unanswered questions; none were found. A total of 22 individuals responded to the survey representing a diverse set of worldwide locales and every global region. Presentation of each of the findings, relation to stated objectives, and analysis summarization for each survey data point follows.

Knowledge Management Program Maturity

In looking to understand the level of maturity of the current in-place program to ensure that a sufficient number of respondents were involved in the latter stages of a knowledge management plan, the first survey question dealt provided duration of any existing organizational knowledge management program.   The resultant set as shown in Table 2 reveals that more than two-thirds of survey participants were involved in a mature knowledge management practice which had been in existence for greater than five years. Additionally, the propensity for greater maturity of such programs indicates that knowledge management practices are well engrained within business as a fundamental component.

Table 2

Duration of Company Knowledge Management Program

Duration	Responses	Percentage
More than five years	15	68.2%
One to five years	3	13.6%

Less than one year	3	13.6%
No formal knowledge management program	1	4.5%

Knowledge Management Program User Profile

Developing a user profile was important to determining the makeup of the respondent audience. Additional findings revealed a global audience from every region as depicted in Table 3 with only a slight edge to North American respondents at 40.9% versus all other reporting regions. Asia Pacific Rim respondents were tied with Europe, Middle East, and Africa region at 22.7% each. The lowest participating region was Central and Latin America at 13.6% of all survey responses.

Table 3

Location of Respondent

Region	Responses	Percentage
APAC – Asia Pacific Rim	5	22.7%
EMEA – Europe, Middle East, and Africa	5	22.7%
NAR – North America	9	40.9%
CALA – Central and Latin America	3	13.6%

While the location of survey participants were somewhat split across each region, the numbers do reveal a dominance of North America participants from a developed business and

knowledge management reach. Only slightly trailing are the European and Asian regions which both have rapidly maturing corporation-based economies over the past few decades. And finally, the emerging Latin American countries have the lowest number of participants.

As seen in Table 4, merging these two questions together to view company knowledge management program existence and the data for each global region shows that respondents from less-developed Africa have no formal program in place. Yet while the more developed Asia and Europe regions do have programs in place, they represent a limited to lengthy overall age contributing to an intermediate level of program maturity following formalized processes. North America represents a much higher longevity of formal knowledge management programs consistent with business development in that region while South America shows a mature level of knowledge management program experience which could be accounted for by the high presence of globalized corporations from developed countries.

Table 4

Duration of Company Knowledge Management Program by Region

Response	North America	South America	Europe	Asia	Africa
More than five years	77.8%	100.0%	50.0%	60.0%	0.0%
One to five years	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%
Less than one year	11.1%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No formal knowledge management program	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Training Practices

The large majority of survey respondents stated, by a nearly 3-to-1 margin, that they

participated in a knowledge management training program to discuss governance to knowledge-

sharing process and practices as seen in Table 5. This is important to evaluating whether the

program participants were led to understand proper techniques for capturing, storing, and reusing

gathered knowledge in a manner consistent across their organization.

Table 5

Knowledge Management Program Training Practices

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	16	72.7%
No	6	27.3%

Without formal training, the likelihood that the participants will embrace non-standard

practices or organically spawned processes which could be derived based on cultural or regional

biases is much higher than for those individuals whose organizations have such training already

in place.

Companies who offer or require some cultural sensitivity training followed a similar

trend shown in Table 6 as nearly 60% of surveyed employees stating that their organization

provides this instruction. To provide some foundational understanding for this study, this

finding was useful to determine if cultural training was considered at a macro level for global

organizations, knowledge management program notwithstanding.

Table 6

Cultural Sensitivity Training Practices.

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	13	59.1%
No	9	40.9%

Global Knowledge Sharing

Further to revealing the overall makeup of the survey respondent was each individual's daily level of participation in knowledge management practices. As a consumer, creator, and/or reviewer of content, over 86% of all survey respondents stated that they performed such activities on a daily basis in accordance with their knowledge management program. Knowledge- sharing participation is indicated by the results found in Table 7 demonstrating the regular participation of company employees in a formal knowledge management program.

Table 7

Daily Participation in Knowledge Management Program

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	19	86.4%
No	3	13.6%

Additionally, all but one respondent interacted with peers to share and participate in the knowledge management program on a global scale. More than 95% of survey participants said

"yes" to working as part of a globally implemented knowledge management program. Whether they participate in a formal corporate knowledge management program or do not, these same survey participants do interact with peers in other countries and regions to perform their duties as indicated in Table 8.

Table 8

Global Work Interaction

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	21	95.5%
No	1	4.5%

Breaking down the level of contact amongst global employees, the spectrum of direct interaction during the course of normal work duties is represented in Table 9. This data finds that more than 77% of employees interact with others on a global scale through the course of working at least once daily or more often including 44.5% on a daily basis and 31.8% interacting several times throughout the workday. There are no survey respondents who do not interact with peers located globally on some level.

Table 9

Global Work Interaction Frequency

Response	Count	Percentage
Monthly Interaction with Other Global Employees	2	9.1%

Weekly Interactions with Other Global Employees	3	13.6%
Daily Interaction with Other Global Employees	10	45.5%
Interact with Other Employees Several Times Each Day	7	31.8%
No	1	4.5%

Findings reveal that many companies are indeed addressing sharing of knowledge across borders and regions to solve problems within their business. Table 10 shows that nearly 73% of survey respondents are depending on their globally located peers to assist in the problem-solving process.

Table 10

Interaction with Globally Located Employees for Problem Solving

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	16	72.7%
No	6	27.3%

Table 11 indicates that nearly three-fourths of the respondents were part of a knowledge management program that did in fact include aspects relevant to sharing with other cultures.

This aligns well with the previous question showing a consistency of global companies which are factoring in the behavior and makeup of their employees. Conversely, still 27.3% of companies are ignoring this need causing a mismatch between how employees must operate and how they are trained to operate in those instances.

Table 11

Processes for Knowledge Sharing Across Global Regions

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	16	72.7%
No	6	27.3%

Defining value from the global peer-to-peer interactions is represented in Table 12 showing that most find content quality to be relatively consistent regardless of the source; more than 22% of all survey participants believe that the content they are using from other regions outside their own is less worthy than the same content created within their own country.

Table 12

Value of Knowledge Shared with Other Global Regions

Response	Count	Percentage
The content created by those outside my country is of higher/more useful value	0	0.0%
The content created by those outside my country is of the	17	77.3%

same/identically useful value		
The content created by those outside my country is of lower/less useful value	5	22.7%

Chapter 5 – Analysis and Conclusion

Based on the survey findings, there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn with respect to whether knowledge management programs are indeed global in nature and subsequently, how corporate organizations take into account cultural differences of their employees within those same knowledge management programs. Also, it can be determined how culture is influencing the implementation of knowledge management practices directly and indirectly. And finally, a determination of how end users are interpreting the value of knowledge sharing across cultures will be made, and to what extent knowledge management program effectiveness is impacted when in a global setting.

At first glance, there is a surprisingly high degree of common practice defining a foundation of cultural sensitivity within organizations. At nearly 60% of survey respondents acknowledging that cultural sensitivity training was provided or required, this would indicate an acceptance that business practice in general is either unable or unwilling to accept inefficiencies resulting from differences in native background, perspective, or upbringing. Further telling is that over 72% of knowledge management programs share information through regular, direct work interactions outside or across country borders by process, by nature of their organizational makeup, or by work duty interaction model.

To validate that some approaches are being implemented by process or at least, organically by knowledge management program participants, this researcher can also conclude the likelihood of participants to place value in the knowledge of their peers located globally was higher amongst those who did receive cultural sensitivity training as part of their corporate training program: 86.4% versus 77.8% of those not trained in cultural sensitivity. Yet, despite

the cultural sensitivity training and integration with global peers, there is still a sense of distrust of content amongst nearly one-fourth of the respondents. This belief is a challenge for business that runs in parallel with the essence of this study. That is, to what extent is this distrust avoidable through more effective corporate policy and knowledge management practices?

On the other end of the spectrum, those participants who take part in a program where cultural awareness is embodied directly in the knowledge management training are 20% more likely to trust content from their global peers than those who do not receive such training (86.7% versus 66.6%). This supports the notion that a number of organizations are taking measures to overcome any potential knowledge-sharing obstacles due to cultural boundaries therefore maximizing the knowledge-sharing potential.

These results align with the discussed case study by Youngsun and Choi (2005) regarding the Accenture consulting firm failures in implementing knowledge management on a global scale. As supported by this research, it is highly likely that if cultural subtleties were considered by their planners as they seemingly are being addressed by the knowledge management programs in place today, the development of a more impactful knowledge sharing environment as defined in the Accenture's original project scope could have been more easily realized across the entire enterprise.

Also supported by this research and as presented by Youngsun and Choi (2005), is the Western versus non-Western approach to knowledge sharing. That is, knowledge sharing practiced by the Japanese and Chinese cultures involves collective peers interacting to form an opinion, rationale, or solution. Conversely, an employee in the United States will work to find a solution and then share that gathered knowledge with the collective community only after the fact, generally speaking.

This scenario knowledge sharing dynamic matches the survey research findings in which respondents from the United States stated that they place far greater trust in content generated by their own country mates versus knowledge shared by peers in other countries. From the reverse direction, 100 percent of survey respondents from the Eastern hemisphere including all Asian countries trusted the content of their peers both in country and abroad. This is particularly revealing considering that all users responded a nearly identical level of daily involvement with those same peers through the problem solving process. But yet it seems that the take away from those collaborations is entirely different depending on the native background of the participant.

Contrasting survey results with research of common best practices, there is validation of the impression that any organization set on developing a successful knowledge management model has one rule before all others. That rule is to ensure the greatest attainable reach of involvement possible to pull in every potential perspective, thought, and solution known or yet unknown to the collective of the organizational whole. An order of magnitude improvement is realized as each set of differing views come together on a playing field of collaboration to sort through details, brainstorm efficiencies, learn, perfect, and eventually decide on a common understanding. This is really the core of a successful knowledge management program.

While the human factors and influencers cannot be ignored as highly relevant to the importance in understanding how, when, and where cultural considerations should be intertwined with knowledge management, from a corporate point of view, profitability and growth is of utmost concern. In the current operating environment, global growth is where the greatest potential lies. Configuring a company to operate in the new global model requires more than just business acumen, it requires the ability to solve problems quickly and accurate through strong organizational knowledge sharing practices.

But while formal knowledge management process by itself becomes second nature for any efficient but highly dispersed organization, technology is reinforcing knowledge management business processes directly out the box as these software applications become mature and aware of best practices. However, as the process and technology challenges become more easily resolved, the culture component of knowledge management remains a challenge except when addressed intentionally and explicitly by business.

Historically, it could be said that even from the early days of knowledge management as a practice, the triad of process, technology, and culture were all on equal footing as the primary focus of any formal plan to implement knowledge-sharing workspaces. But as Grenier (1998) states, "indigenous knowledge" is nothing without first understanding the context of background, traditions, and so on. This could be applied to any knowledge shared across cultural boundaries and in any knowledge management environment.

Confirmation of the value of knowledge is decided by the consumer at the point of leverage and yet the one thing is for certain and that is that variance in capturing knowledge depends on the perspective of the knowledge user. The nascent globalization of our world economy and respective business models demand that society will have to work harder, across more miles, throughout more round the clock time zones, and change approaches to business to match. But the mode of collecting knowledge in concurrence with the global need is not as easy.

Despite the thesis as stated, there is evidence that global knowledge management practices have begun to accommodate culture within their respective processes based on these results but must continue to change to meet the needs of new international entrants on the business scene who may have not yet been introduced to the concept of collaborating to solve problems. Or in some instances, these same individuals may not have been introduced to the

concept of collaborating in a manner other than that defined by their own cultural influences to solve problems. But in either instance the knowledge, perspective, and ability to contribute to the collective problem solving process is no less valuable and therefore, the steps followed to harvest their knowledge must continue to change and accommodate the variances as a result of global, regional, and cultural boundaries, not the other way around.

Just as Peter Drucker (1999) stated, the need for knowledge workers and their ability to work in an informed manner is the most valuable and important business problem to be solved for the twenty-first century. But the process of training and empowering a globally co-located staff to work in partnership with their global peers in an efficient knowledge-sharing environment is not a one size fits all model.

Chapter 6 – Areas for Further Research

Limitations observed in this study included a narrow understanding from each survey participant regarding specific levels or titles that they currently hold within their organization. It would be ideal to segment responses by knowledge management program leaders, knowledge management contributors, and knowledge management consumers to further analyze the value that each perceived from the program where knowledge sharing transcends cultures.

It should also be understood what challenges knowledge management program participants encounter when sharing or utilizing knowledge such as language barriers, training received, if topics such as subjectivity versus objectivity in knowledge are taught, or if there is a limited ability to find information, i.e., knowing where to start looking. A remedy for this in future research would favor using face-to-face or phone interviewing to allow the line of questioning to be freer flowing and introduce ad hoc answers and observations.

Additional limitations to this survey include the total number of respondents due to a smaller than anticipated sample size. While the breadth of their global locations residing on five different continents presented a wealth of global perspective, additional participation would be helpful to more greatly reinforce the statistical validity of this research. Opening up the window for survey responses could have easily helped introduce a higher survey completion rate. Also, expanding the visibility of the survey to a larger audience of knowledge management professionals and users through additional social media outlets would provide a far larger potential for response.

Finally, slight retooling of the line of questioning to drive a more complete knowledge of whether training that was offered, such as cultural sensitivity training, was indeed completed by

each of the participants would be helpful. This could be easily remedied by adding one to two additional questions or changing the wording of the existing questions to clarify that such training was offered and completed by the respondents.

Additional research in this area is recommended as knowledge management is becoming more of a universal subject in not just the current corporate world, but also in lesser developed, yet vastly diversified global organizations. And while a trend of knowledge management practice pervasiveness continues, match with this the exponential and substantial growth in the social media space where global interactions are penetrating both work and personal interactions daily. That trend could become yet even more charged as emerging nations participate more collaboratively within business environments and in parallel, develop mature skill sets in their respective areas of expertise. In conjunction, the effectiveness of the knowledge they provide will challenge even first world nations potentially reversing the cultural boundary dynamics identified in this research.

References

Albescu, F., Pugna, I., & Paraschiv, D. (2009). Cross-cultural knowledge management. Informatica Economica, 13(4), 39-50.

Arun-Kumar, D. (2008). Impact of globalization on core engineering education in India. Perspectives On Global Development & Technology, 7(1), 55-68. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Burrows, G. R., Drummond, D. L., & Martinsons, M. G. (2005). Knowledge management in China. Communications Of The ACM, 48(4), 73-76.

Chang, L., Mak, M. K., Li, T., Wu, B., Chen, B., & Lu, H. (2011). Cultural adaptations to environmental variability: an evolutionary account of east-west differences. Educational Psychology Review, 23(1), 99-129.

Delen, D., & Al-Hawamdeh, S. (2009). A holistic framework for knowledge discovery and management. Communications of the ACM, 52(6), 141-145. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Drucker, P. F. (1993). The rise of the knowledge society. Wilson Quarterly, 17(2), 52. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Drucker, P. F. (1996). Landmarks of tomorrow: a report on the new "post-modern" world. (Rev. ed.). New York: Harper & Row, Publishers. Accessed from Google Books: http://books.google.com/books?id=G-SrBghhPRUC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=knowledge%20worker&f=false

Drucker, P. F. (1999). Knowledge-worker productivity: the biggest challenge. California

Management Review, 41(2), 79-94. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Fischer, M. D. (2005). Culture and indigenous knowledge systems: emergent order and

the internal regulation of shared symbolic systems. Cybernetics & Systems, 36(8), 735-

752. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Glisby, M., & Holden, N. (2003). Contextual constraints in knowledge management

theory: the cultural embeddedness of Nonaka's knowledge-creating company. Knowledge

& Process Management, 10(1), 29-36. doi:10.1002/kpm.158

Grenier, L. (1998). Working with indigenous knowledge: a guide for researchers.

Published by International Development Research Centre. Accessed from Google Books

at:

http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=VlGncLGEf5MC&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq

=grenier+Working+with+Indigenous+Knowledge&ots=goxlB-5GMy&sig=-

SvkDQrHHO4i3p265x9y_YTpa7E#v=onepage&q&f=false

Hauschild, S., Licht, T., & Stein, W. (2001). Creating a knowledge culture. Mckinsey Quarterly,

(1), 74-81.

Hocking, J., Brown, M., & Harzing, A. (2007). Balancing global and local strategic

contexts: Expatriate knowledge transfer, applications, and learning within a

transnational organization. Human Resource Management, 46(4), 513-533. Retrieved

from EBSCOhost.

Lang, R., & Steger, T. (2002). The odyssey of management knowledge to transforming

societies: a critical review of a theoretical alternative. Human Resource Development

International, 5(3), 279-294. doi:10.1080/13678860210142146

Kwiksurveys.com Privacy Policy. (2012). Terms and conditions. Retrieved February 24, 2012,

from http://kwiksurveys.com/?p=terms

Marshall, C., & Prusak, L. (1996). Financial risk and the need for superior knowledge

management. California Management Review, 38(3), 77-101. Retrieved from

EBSCOhost.

Michailova, S., & Hutchings, K. (2006). National cultural influences on knowledge

sharing: A comparison of China and Russia. Journal of Management Studies, 43(3), 383-

405. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00595.x

Michailova, S., & Sidorova, E. (2010). Knowledge management in transition economies;

selected key issues and possible research avenues. Organizations & Markets in Emerging

Economies, 1(1), 68-81. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Moss, G., Kubacki, K., Hersh, M., & Gunn, R. (2007). Knowledge management in higher

education: a comparison of individualistic and collectivist cultures. European Journal of

Education, 42(3), 377-394. doi:10.1111/j.1465-3435.2007.00314.x

Nonaka, I. (1991). The knowledge-creating company. Harvard Business Review, 69(6),

96-104. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

O'Leary, D. E. (1992). Case-based reasoning and multiple-agent systems for accounting

regulation systems with extensions. International Journal of Intelligent Systems in

Accounting Finance & Management, 1(1), 41-52. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Pee, L. G., & Kankanhalli, A. A. (2009). A model of organisational knowledge management

maturity based on people, process, and technology. Journal Of Information & Knowledge

Management, 8(2), 79-99.

Ruggles, R. (1998). The state of the notion: Knowledge management in practice.

California Management Review, 40(3), 80-89. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Weir, D., & Hutchings, K. (2005). Cultural embeddedness and contextual constraints: knowledge

sharing in Chinese and Arab cultures. Knowledge & Process Management, 12(2), 89-98.

Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Yeung, A. K., Ulrich, D. O., Nason, S. W., & Von Glinow, M. A. (1999). Organizational

learning capability. Oxford University Press. New York. Accessed from Google books at

http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=cX8AMG0eW3cC&oi=fnd&pg=PA3&d

q=organizational+learning+yeung&ots=ivabt1qGDj&sig=7AWb23YhQ5vhnH94JlzQBi

VFyaA#v=onepage&q&f=false

Zack, M. H. (1999). Developing a knowledge strategy. California Management Review,

41(3), 125-145. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Appendix A

1. How long has your company's knowledge management program been in place?

- More than five years

- One to five years

- Less than one year

- No formal knowledge management program

2. Are you a daily participant in your knowledge management program, i.e., for reuse, creation, or validation of content?

- Yes

- No

3. In what country are you located?

4. Are participants in your company's knowledge management program located globally, i.e., both inside and outside of your country?

- Yes

- No

5. Do you interact with other global employees of your company during the course of your normal work duties? If so, how often?

- Monthly interaction with other global employees

- Weekly interaction with other global employees

- Daily interaction with other global employees

- I interact with other global employees several times each day

- I do not interact with other global employees

6. Does your company's knowledge management program provide training on proper adherence and/or guidance regarding proper knowledge-sharing practices?

- Yes

- No

7. Does your company offer or require cultural sensitivity training?

- Yes

- No

8. When problem solving, do you regularly interact with fellow employees who are globally located other than in your country?

- Yes

- No

9. Do your company's knowledge management processes address how to share knowledge with your fellow employees who are located in other global regions/countries?

- Yes

- No

10. Compared to knowledge content that is created by your fellow employees in your own country, do you find the same value from knowledge content created by employees from other regions/countries? Is this higher, lower, or about the same value?

- The content created by those outside my country is of higher/more useful value

- The content created by those outside my country is of the same/identically useful value

- The content created by those outside my country is of lower/less useful value

Appendix B

Kwiksurveys.com Privacy Policy

Kwik Surveys The only free & unlimited survey tool.

Home About FAQ Help / Docs Demo Survey Contact Terms & Conditions

Privacy.

Your personal data is kept on secure servers.

No credit card details are stored by us, all payments are processed by PayPal Inc.

Information that is gathered from visitors in common with other websites, log files are stored on the web server saving details such as the visitor's IP address, browser type, referring page and time of visit. Cookies may be used to remember visitor preferences when interacting with the website. Where registration is required, the visitor's email and a username will be stored on the server. The information is used the information is used to enhance the visitors experience when using the website to display personalised content and possibly advertising. Data and email addresses will not be sold, rented, leased or disclosed to 3rd parties. Email may be sent to inform you of news of our services or offers by us.

Visitor options if you have subscribed to one of our services, you may unsubscribe by following the instructions which are included in e-mail that you receive. You may be able to block cookies via your browser settings but this may prevent you from access to certain features of the website.

Cookies are small digital signature files that are stored by your web browser that allow your preferences to be recorded when visiting the website they may be used to track your return visits to the website.

3rd party advertising companies may also use cookies for tracking purposes.

Google as a third party vendor uses cookies to serve ads. Googles use of the dart cookie enables it to serve ads to visitors based on their visit to sites they visit on the internet. Website visitors may opt out of the use of the dart cookie by visiting the Google ad and content network privacy policy.

Appendix C

Provision for Informed Consent

Page: 1/2

Graduate Thesis Research Study - Knowledge Management across Cultural Boundaries

Thank you in advance for your time and for helping me with my Master's Thesis. This survey will take 5 minutes to complete and is only 10 questions long.

Please read the below consent, then select *NEXT >>* to complete the short survey.

Thanks!!

- Jeff

Provision for Informed Consent

You are being invited to participate in a research study about how knowledge management programs in globalized companies address differences of culture with respect to knowledge transfer. This study is being conducted by Jeff Harling and Dee Bilo, from the School of Computer and Information Science at Regis University. This study is being conducted as part of a graduate thesis.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will be used to understand how current knowledge management programs are addressing global variations in knowledge sharing across cultures. The questionnaire will take about fifteen minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study should provide more general benefits.

This survey is anonymous. Do not write or include your name on the survey. This is a web-based survey and your responses are kept confidential in accordance with Kwiksurvey's Privacy Policy. That is, only non-personally identifiable information is gathered. However, absolute anonymity may not be guaranteed over the Internet. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Individuals from Regis University Institutional Review Board may inspect these records. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed.

Records will be stored in a locked file cabinet. Only the investigator and others authorized by regulation will have access to the material. The data will be saved for three years and then shredded.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By completing and submitting your answers to this online survey, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Jeff Harling, phone: 303-304-7270 or email: harli628@regis.edu, or Dee Bilo at dbilo@regis.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you've been placed at risk, you may contact the Regis University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Regis University, Office of Academic Grants, 447 Main, Mail Code H-4, 3333 Regis Blvd., by phone at (303) 346-4206, or by e-mail at irb@regis.edu.