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TRUONG MINH CHAU

KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN INTERCULTURAL TEAMWORK

What factors can influence knowledge sharing
process in intercultural team work ?

The case of Finnish and Vietnamese team



TURUN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
TURKU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Truong Minh Chau

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The transition from an industrial to a post industrial knowledge economy provides and increases in the proportion of jobs that are knowledge intensive. There are statistical analyses typically show that managerial and professional work regarding to knowledge intensive becoming one of the fastest growing occupational groups since the 1980s. Elias and Gregory; Fleming et al. (1994, cited in Hislop 2013:7). Knowledge management, therefore is a contemporary field which provides many interesting aspects as well as potential for intellectual development of academic researchers and knowledge workers. Knowledge is one of the most valuable assets for many organizations. The challenges of how to keep this asset being transferred and shared among all employees to achieve better performance is increased. For this reason, communicating and organizing knowledge is highly essential not only for top managers but also among employees in organizations. It is even more significant in international organizations where the employees own multinational backgrounds.

Cross cultural or intercultural factors therefore have a huge impact in knowledge communication. In order to help facilitate the transfer of knowledge within the intercultural context, a lot of research is being conducted. The recognition of the difficulties inherent in transferring knowledge from one person to another is highlighted in different writings of Polanyi(1996), Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995).

This study focuses the sharing of knowledge in academic teamwork, in which members having different cultural backgrounds. In consideration that knowledge –especially tacit knowledge is hardly shared and most valuable asset. In this study, the influence of cultural obstacles and barriers towards knowledge sharing are investigated. Additionally, the general knowledge management and culture concepts are both analysed, in order to support the study question. The study main research question is as following: *What factors can influence knowledge sharing process in multicultural team work – The case of Finnish and Vietnamese teamwork*

The research method is qualitative. Interviews and questionnaires provide the assessment of the situation of sharing knowledge within multicultural teamwork, the obstacles and barriers of sharing knowledge within the target group (academic researchers and consultant employees).

KEYWORDS:

Knowledge management, intercultural communication, knowledge sharing, teamwork, transfer knowledge, multicultural teamwork

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

SE Asian	South East Asian
Vnmesese	Vietnamese
PDI	Power Distance Index

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

1.1 Knowledge management as a source of competitive advantage

“Knowledge accidents happen when people run into each other at places like this or at the water cooler, exchange information, and realize an opportunity for collaboration and a synergy between the projects they’re working on. We need to make knowledge accidents happen on purpose, regularly and, most importantly, with intent.”

–Al Zollar, GovTech conference, June, 2002

Since approximately the mid-1970s, economies and societies in general have become more information and knowledge intensive, with information/knowledge intensive industries replacing manufacturing industry as the key wealth generators(Hislop 2013, 3). After that, the link between knowledge and business success as well question about how to control knowledge to boost business performance were raised. In the middle of 1990s, Tom Stewart(cited in Smith 2005) began developing the case for knowledge as one of an increasing number “intangible assets” of organization with three main types of intangibles . Increasingly, multinational companies and consultancies initiated focusing on knowledge management efficiency to reach new competitive advantage. Different surveys and researches were conducted from 1960s to 1990s for instance the spiral of knowledge creation from Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995,71), Leonard-Barton and Sensiper(1998, no pagination) with three main ways in which tacit knowledge can be exercised to the benefit of the organization and Davenport, Jarvenpaa and Beers (1996) via researches identify five primary process orientations to knowledge. The explosion of interest in knowledge management among academics, public policy-makers,

consultants, and business people began in the mid-1990s (Hislop, 2013). It was highlighted that knowledge and learning are considered as core competency, fundamental to sustain competitive advantage (Ahmed et al., 2001). There are various prospective enhancements of more effective knowledge sharing:

- Improved innovation leading to improved products and services
- Improved decision making
- Quicker problem solving and fewer mistakes
- Reduced product development time
- Improved customer service and satisfaction
- Reduced research and development costs (Ahmed et al., 2001).

Particularly, the core competencies of companies or organization are based on internal and external factors. The intellectual capital creates the link among different stake holders: investors-who allocate money to organization, managers- who manage resources in the organization and employees who allocate an important part of their lives for organization. *In other words, organisations must become "intelligent", continually learning more about the nature of, and the relationship between, their internal and external environments*(Stonehouse and Pemberton 1999, 131). Intellectual capital has become so vital that it's possible to clarify that an organization that is not managing knowledge is not paying attention to business (Stewart 1998).

The external resources for instance new available technologies, economic situations, natural resources or markets could be available to all organizations, thus merely internal resources can create differences from competitors. The external resources can be reflected in different peripheral areas including customers and channels, competitors and complementors, emerging technologies and scientific developments, political, social and economic forces (Day&Schoemaker 2006).

And those internal resources are human resources or real belonging infrastructures of the organization. In many organizations however this internal knowledge is not well connected to decision makers. The competitive advantage does exist within the firm however the scale and scope of

organizations create problems of uncoordinated, distributed intelligence (Day&Schoemaker 2006).

Besides that,the demographic changes in labour force such as retired staffs or managers leaving companies can create loss the most experienced employees.In Finland precisely, 11 % of labour force that means 270 000 people are the age 60-64 and expected to retire in the coming few years (Statistic Finland 2012). While in Vietnam the number of retired people is almost 12 % of population meaning approximately 10 million people (Index mundi 2013).

Retired people also take with them experiential knowledge and critical expertise that cannot find in other personals. The difficulty in searching replacement for high skilled experts is purely part of the organizational challenge. The main problem is about hidden costs for organization. Leaving employees can own long term personal relationships with some key customers or suppliers even major decision maker in customer companies.This is a huge trial for new replaced employee as well as company to keep the stakeholder's trust. In other cases, leaving employees could take with them those contacts without sharing. This leads to lost customers to competitors.

Tacit knowldge is a tremendous resource for all activities-expecially for innovation. The tacit dimensions of individual knowledge are not publicly available. Those dimensions are as embodies in people to be hired. Hence the tacit dimensions of the collective knowledge are woven into the very fabric of an organizationand are not easily imitated (Leonard & Sensiper 1998: 127; Stonehouse & Pemberton 1999: 141). Without sharing knowledge, it generates also lower innovation capacity and slow down the growth strategy. Research of Dalkir estimates that an organization with one thousand knowledge workers loses a minimum of \$6 million per year in time spent just searching for information (Dalkir 2011, 143). There is massive amount of time spent reworking or recreating information because it has not been found. In addtion,

making decisions based on incomplete information is increasing at an alarming rate. In combination, ineffective knowledge sharing system threatens organization: networks and innovation capacity and above all the competitive advantage of organization.

However, in working process there are challenges such as lack of knowledge management culture, sharing and receiving knowledge interruption, unaware of sharing knowledge benefits for managers and team members to deal with. Tacit knowledge or know-how knowledge as Polanyi (1958) suggests as highly individual and attainable only through personal practice and experience. Tacit knowledge is not always necessarily connected to age even though connecting to experience (Joe et.al, 2013: 924) . Thus it is hardly shared and explained especially in case of academic or expertise knowledge. The reason could be that no one can appreciate the experience they give to this problem, therefore they may appear foolish and that is too high price to pay (Leonard & Sensiper 1998 : 123).

More challenges seem to appear in projects and team work where team members belong to two or more different settings of culture. Hall (1995, cited in Nigel Holden 2002 : 3) claims that cultural differences are important enough to ruin a partnership that otherwise makes perfect economic sense. Perception, firstly prevents sharing process. Perception- the characteristic of unconsciousness entails a problem that people are not aware of the full range of their knowledge (Polanyi, 1958). Language and communication could be the second encounter to team work challenge. The interaction among members is paused or misinterpreted due to communication styles such as low context versus high context. The differences in low-high context are discussed in further in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5. Cultural effects are enormous and multifaceted due to variety of educational and social background as well as value system. *“Culture clash happens when people from two different cultures come into contact. Sometimes the clash begins before anyone has a chance to introduce you properly, before you even open your mouth”* (Nigel Holden 2002:4).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Many international organizations and global corporations have the international workforce as the major number of employees. The various backgrounds of employees create interesting environment for studying about knowledge management. This study is triggered by realistic case studies as well as researches about the acute relation between culture and knowledge sharing.

The objective of this bachelor thesis is to study the fundamentals of knowledge sharing in multicultural team and how multiple cultural communications create impacts in process of sharing knowledge. The main research question is the following:

What factors can influence knowledge sharing process in multicultural team work – The case of Finnish and Vietnamese team?

This thesis initially introduces the cultural and knowledge management theory frameworks and their applications in the workplace. This study is entitled to discuss the importance of sharing knowledge in teams. In addition, it analyses the possible multicultural communication obstacles in sharing knowledge processes.

This research focuses on academic Finnish and Vietnamese researchers and consulting employees who obtaining as well as exchanging frequently knowledge in their daily work. Those two nationalities are selected to ensure the precise and specific results for this study. Chosen researchers and consulting employees should have experience working together (Finnish – Vietnamese and vice versas) from two years and so forth. Two year length working experience of interviewees with the different culture could provide more accurate information. The interviewees are acquainted with each other enough and understand the cultural influences in working life.

In precise, the following questions will be used as a baseline for the open in depth interviews:

- What are the negative and positive factors which can influence knowledge sharing process in Finnish-Vietnamese teamwork?
- What are the best practices in Finnish-Vietnamese teamwork regarding successful knowledge sharing?
- How does intercultural communication influence the process of sharing knowledge between Finnish and Vietnamese team members?

As a final point, the study concludes and compares the findings with research results via the literature review and study outcomes.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 What is knowledge?

For ages, many philosophers such as Nokana.I, Sveiby, Davenport.T, R have debated about knowledge definition. Knowledge cannot be codified into a discrete entity as it is deeply embodied in people and simultaneously embedded in and inseparable from people's work practices (Hislop 2013 : 41) . According to Stewart (1997), knowledge assets, like money or equipment, exist and are worth cultivating only in the context of the strategy used to apply them.

A knowledge model is adopted by Brelade et al. 2003 (see Figure 1), the authors describe different stages of forming knowledge. By using the analogy of someone learning to ski. The data stage would be buying the skis, the information stage would be using a book on skiing as an aid to learn how to ski. At knowledge stage, the person gain actually experience of skiing.

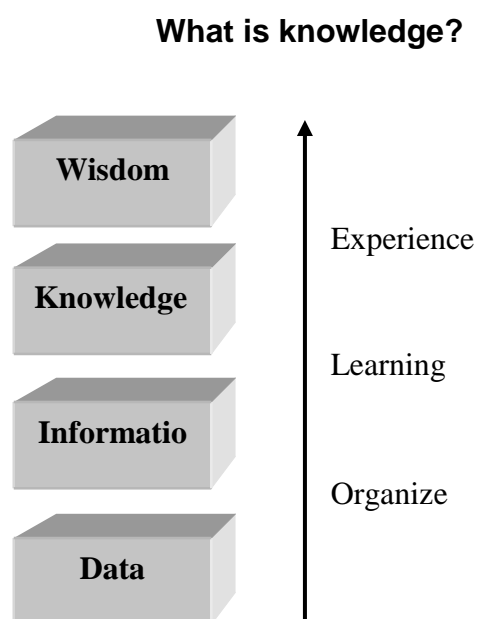


Figure 1 A model of knowledge (Brelade et al. 2003)

The term "data" describes a set of discrete, objective facts about events (structured records of transactions). *Information* is a message, usually in the form of a document or communication. *Knowledge* is a mix of framed experiences, values, contextual information and expert insights originating in the mind of the knower, Davenport&Prusak (1998, cited in Mayer 2000 : 56). On the other hand, there exists another view on relationship between knowledge, information and data. Data has no context such as raw figures, facts . When data is put into context, it becomes information. When the links between different pieces of information are formed and patterns apprehended it becomes knowledge (Brelade et al 2003 : 6).

According to (Stewart 2003 : 13), a company's intellectual capital is the sum of its human capital (talent), structural capital (intellectual property, methodologies, software, document, and other knowledge artifacts), and customer capital (client relationships) which shown in Figure 2.

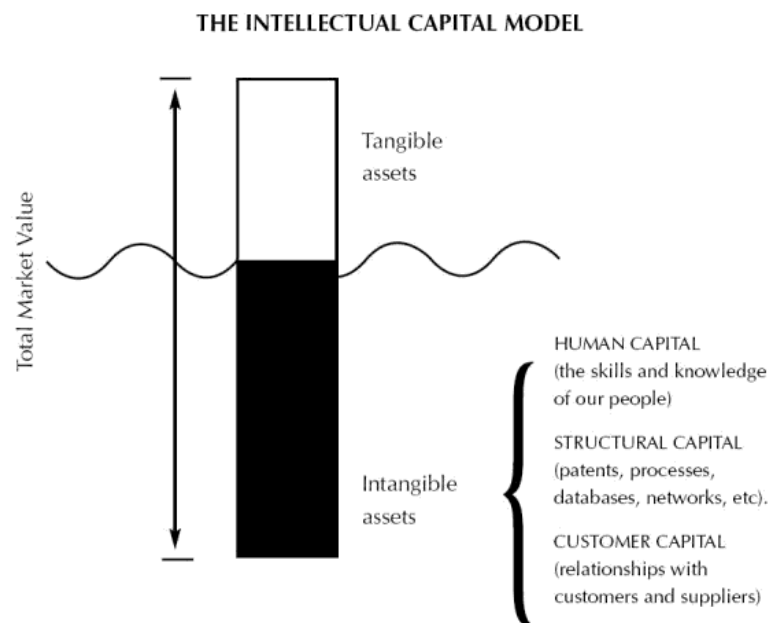


Figure 2 The intellectual Capital Model(Stewart, and Brealey 2003:13)

Above all, companies own intellectual capital or knowledge to transform raw materials and generate more valuable products. Employees possess valuable knowledge including skills, experiences, ideas and resources which is

developing all the time when performing their tasks. However, the risk is that this knowledge asset can be lost due to retirement, employee turnover or merging and so forth. Lesser and Prusak (2001:1) note that: “The most knowledgeable employees often leave first”. The reasons can be: expectation of expertise improvement was not met, lack of feedback about performance, lack of freedom in contributing or sharing ideas. Hence, to preserve those assets it is vital to identify, store and reuse knowledge in the easiest way from different level of organization such as: individual to individual, member of community and organization.

2.2 Tacit and Explicit knowledge

“[T]Here are two types of knowledge: explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge” (Nonaka et al., 2000). From this perspective, tacit and explicit knowledge do not represent the extremes of a spectrum, but instead represent two pure and separate forms of knowledge (Hislop 2013: 22). It is argued as well that the notion of the tacit is parasitic on the notion of the explicit. There are different levels of tacit knowledge such as weak, medium and strong tacit knowledge. Some of those levels we would or would not easily explain in explicit form (Collins 2010: 85).

Knowledge hence is based on two interrelated dimensions. The deeper knowledge is known as tacit knowledge. The knowledge is encoded or communicated in language system known as explicit knowledge.

2.2.1 Tacit knowledge

Defined by Sternberg (cited in Smith 2001 : 314), tacit knowledge is technical or cognitive and is made up of mental models, values, beliefs, perceptions, insights and assumptions. Technical tacit knowledge is demonstrated when people master a specific body of knowledge or use skills like those gradually developed by master craftsmen. Hence, it is clear that knowing and doing cannot be separated. Cognitive tacit knowledge incorporates implicit mental models and perceptions that are so ingrained in employees they are taken for

granted. Usually people seem to be unaware of the fact that they are embedded with some kind of tacit knowledge. This kind of knowledge is highly internalized and it is a natural part of human behaviour to be unconscious of knowledge (Haldin-Herrgard 2000 : 361). The knowledge, as stated above, has become a natural part and employees do not aware about required skills or actions to reach success. When employees are the best experts of their own work, they have tacit knowledge-based feelings about the development needs. Gradually, more and more of the task is “taken over” by the subconscious -shifting gears becomes “automatic”, “natural”. (Senge 2006:340).

The tacit knowledge is involved with different terms such as “skills”, “know how”, “working knowledge” and “expertise”. The etymology of tacit knowledge, tacitus, relates to quite, silent, not speaking, peaceful, unmentioned, unthought-of, undealt with; wordless, secret and unnoticed. When tacit knowledge is talked about , the terms soundless, hidden, implicit knowledge and practical know how, are also used (Puusa and Eerikäinen 2013 : 309).

Cognitive models affect how we make sense of events in our world. People use metaphors, analogies, demonstrations and stories to convey their tacit knowledge to others (Stewart, 1997).

For illustration, students attend lectures, take notes, download teacher materials. All materials or notes are explicit knowledge. However, knowing the way how and why a theory can be applied in a case study is considered as tacit knowledge. Since how students will use and apply the theoretical concepts seen in class is highly personal. Eventhough the exactly same amount of knowledge is delivered to students, some will and some will not use or apply the same way. *It is the skill of hands, the knowledge of the skin and of the deep layers of the brain*, Koivunen (1998, cited in Puusa and Eerikäinen 2013 : 309).

Tacit knowledge could differentiate the expert from the novices and increases work quality. It therefore is the most valuable knowledge of each individual. Tacit knowledge is acquired through personal effort, involving the accumulation of experiences and learning by doing, and becomes manifest in skilled

performance (De Fillippi et al. 2009 : 8). Consequently, tacit knowledge usually becomes a natural or obvious part in oneself working life. Tacit knowledge can not be separated from the person who owns it. It creates also strong impacts on performance of employees. One can learn the importance of service quality by reading textbooks but not learn a “smiling attitude” by reading about it (Herrgard 2000 : 359). It means to express, encode, share or copy this form of knowledge is highly difficult in fact. Tacit knowledge is not easy to communicate or transfer in language or word expression. It is more probable to say that tacit knowledge possibly shared. *Even in the case of a master and apprentice, the master is not directly transferring knowledge. Rather, the master helps the apprentice, or receiver, learn by shaping the way the apprentice takes information from the environment* (Thompson et al. 2009 : 328). On the other hand, due to abstraction characteristic tacit knowledge plays as key role in gaining competitive advantage and challenges for sharing process. Different methods like apprenticeship, direct interaction, networking and action learning that include face-to-face social interaction and practical experiences are more suitable for supporting the sharing of tacit knowledge (Haldin-Herrgard 2000 : 359).

2.2.2 Explicit knowledge

Explicit knowledge is characterized as technical information or data. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), explicit knowledge is formal and systematic and it can be expressed in words and numbers. It is labelled under formal language, copyright and patents for instance.

This type of knowledge can be transferred or shared in communication by different forms from prints to electronic methods. Explicit knowledge can be easily codified , shared and stored in the form of data reports, books or manuals in a formal and systematic language (Nonaka et al. 2006). Meanwhile, tacit knowledge as Nokana (1991) provides view that tacit knowledge or “know-how” is residing in the individual’s mind and is deeply rooted in the values, emotions,

routines and ideals of the individual making it difficult to formalize. The “Iceberg” metaphor describes explicit and tacit knowledge differences (see Figure 3).

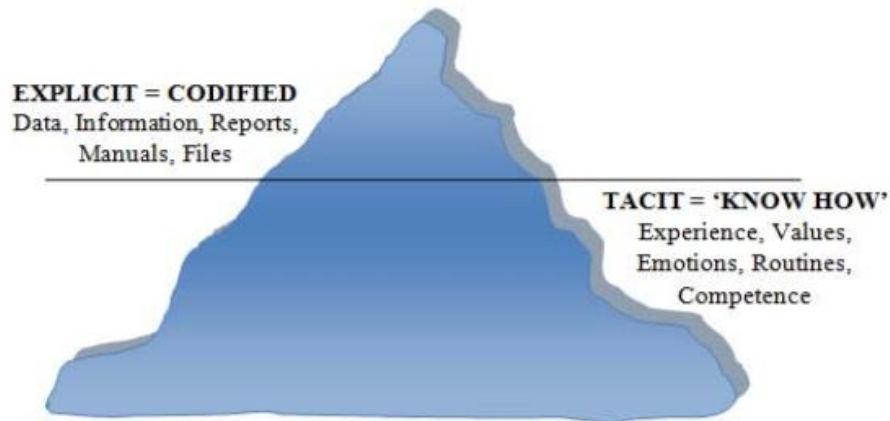


Figure 3 The “Iceberg” Metaphor describing Explicit and Tacit knowledge (adapted from Cognitive Design Solution 2010)

Once codified, explicit knowledge assets can be reused to solve many similar types of problems or connect people with valuable, reusable knowledge. Explicit knowledge is made available through replication of written instructions, mathematical equations or scientific formulae that summarize the knowledge content (De Fillippi et al. 2009 : 7). Principally, explicit knowledge refers to process or way of organizing knowledge.

These two knowledge categories enrich and vastly relate to the organization competency. Brown and Duguid (1998 cited in Mc Adam. R et al. 2007: 44) suggest “an organization’s core competency is more than the explicit knowledge or “know-what” It requires “tacit know-how” to put “know-what” into practice.

By using explicit and tacit knowledge wisely, companies could make the use of tacit knowledge in nurture innovation and ingenuity. On the other hand, they apply explicit knowledge in task organization and predictable working results.

2.2.3 Individual and Team knowledge

Knowledge obviously exists in individual level from very basic to complicated or academic understandings. Conversely, knowledge is located in form of shared work practices and procedures, the common or mutual hypothesis and perspective. Therefore knowledge can be divided into different level from individual to small-scale level as team, group and social level.

	Individual	Social
Explicit	Conscious	Objectified
Tacit	Automatic	Collective

Figure 4 Generic Knowledge Types (Smith 2001, 315)

In particular, objectified knowledge represents explicit group knowledge, for example a documented system of rules, operating procedures or formalized organization routines.

Collective knowledge on the other hand represents tacit knowledge, knowledge possessed by a group that is not codified. Examples of this include informal organizational routines and way of working, stories and shared systems of understanding (Hislop 2009 : 23).

Hence, in team working context where the individual existing knowledge can combine with system of shared values, it could increase the potential of sharing knowledge as well as community enhancement.

2.3 Culture

The potential for management frustration, costly misunderstandings and even business failures increases significantly when dealing with people whose values, beliefs, customs and first language are different from your own (Lisa Hoecklin, 1995). Culture has been playing in business environment as a source of competitive advantage. Organization value and knowledge could be enhanced or innovation business practices are invented via the diverse cultural working environment.

2.3.1 Definition of Culture

Culture is not

Right or wrong

Inherited

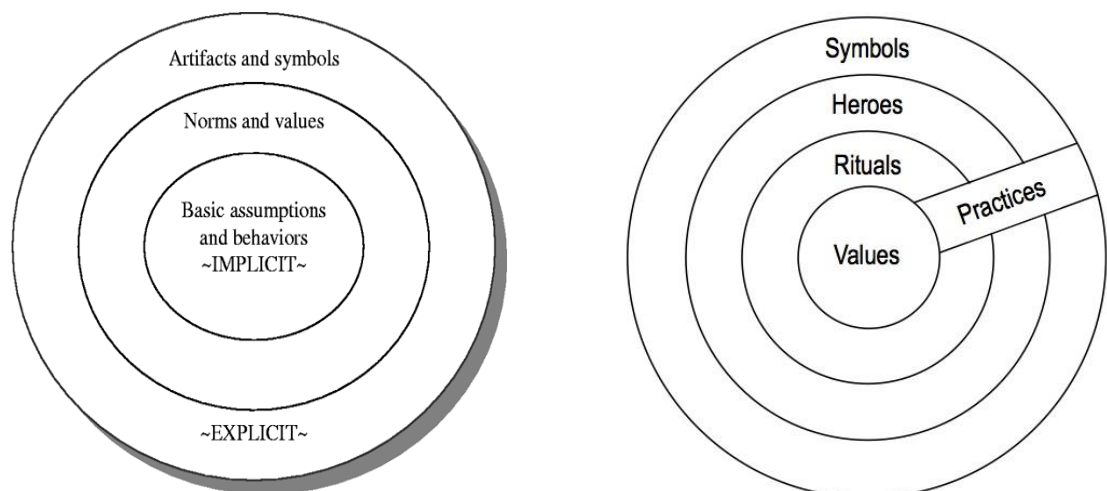
About individual behaviour. There are wide variations in individual values and behaviour within each national culture. (Hoecklin 1994 :25)

And, culture can be viewed as a set of beliefs or standards, shared by a group of people, which help the individual to decide what is, what can be, how one feels about it, what to do and how to go about doing it , Goodenough (1971 cited in Usunier 2007: 17)

Culture is complicated to define in words since its characteristics including tangible and intangible elements. The social rules and personal identities are built under cultural influences. The environment or surrounding a person is brought up affects or decides his fundamental behaviour in real life situations. That complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Tylor 1871). Culture has also an impact on communication one of the most vital parts in daily life as well as working place. Primarily a system for creating, sending, storing and processing information (Hall and Hall, 1987).

That means cultures is the key role in way of human acts and communicates. It supports and explains person behaviour, habit or way of evaluate items. People are gathering, sharing and embracing in teamwork within the cultural circle. Especially, interaction and verbal and non-verbal communicating are critical parts in working environment. On the other hand, thinking, dealing, learning as well adaptability to changes are diverse among different cultures. The way of communication and working or react towards the problem can be highly varied from person to person in an international organizational and multinational teamwork (De Long 1997: 5-15, Hislop 2013: 138-151). Concept of time is the most common instance for cultural differences. While some nations have a preference with punctuation, the others consider being late is normal.

Culture can be described as an onion in which contains many layers. The explicit part of culture such as tangible artefacts: art, cuisine, language, apparel are expressing elements for the deeper cultural values. The deeper the values in cultural onion diagram the more essential ideals and deep root of one culture. In the centre, the assumption defines for us:



Sources: Adapted from Hofstede (1991), Schein (1992), Trompenaars (1994) and Zakaria (2006)

evil

vs. good

dirty vs. clean

ugly vs. beautiful

unnatural vs. natural

Hofstede, 1991.

abnormal vs. normal

paradoxical vs. logical

irrational vs. rational(Geert Hofstede, 1991)

The existence of these core values are so obvious and natural. People do not even aware about those beliefs; we behave and react in certain way without explanation. Therefore, they cannot be discussed, nor can they be directly observed by outsiders (Geert Hofstede, 1991).

Culture concept nowadays is enlarged not only in the border of society, nation but also in organization. The impacts of culture on organization have been researched by many experts. In business environment, culture brings up ideas about organizational or corporate culture, communication, employee's skills, behaviour, and diversity backgrounds. In general, understanding cultural differences and managing the diverse workforce will support the leader to reach the goals as well as better working flow. All alternatives are present in all societies at all times, but some are preferred over others. (Adler.N 1997 : 18) makes it clearer that, understanding the culture does not mean doing an injustice.

In this study the dimensions of Hofstede will be applied mainly. The reason is due to the more differences and gap between two nations (Finnish-Vietnamese) are shown clearly than the other frameworks.

2.3.2 Geert Hofstede's 6 D model

Aiming at a good understanding of the workforce, it is important to learn about their based assumptions and their original cultural background. People have different set of working norms and regulations at their own hometown. By learning the national profile, the managers or leaders could be able to support and assume the expectation from our colleagues.

Geert Hofstede, Dutch professor has begun one of the most well-known researches and theories about culture differences. The study was conducted in

1967 among IBM employees in many countries. According to Hofstede, there are firstly four dimensions of national culture including: Power distance (PDI); Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV), Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). In 1991, Long Term Orientation (LTO) was added based on research of Michael Bond. Later on, the sixth dimension Indulgence versus Restraint was added this dimension was based on Minkov's World values survey data analysis for 93 countries (Geert Hofstede 2013).

Power distance

In countries where there is larger power distance, young people especially children are expected to respect parents and elders. Independence is not really encouraged in family. Throughout life, children ask guidance and advices from their seniors. There is a pattern of dependence on seniors which pervades all human contacts, and the mental software which people carry contains a strong need for such dependence.(Hofstede et al. 2010: 67). In the contrary, low power distance society as Finland, parents tend to let children to take control over their own lives as soon as they are old enough. A need for independence is supposed to be major component of the mental software of adults. (Hofstede et al. 2010 : 68) From the roots in the family and society, power distance creates also effect in workplace. The high power distance original Vietnamese employee could carry to his first workplaces the attitude which he experienced before between: parents-child, teacher-student. Superiors and subordinates are highly different from each other; there is existing inequality in large power distance office. In Vietnam, theory points out as high power distance country, the power is centralized as much as possible; staffs are told which task to perform. Bosses and superiors are supposed to privileges. The most respect, the most comfortable with or "good father" is the ideal boss. And it is also more emotional relationship between bosses and subordinates. Following is the comparision national culture index between Finland and Vietnam:

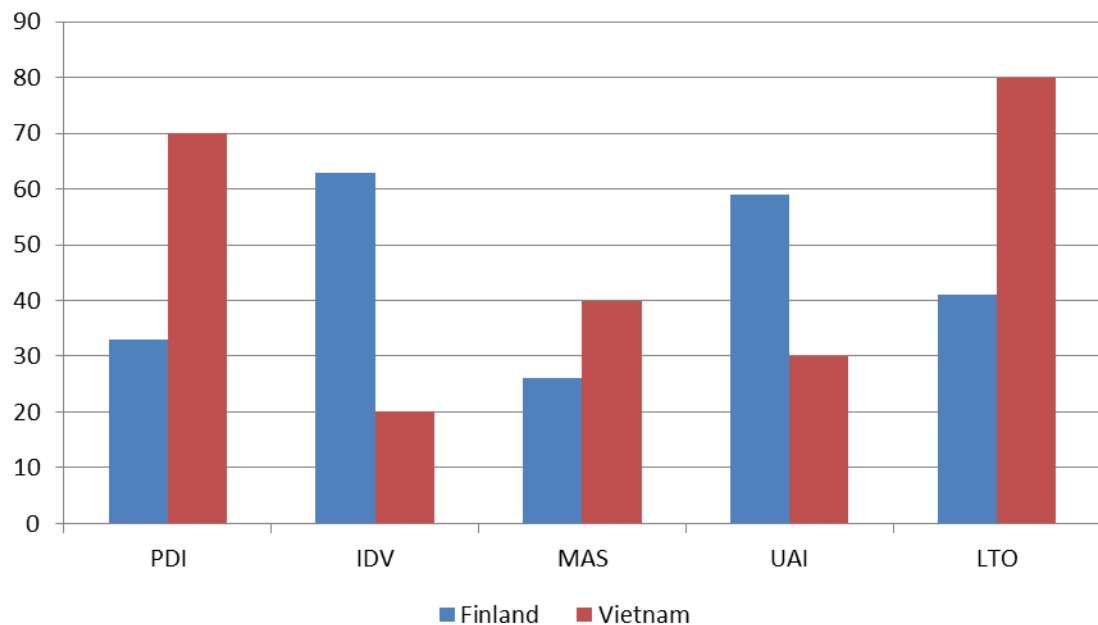


Figure 5 Finland and Vietnam – National cultures presented by Hofstede (2012)

The low power distance situation is dissimilar with equality and hierarchical system in which roles can be changed is convenient establishing purpose. The organizational power is decentralized, superiors are expected to be accessible by all subordinates and bosses are resourceful democrat. There is no difference in treatment at working place due to lower or higher position. The high power distance countries includes Vietnam and Asian countries as well as eastern European countries. Whilst the low power distance countries were found in Nordic countries including Finland (Hofstede et al. 2010 : 57-59)

Individualism versus Collectivism

At first, in higher individual society, the “I” as independent self is encouraged and expressed. While in collective countries, term of “we” is more common. In family limitation, personal opinion hardly exists in collectivists, opposites to individual case. Loyalty to the group such as family and relatives or organization is essential so that the value is shared among collectivists. On the contrary, individual cultures encourage self-independent economic and less dependent

on parents and relatives. In the working place, harmony maintenance is vital for collective cultures. Thus Vietnamese who are lower index in individualism tend to avoid confrontations and conflicts due to not hurting members and save faces for whole group. Hence, the workplace itself in Vietnam is more in-group, interest of in-group or group is put as priority. Employers and employees relationship is ethical, to aim at the mutual loyal commitment. The relationship of trust is necessary established with partners before start of any business. This explains why family members or relatives are preferential for high positions in collectivist organization. Due to more self-interest orientation, individualist cultures or Finns emphasis own employee's interest. The bonus or promotion is based on personal performance. While management of collectivists is management of groups, management of individualists is management of individuals. Occupational mobility is higher as well in individualistic countries due to less relationship positioning.

Masculinity versus Femininity

In a feminine society, relationships, caring about the others and quality of life are crucial whereas in a masculine society, earning, recognition and achievement are appreciated greatly. The emotional role is differentiated in two dimensions. Modest, tender and show feelings are expected in both genders in a feminine society. On the other hand, in more masculine society such as Vietnam with the score of 40, women are supposedly tender and show feelings, taking care of relationships. Men in masculinity oriented culture are apparently assertive, ambitious and tough. Competing, hiding emotion and aggression are more common among male individuals in highly masculine society. Since recognition role and "live in order to work" ethos (Hofstede et al. 2010 : 167), competition, excel effort, money and status products become vastly important. Comparing to Finland with the score of 25, people in feminine cultures consider the work ethos would rather be "work in order to live" (Hofstede et al. 2010:167). Thus, they respect small and modes things as beautiful and consensus determined. Leisure time is also more preferred to higher salary in high feminine cultures. The management styles at workplace therefore are dissimilar as well.

While in feminine cultures, *ménage à trois* way means more intuition and consensus focus, negotiation and compromising are used to aim at the resolutions. Masculine cultures show managing way with decisiveness and aggressiveness, resolutions will be found by the strongest. Reward system in higher feminine countries is based on equality versus based on equity in masculine countries. The most feminine countries include Nordic countries and several Latin countries. German speaking countries for instance, were found the most masculine countries (Hofstede et al. 2010 : 141-143).

Uncertainty Avoidance

Hofstede defines Uncertainty avoidance as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations (Hofstede et al. 2010: 191). Stronger uncertainty avoidance countries consider uncertainty is a continuous threat and it is necessary to be fought. This leads to more stress and high anxiety level in those cultures. Uncertainty in weaker UAV cultures in opposition is an ordinary feature of life. The differences or unfamiliar situations, risk investment are considered as dangerous in strong uncertainty cultures while it appears totally opposite to uncertainty acceptable cultures. Open-ended learning and good discussion are preferred in countries with weaker uncertainty avoidance. And structured learning situation or the wrong or right answers are comfortable for students in uncertainty avoidance countries. The differences consequently appear in workplace such as: changes of employer, time is framework for orientation, strategy focus at top manager, decision making process concentration are more popular in weaker uncertainty countries. More uncertainty avoiding cultures have differences in: need of regulations, precision and formalization demand, having belief in experts and technical solutions, less invention, better at implementation, motivated by security or belonging. Nordic countries along with Asian countries and African are scored as low uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede et al. 2010: 192-194).

Long term Orientation

Opposite to each other short term orientation particularly stands for “tradition, preservation of “face,” and fulfilling social obligations” or “the past and present” whereas long term orientation refers to “perseverance and thrift” or “future rewards”. In the way of thinking, long term orientation cultures as Vietnam consider working values consist of learning, honesty, adaptability, self-discipline, leisure time is not vital. People are aiming at profits of coming years from current time. While the work values of short term orientation countries as Finland with much lower index 41 in Hofstede research, are more freedom, rights, achievement and one self-thinking. The current situation of profit is most crucial. Rewarding based on abilities and meritocracy systems are common in short term orientation scored countries. The long term oriented countries on the other hand, ponder wide social network and economic creating advantages. Absolute truth or universal perception about right or wrong and evil or good exist in countries with short term orientation. Instead of this, in long term orientation countries, people judge the truth and evil or good depending on the different occasion. There is slightly unlike in way of thinking between these two cultural dimensions: analytical thinking in short term cultures and synthetic thinking in long term ones. Long term orientation countries example could be found in East Asia (Hofstede et al. 2010: 255-258).

Indulgence versus restraint

The latest dimension is Indulgence versus restraint is relating to happiness, life control and importance of leisure. The definition of this dimension is proposed as: *Indulgence stands for a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, restraint, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms.*(Hofstede et al. 2010: 281)

The society with looser social norms provides a large number of alternative channels and non-standard behaviour is more easily tolerated. In the strong or tight societies there are several elements maintain: group organization owning

strong values, high formality, permanence, durability as well solidarity. The indulgent countries have higher number of optimistic and extroverted personalities. This implicates also in indulgent cultures or emotional cultures, people are easier express feelings in both verbal and non-verbal expression from gestures to facial appearances. Oppositely, the neutral or restraint cultures would rather being calm and hardly reveal thinking. Restrained countries maintain perception of helplessness is what happening to oneself is not only his/her own doing. In indulgent countries, personal life control is sustained. The difference between indulgent and restrained cultures is also based on standard image or national perception. In indulgent countries the typical standardized rule for front desk staffs can be problematic in local restrained environment.

2.3.3 Other Cultural Frameworks

In addition to Geert Hofstede's framework, there are existing frameworks of other researchers that classify national cultures into altered dimensions. Some concepts and dimensions meet the identified ones by Hofstede, however several dimensions are value to be mentioned. First, the research of Shalom Schwartz, an Israel psychologist, was developed in the 90's. Schwartz described the national culture in another approach which comprised three issues and 56 value lists. He discussed three basic issues societies are challenged with: the nature of the relation or integration between the individual and the group (conservatism versus autonomy), how equality is valued and expected and personal responsibility is guaranteed in order to preserve the social order (hierarchy versus egalitarianism) and third issue is the relation of members of the society seek to change their relationship with nature and the social world in order to advance personal or group interest(mastery versus harmony) (Shalom H.Schwartz 1999). Schwartz collected and used data from teachers and college students in over countries. The next framework is built by Fons Trompenaars who studies Economics at the Free University of Amsterdam and later earned a Ph.D from Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. Trompenaars identified seven basic dimensions of culture: Universalism and Particularism, Individualism and Collectivism, Neutral and

Emotional, Specific and Diffuse, Achievement-oriented and Ascription-orientation, Sequential time and synchronous time, Internal direction versus Outer direction (Trompenaars and Hampden 2013).

By dimensions of Hofstede and other scholars' findings, it could be understood that culture roots in individuals, diverse perceptions in specific situation and regulates human manners. "The Software of the Mind" (Hofstede nt) affects not only towards national cultural features but also behaviour of people in organization and work place. Transfer of knowledge exclusively, in international working team is the most interactive practice. As a result, cultural theories or simulations should be properly aware as well as applied.

2.4 Cross cultural or Intercultural team

To gaining more precise concept of comparing interaction between people in teamwork from different cultures, firstly the variances between "cross cultural" or "intercultural" terms can be distinguished. "Cross cultural" dealing with larger approach, it is describing national management system comparison and local business customs in various countries. This leads to emphasizing country specific characteristics and universal differences. The aim of such approach is needed in preparation and implementation of management decisions in separate state contexts. However, centralization of intercultural approach is interaction among business people, organizations, buyers and sellers, employees and managers coming from different cultural backgrounds (Usunier 1998:9). Hence, it is better defining this bachelor study in intercultural limitation than cross cultural approach

2.4.1 Intercultural communication

Studies in "cross cultural communication" start from an assumption of distinct cultural groups and investigate aspects of their communicative practices comparatively. Studies in "intercultural communication" mostly also start from an assumption of cultural differences between distinct cultural groups but study their communicative practices interaction with each other. Finally, the "inter-

accompaniment for cues that aid the receiver in decoding the verbal symbols. Non-verbal behaviours not only function to amplify and clarify verbal messages but can also serve as forms of symbolic interaction without verbal counterparts (Samovar et al. 2011 : 269).

Intercultural communication arises when people communicate with other member of different cultures. The experienced background of human builds a set of meanings for most of words and actions in daily life. From many abstract words to common concepts, even in the same culture there are only “approximately” same meanings. The explanation bases on our experiences and diverse beliefs, attitudes, values and expectations.

Hence, culture plays as the determine factor to particular nonverbal behaviour explaining particular thought, feeling of communicator. The same facial expression “frown” can be represented totally different meanings to multicultural communicators. According to Adler “When the sender of a message comes from one culture and the receiver from another, the chances of accurately transmitting a message are low (Adler 1997 : 71). Especially, in academic environment where knowledge is sharing and teams are formed from different cultures. Below are different classes of relationship between culture and knowledge sharing which adapted from Hendriks. P (2004):

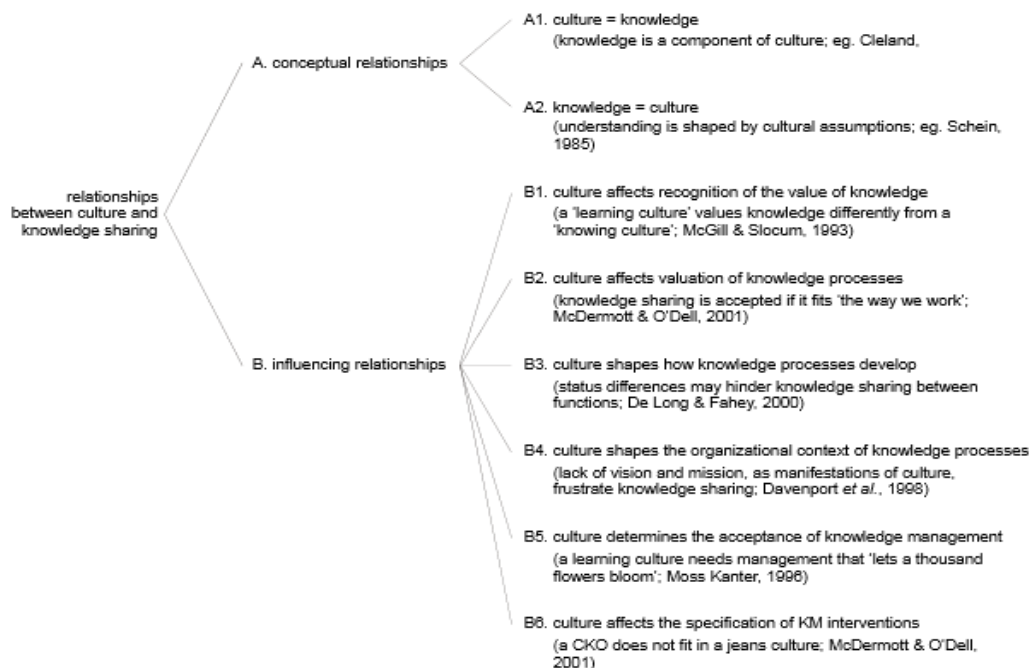


Figure 7 Relationship between culture and knowledge sharing which adapted from Hendriks. P (2004)

The differences among the cultural values of team members can influence team performance and processes (Silverthorne 2005 :155). This cultural variety interrupts and create misunderstanding in knowledge sharing process which could be caused by misperception, misinterpretation and misevaluation

2.4.2 Diversity categories in team (Adler 1997: 129)

The backgrounds of team members can be very similar or totally different in point of view, work experiences as well as cultural origins. This thesis will focus on categorizing team by cultural differences in their team members. The whole team participants come from the same culture considered as homogeneous. The multicultural teams could be divided into three categories: team has only one individual from another culture is referred as token team, numerous members coming from two cultures is called bicultural team and team includes three or more cultural backgrounds member is defined as multicultural team.

Homogeneous Team

In this team, every member owns same background. Hence, homogeneous team participants perceive, interpret and evaluate things almost similarly. An example can be a team of male Finnish ice hockey players. They are same culture, gender and profession.

Token team

In a token team, the only member who is coming from different culture can have separate point of view and comprehend in particular situation compared to the rest of team. A team of French soccer players has the British goal keeper could be an example. The British goal keeper is the token member (Adler 1997: 130)

Bicultural team

There are two or more members coming from two cultures. A team include three Finnish and two Swedish doctors working for a volunteer project, for

instance. In this example, team has to continuously incorporate and combine both existing cultural perspectives.

Multicultural team

In this multicultural team, three or more ethnics are presenting. In big corporation or multinational companies, nowadays it is very common existing team of executives who having diverse cultural backgrounds.

2.5 Knowledge sharing and Possible multicultural communication

obstacles

The importance of human, social, and cultural factors in shaping knowledge management processes is visible in a significant amount of case study evidence on knowledge management initiatives (Hislop 2013: 137). Figure 6 shows the relation within organization, people under support of technology and processes implanted within a culture.

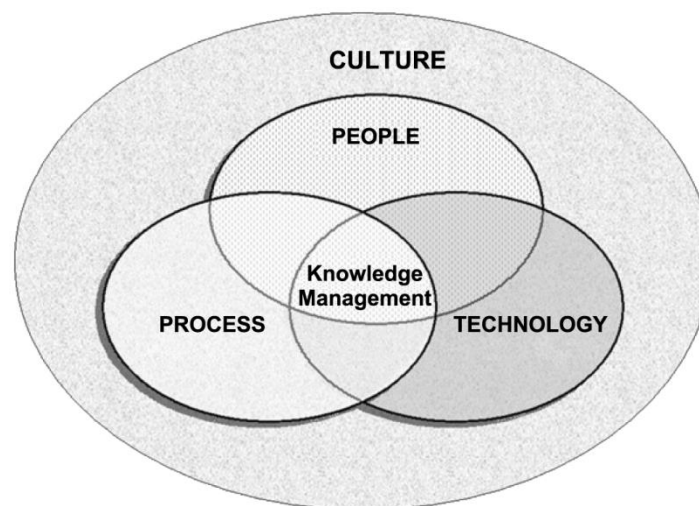


Figure 8 KM system (Corelick.C 2005, 129)

Culture, here is not only company culture but also influenced by the culture of individual cultures of employees. Culture has the effects over all three other elements (people, process and technology). People element is coming with cultural differences, processes and systems is influenced in new technology acceptance for example. In consequence, cultural obstacles and barriers exists

in these areas. The impact of culture on the context for interaction can be assessed on at least three dimensions: vertical interactions, horizontal interactions and special behaviors that promote knowledge sharing and use (De Long and Fahey 2000: 120).

Perception

The perception of team members towards the different cultural member and vice versus could create problem in process of communication or working. This misperception could lead to inaccurate view and measuring skills and potential involvement of team member for a particular task. The lower developing countries could be under evaluated. When some members come from higher developing countries and others from lower developing countries, team members tend to talk more to those from higher developing countries (Adler 1997: 133). There is existing assumption that the stereotypes can be applied to every individual in team. It leads to frustration in team communication and more difficult for members to share opinions or ideas. In a parallel situation, an Indian manager described the lack of respect granted him by many of his British colleagues who, he believed, “assume that I am underdeveloped simply because I come from an economically underdeveloped country” (Adler 1997:133). Power distance and uncertainty dimensions of Hofstede also indicate major impacts on information sharing and communication. High power distance cultures or Vietnamese particularly have centralized and top-down approaches. Vietnamese employees regularly show more respect towards manager in high power distance cultures. The subordinates are expected to told what to do and respect the boss as “good father”(Hofstede 2010: 73). Similar to other Asian countries, the Vietnamese profile is one of the collectivism, unequal power distribution and long term orientation influenced by Confucian value and ideals (Stankosky et al. 2010: 264). This is opposite to the low power factor cultures as Finland where equality is more preferred. Therefore, the level of acceptance how knowledge will be exchanged among staffs is also dissimilar between Vietnamese and Finns. Furthermore, in the more hierarchical cultures, top managers or supervisors often have control the information flow. There

might be existence of some restrictions or barriers for lower-level employees to share knowledge. In case of Vietnamese and Finns, the possible barrier for sharing knowledge could be Vietnamese employees will not feel free to respond or participate in debate or discussion without the allowance of their supervisor due to their different hierarchy information flow. Another assumption which the dissimilarity in power distance might create difficulty in sharing process is “saving face” attitude. The people from higher power distance culture could have different expectation about particular topic respondents. They tend to show good status and prevent facts not in line with their status image (Archichvili et al. 2006, 99). For those reasons, in sharing process the obstacles might occur due to Vietnamese presume about supervisor’s role as well as saving face attitude.

Communication style

According to Edward T. Hall, there are two different dimensions: High-context culture and Low-context culture (Hall 1976). These two dimensions have very straight effect on way of people sharing and communicating their own knowledge. Graph, table and numbers are used in Finland - low-context culture to explain the arguments while Vietnamese or high-context culture use stories and metaphor to explain a case study. The possible obstacle here is misunderstanding and accurate level of content in sharing process. The communicator could evaluate wrongly the given knowledge. At the same time, the non-verbal and verbal communication style give various ways of communication. In non-verbal communication as Vietnam, it requires more physical meetings with aim at developing relationship and exchanging information. However in more verbal communication-Finland, written emails, phone calls and virtual meeting are preferred. On the other hand, communication styles have a foremost influences in trust building. In more non-verbal culture as Vietnamese, people use physical meeting as building relationship in long term. However, in verbal communicating cultures for instance, Finns seek for reliable experts and precise facts. Hence, trust

building to share idea and know-how knowledge might be missing between Finns and Vietnamese. One more possibility for sharing barrier is the difference in collectivist culture and individualist culture. The more collective team member as Vietnamese would tend to gain the in-group belonging by face-to-face communication. This tendency might create more willingness to share knowledge in Vietnam. However, the same tendency might be a potential barrier to Finnish-Vietnamese sharing knowledge due to the more individualist culture as Finland.

Another example is the variety of personal distance in each culture perception. In working environment, this could create misunderstanding in communication process as well due to too close or too far distance between communicators.

Interpretation and Language

In team work, experience and knowledge of members are very valuable. Team members even depend on each other's knowledge. However, different ways of interpretation poses a threat in misunderstanding the argument. *Language also shapes perception. **What we see depends on what we are prepared to see*** (Senge 2006: 59). For instance, the same problem could be understood and communicated diversely by the employees. The Asian employee or Vietnamese is interested in understanding the background and all possible dependences, they start talking at lunch table or café break whilst the Western employees pay attention at precise details of the problem and exchange this information in the meeting room. Another interesting difference in interpretation is silence. In particular, silence of Asian people is easily misperceived by the other cultures. While in Asia, such as Vietnamese silence represents saving face attitude, politeness or sometimes misunderstanding signs. Learning appropriate rules for silence is also part of the acculturation process for adults attempting to develop communicative competence in a second language and culture (Nakane 2007:12). Similar to this example, Lehtonen & Sajavaara

(1985) and Sajavaara & Lehtonen(1997) report that the Finns often attach a positive value to silence on social occasions.

Besides that, another obstacle is language. Misunderstanding and reluctance to share knowledge can be caused by explaining wrongly. When people use a language as second one not mother tongue there is frequently happening mistake in explaining and sharing information. Especially in case of Finnish-Vietnamese teamwork, language as said above could become an obstacle for sharing knowledge.

3. CASE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Finnish and Vietnamese team work

Team work and intercultural teamwork nowadays is highly common in different Finnish organization. According to Statistic Finland 2012, there are 64 200 foreigners in working age. And more and more foreign researchers as well as employees consisting of Vietnamese are working in different Finnish areas. Also Statistic Finland 2012 reported a total of 1,655 new doctorate degrees were attained in 2012 where the share of foreign citizens was 18% comparing to 8% in 2000. There are growing doctorate degrees attained by foreigners in different fields of sciences. shown in Figure 9.

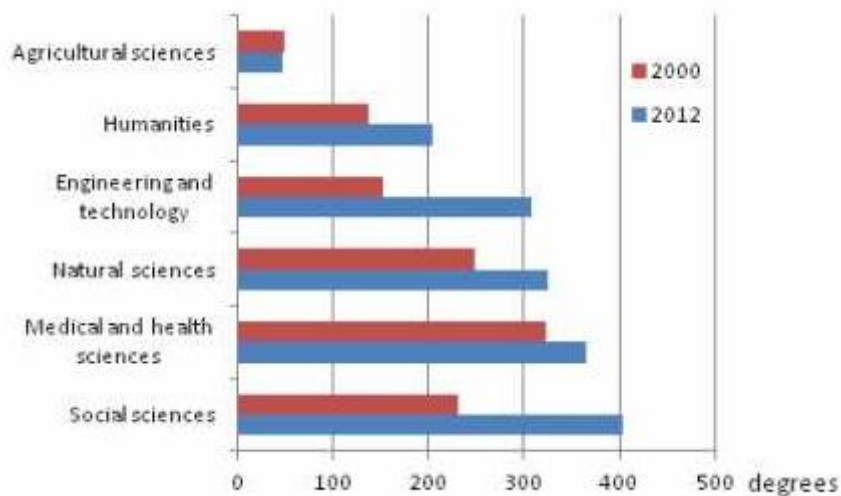


Figure 9 Doctorate degrees by field of science in 2000 and 2012 (Statistic Finland 2012)

Hence, there is the need for both sides to increase knowledge about their new partners' culture and factors could influence their different working styles.

3.2 Research methodology

Qualitative research

Based on the question of this study, qualitative is chosen. Dhawan defines *Qualitative research is specially important in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour, through such research we can analyse the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner or which make people like or dislike a particular thing* (Dhawan 2010:5).

In order to research knowledge sharing in intercultural teamwork from an in-depth point of view, the qualitative research is necessary. There are both primary and secondary data used as well as the personal fieldwork observation. The qualitative methodology can be split into four main stages(Myers 2013, 57).

- Philosophical assumptions: the research is based on an underlying assumption of what makes this research a valid one
 - Research method: the research uses the gathered empirical facts to convince of the applicability or not of the theory presented in the conceptual framework
 - Data collection technique: the collected information includes both primary data(interviews)), secondary data (memos, meeting reports) and also personal fieldwork observations in the case study organization
 - Data analysis approach : the purpose of this stage is to classify the gathered data and synthesize conclusion using a specific analysis approach
-
- Philosophical assumptions: By interpretive research usage, the philosophical assumption of this research focuses on face-to-face semi-structured interviews with a set of pre-formulated questions as the primary application tool, the secondary data is previous or other researches about Vietnamese and Finnish teamwork and my own observations. Through social communications such as language, consciousness, shared meanings and instruments. They do not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focus instead on the

complexity of human sense-making as the situation emerges, they attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them (Myers 2013: 39). Content analysis cannot solely explain certain patterns of the knowledge –related processes which are man driven. Hence the chosen interpretive research is chosen since knowledge-related processes reply also on the social content and human factor where knowledge is largely formed and analysed from an interpretive perspective. The collected data includes not only documented data but also observations during working process of interviewees such as interactions, actions and performance.

Research methodology

The interviewees are carefully chosen to ensure they have been working in a knowledgeable environment in more than two years. Interviewees are expected to represent the importance of knowledge sharing in their team work. The interviewees are researchers or employees working in knowlegable environment with more than two year experience with the other nationality (Vietnamese or Finnish). The second objective is to find out how the different cultural backgrounds affect people in sharing knowledge. In order to reach this second aim, interviewees will give opinions about their circumstance and attitudes in teamwork with other cultural members (Vietnamese or Finnish). This will lead to a finding about factors of intercultural background pose effect to knowledge sharing process.

In interview process, interviewer will encourage the interviewees to explain freely his/hers experiences or feeling about sharing knowledge with other team members. Based on the most frequent ideas and answers of interviewed people, interviewer will do analyse for above purposes.

Research strategy

According to Myers (2013: 6), research methods could be distinguished into four types: strategies action research, case studies, ethnography and grounded theory. In this study, the chosen approach is qualitative research method as Myers (2013: 57) mentions. This method illustrates a principle or a particular point that the writer wishes to aim. On the other hand, qualitative is ideal for studying the social, cultural, and political aspects of people and organizations (Myers 2013: 9) . The case study of Finnish and Vietnamese teamwork provides a practical application of theory and the subject problem is brought in real working life. Similarly, the case study in question aims at understanding the knowledge sharing processes in particular intercultural situation of Finnish-Vietnamese teamwork. In addition, the conceptual framework based on knowledge and cultural effects is tested.

Data collection

Data collection technique is multi-layered ad comprises semi-structured interviews. The reason for semi-structured interviews is based on pre-made open questions. Semi-structured interviews sit somewhere in between structured and unstructured interviews, involving the use of pre-formulated questions without adhering strictly to them (Myers 2013). The interviews are individual-based and are conducted during a period of two weeks, each person is interviewed separately. The interview duration is approximately 30 minutes each. The Vietnamese interviews is translated into English since the interviews are conducted in Vietnamese.

The objective of interviews is to supply insights on intercultural teamwork from the knowledge sharing perspective as well as identifying the influential factors to prevent sharing knowledge in term of cultural differences. Special attention is given to the questions aiming at locating possible problems within the intercultural team in sharing knowledge process.

The data collected includes the transcripts of interviews and my own observations completed during my working experience in the Finnish-Vietnamese teamwork.

Data analysis

Data analysis approach includes the interview transcripts are described and arranged according to specific theme (knowledge importance, sharing knowledge and cultural effects). Myers (2013) refers content analysis seeks to demonstrate the meaning of written or visual sources by systematically allocating their content to pre-determined, detailed categories, and then both quantifying and interpreting the outcomes. Following Figure gives a graphic representation of qualitative research method.

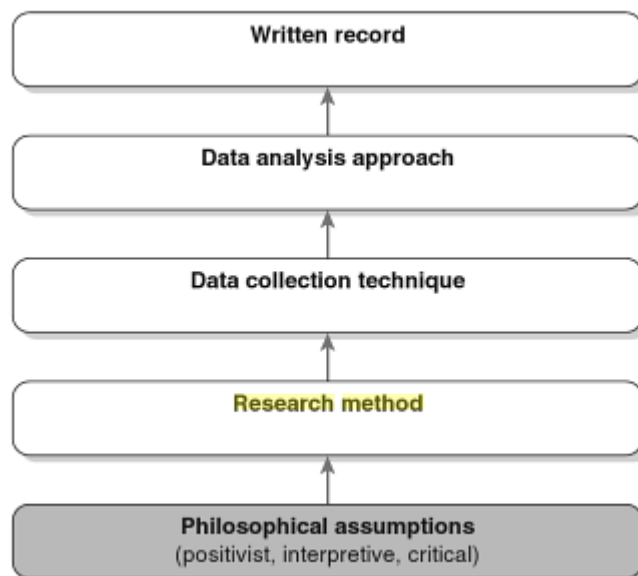


Figure 10 Qualitative research method (Myers 2013: 37)

3.3 Interview

Persons were taken from the academic units such as researchers doing their Phd or working in knowledge environment (office staffs, services advisor and consultants). Academics and researchers were selected due to the nature of their career. This environment always requires a large amount of knowledge have to be exchanged on a regular basis with their team members. All six interviewees had more than two years experiences from work and research. The one to one discussion was organized between interviewer and participants. To prevent interruptions, interviews were booked in two weeks beforehand in advance. The expected number of interviews was eight however due to some cancellations there was six interviews arranged. Before the discussion, all participants were told about the main topic and the usage of their answers and records. It was promised confidentially that the interview's answers would not be used in opposition to their daily employment. There were three Finns and three Vietnamese interviewed.

Following is the table represents key properties of the interviewees: age, education, working experiences. The table has order of three Vietnamese interviewees and three Finnish interviewees coming after.

Name- Code	Age	Education background	Working field	Years working as team with Finnish/ Vietnamese colleagues	in Team as backgrounds
CN-Vn1	29	Master	Service sector	3	Not only Finnish and

						Vietnamese- Bicultural team
DV- Vn2	28	Master	Academic research	2		Not only Finnish and Vietnamese- Bicultural team
LU- Vn3	34	PhD	Academic research	3,5		Only Finnish and Vietnamese- Token team
HK- Fi1	30	Post PhD	Biology	2,5		Not only Finnish and Vietnamese- Bicultural team
AP-Fi2	31	PhD	Engineering mathematic	3		Only Finnish and Vietnamese- Token team
EL-Fi3	29	Master	Information Technology	4		Not only Finnish and Vietnamese- Bicultural team

Table 1 Interviewee´s background and information

Interview feasibilities

The interviews took place in two weeks from 21st of April to 4th of May. There were no interruptions and interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes which did not end until the interviewees had finished their thought. The interviews were conducted in English. The first plan was Vietnamese interviewees could say in their mother tongue however, they all agreed using English instead. Notes and mind maps of interviews were written down by the interviewer.

Since the format of the interview was semi-structured, the interviews were given the list of questions to guide the discussion in the aimed direction. The questions were asked similarly from all interviewees, only questions of adaptation in new working environment was diminished with Finnish interviewees who are locals. Some interviewees required more open and suggesting than others.

The interviews were ensured for the contribution only for the thesis purpose and included some key points for thesis analysis.

4. FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS

4.1 Comparision

In the following table, the Finnish and Vietnamese answers are compared in main idea and keywords. The keywords are chosen from interviewees if those words were repeated more than twice. The common idea and keywords of Finnish and Vietnamese are bold.

Idea and keywords/ Finnish	Idea and keywords/Vietnamese
<p><i>How important knowledge is ?</i></p> <p>Fi 1: Research work requires theory and accuracy</p> <p>Fi1: Backbone</p> <p>Fi1, Fi2: Competences in team</p> <p>Fi1, Fi2, Fi3: Better performance</p> <p>Fi3: Valuable resource</p> <p>Fi2, Fi3: Self competitiveness</p>	<p><i>How important knowledge is ?</i></p> <p>Vn2, Vn3: Academic research</p> <p>Vn 1: Company Competence</p> <p>Vn1, Vn2, Vn3: Influence performance</p> <p>Vn1, Vn3: Self development</p> <p>Vn2, Vn3: Team work</p> <p>Vn3: Valuable resource</p> <p>Vn2, Vn3: 3, Cooperation</p>
<p><i>How we share knowledge and why?</i></p> <p>Fi 2, Fi3: Group meeting</p>	<p><i>How we share knowledge and why?</i></p> <p>Vn1, Vn2, Vn3: Official meetings</p>

<p>Fi1: Direct communication in pair</p> <p>Fi1, Fi3: Reach point and validate the process with colleagues</p> <p>Fi1: Consolidate available knowledge</p> <p>Fi1: Stimulate thinking process to create new knowledge</p> <p>Fi1: Transfer tacit knowledge</p> <p>Gain more knowledge</p> <p>Fi2, Fi3: Improve team performance</p> <p>Fi 2: Similar knowledge base</p> <p>Fi2: Back up each other on the task</p> <p>Fi3: Find out the solutions</p> <p>Fi3: Reach the target</p>	<p>Vn1, Vn2: Communicate daily</p> <p>Vn1, Vn2, Vn3: Working environment</p> <p>Vn1, Vn2, Vn3: Better work and more efficient</p> <p>Vn2, Vn3: Key success to the project</p> <p>Vn2: Organization learning</p> <p>Vn3: Better decision</p> <p>Vn3: Gain knowledge from senior researcher</p> <p>Vn2: Desicive element for group success</p> <p>Vn3: Support team members</p>
<p><i>Working and communication style</i></p> <p>Fi1, Fi2, Fi3: Low context</p> <p>All interviewees: Direct communication</p> <p>Vn1, Vn2, Vn3: Straight forward</p> <p>All employees: Self working and management</p> <p>Fi1, Fi2, Fi3: No supervise every day</p> <p>Vn1, Vn2, Vn3: Respect other opinions</p> <p>Fi3, Vn3: Objective</p>	<p><i>Working and communication style</i></p> <p>Vi1, Vi2, Vi3: High context</p> <p>All inerviewees: Indirect communication</p> <p>Vn2, Vn3: Highly criticize in meeting</p> <p>Vn2, Vn3: Closely managed by supervisor</p> <p>Vn2, Vn3: Junior not confidence to share new knowledge in the meeting but in the lobby</p> <p>Vn3: Relationship focus and exchange</p>

	<p>more private information</p> <p>Vn3: Regulations sometimes are flexible</p>
<p><i>How we communicate? (Finnish to Vietnamese)</i></p> <p>Fi1: Have to be more proactive in sharing knowledge with Vietnamese</p> <p>Fi1, Fi3: Need confirmation in advance to prevent misunderstanding</p> <p>Fi2: Vietnamese adjusts quite fast</p> <p>Fi3: Take time to understand Vietnamese working way</p> <p>Fi1: More careful in understanding their words</p>	<p><i>How we communicate? (Vietnamese to Finnish)</i></p> <p>Vn1, Vn3: Become more straightforward</p> <p>Vn1, Vn3: Have to adapt into direct style</p> <p>Vn2, Vn3: Very long learning time to know how to interact with Finnish colleagues</p> <p>Vn1: Take words as what they mean</p>
<p><i>Different culture impacts to share knowledge</i></p> <p>All interviewees: Language barrier</p> <p>Fi 1, Fi2, Fi3, Vn1, Vn3: Strong effects</p> <p>Fi2: Body language</p> <p>Fi1, Fi 3: Different interpretation</p> <p>Fi2: No big problem</p> <p>Fi1: More diverse point of view</p> <p>Fi3: Time concept</p>	<p><i>Different culture impacts to share knowledge</i></p> <p>Vn1, Vn3: Difficult get to know at the beginning</p> <p>Vn2, Vn3: The majority nationality decide the way</p> <p>Vn1, Vn3: Silence in speech</p> <p>Vn3: The way of interpretation</p> <p>Vn1, Vn2, Vn3: Learning more effective working style</p>

Fi1, Fi3: Work allocation	<p>Vn2, Vn3: Using more lobby method (chit-chat, discuss in lunch)</p> <p>Vn3: Take time to have trust to share</p>
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Table 2: Finnish and Vietnamese interviews

4.2 Finnish and Vietnamese culture and communication differences

The greatest difference which was visible in culture and communication is Finnish low context versus high context of Vietnamese. This is an element which differentiates Vietnamese and Finnish. All Vietnamese interviewees said that they are used to indirect communication way such as using image or metaphor to imply how they want to deal with the problem rather than sharing straight the idea. Thus it is hard to get acquainted with straightforward style of Finns. For instance, discussion method has essential contrasts between Finns and Vietnamese. The problem as Fi 1, Fi3, Vn1, Vn 3 stated, they could not get the same interpretation of same words due to different reasons. Vietnamese team members interpret the words non-literally. Another cause is silence in Finnish speech, which Vn1, Vn3 referred, made they misunderstand if there were mistakes, irrelevant facts or not acceptable thought in their speeches. This leads to difficulties in sharing knowledge. Vietnamese might not be confident to share their idea due to wrong interpretation about Finnish communication way.

Time concept is another difference. Vietnamese interviewee explained the time perception is quite strict in Finnish working place. Finns are known for their punctuality and well organized. While in Vietnamese culture, time table could be changed as well as flexible. This requires effort to adapt into precise time management as all Vietnamese interviewees mentioned. Interviewee Fi3 said that the absence of schedule created problems to work efficiently. On the other hand, Vietnamese represent more elastic schedule not always so punctual. For instance, in Vietnam meeting time could be plus or minus 15 minutes. It is common that meeting could be arranged quickly not always pre-booking as Finnish. Hence in general, the differences in time concept did create issues for Finns and Vietnamese in executing and sharing knowledge.

The perception of high respect or power distance aspect to junior also affects the way of sharing knowledge. As Vn2, Vn3 said, the Vietnamese juniors are often shy to point out new idea or their own knowledge in meeting. While Finns much easily explain their opinions.

Body language of some Vietnamese sometimes made Finnish colleague misinterpret. For example, Fi 3 said the Vietnamese do not use eye contacts. In Vietnamese culture, people are not expected always to have eyes contact, especially towards elder people.

Individualism and distance in lifestyle created also different point of Finns and Vietnamese. As Vn1 stated, to get to know and start sharing knowledge with Finns is quite difficult. Finns are colder than Vietnamese and distance at first. In contrast, Vietnamese is more collective and talkative.

4.3 Finnish and Vietnamese working style differences

It was mentioned that the Vietnamese working style is more supervised by seniors or managers. While Finnish working environment has more emphasis on self-working and management. The role of supervisor is clearly different in two working styles.

In Vietnamese society or working system, the senior who has much experience is highly expected. The managers, supervisor mostly are much older and have very important voice in meeting or decision making in teamwork. As the Vietnamese interviewees (Vn2, Vn3) referred the lobby methods such as chit chat or lunch/meal discussion is further common in Vietnam. Differently, Finnish consider meeting time is the time for discussion but not lunch or meal space.

In Vietnam, the juniors respect much the older seniors to hardly share their opinion or knowledge in meeting. Colleagues are much criticized in meeting towards the other opinions. The appreciation and importance of seniors and managers are strong in Vietnamese environment. However in Finnish meeting or daily work it is different. All Vietnamese interviewees mentioned that they can be listened always by both colleagues and elder seniors. Another difference came apparent in interviews is relationship focus among Vietnamese colleagues comparing to Finns. In Vietnamese work place, relationship and network are highly crucial. The relationship is not meaning only between colleagues but also between manager and staffs, supervisor and junior etc. Important decision making and team work discussion can be placed outside of office. On the contrary Finnish does not focus on relationship always in work place. This could imply challenge for Vietnamese in sharing knowledge. Vietnamese researchers and staffs have to put aside their strong “power” impression and relationship building to trust Finns and share knowledge.

Another difference revealed was that Finns deal with situation from very objective point of view. In contrast in Vietnam the power of relationship is more important than the rules or regulations.

4.4 Finnish view of positiveness and barriers in sharing knowledge with Vietnamese

Finns interviewees (Fi1) explained that they have to be more proactive in sharing knowledge with Vietnamese. On the other hand, they (Fi1, Fi3) always need to give confirmation to know if they understand correctly.

Interviewee Fi1 answered to this question that, he has to be more careful in understanding Vietnamese words, because it sometimes does not mean as the word itself.

One of the most used key words to describe difficulties in sharing knowledge with Vietnamese is time consuming to understand Vietnamese working way (time and work allocation). Finns who had long time working with Vietnamese said that it is sometimes difficult to understand how they work. Vietnamese do everything at the same time in some cases.

Vietnamese want to save faces and try to maintain the good outer shell. For instance, it is stated by interviewee (Fi3) that if there were two Vietnamese colleagues, they try to save faces for each other by indirect talk or preventing to hide there is any problem.

Language is obstacle for Finnish to share knowledge with Vietnamese because of English is their second language. One example which interviewee Fi1 referred was difficulties and misunderstanding in concept explanation and discussion with team members.

On the other hand, all Finnish interviewees also mentioned that Vietnamese adjust quite fast in team work. Finns also gain more experience in a multicultural team.

4.5 Vietnamese view of positiveness and barriers in sharing knowledge with Finnish

Interviewees mentioned that they have to try to be much more direct. The most important is taking words as what they mean. As stated above, Vietnamese often understand other speech in more non-literal context. For instance, Vietnamese could take straight words of Finns as strict critical speech. Or the coldness of Finns could prevent Vietnamese to share knowledge openly.

And same as Finnish, interview respondents said it was very long time to know how to interact with Finnish colleagues.

Two interviewees(Vn2, Vn3) mentioned that the majority nationality decide the way of teamwork so they are minority in Finnish-Vietnamese teamwork thus they have to adjust.

Language is the most common reply from interviewees about communication difference. Since in working place, they mostly use English is none of their mother tongue. Finns are tending to talk with Finnish colleagues and Vietnamese talks in group as well if possible.

The knowledge flow of Finnish and Vietnamese therefore is possibly disrupted. When both sides are hesitate due to the language limit as well as differences in interpretation. These elements lead to the common group culture not open and supportive enough for all team members to share knowledge.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE THEORY AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Analysis of the theory and research findings

The interviews provided several relevant evidence and practical findings of theory.

Perception

The Finnish interviewees do not show the misperception in term of lower or higher developing origin of colleagues. Finnish have quite fair view about status culture as well as attempt to understand the other culture particularly Vietnam. Hence, the problem of pre- assumption that team members tend to talk more with those people from more developing countries (Adler 1997:13) does not really exist in case of Finnish-Vietnamese teamwork.

On another facet, large power distance perception as Hofstede cited created subordinates and superiors relationship in organization frequently loaded with emotions (Hofstede 2010: 73). Emotions and large power distance does much affect to perception especially Vietnamese interviewees. Even though, the interviewees have high commitment to learn since they are academic researchers and knowledge working related. They are deeply used to high power distance, centralized management in organization. The top- down approach is mostly common in Vietnam, hence being supervised and “older superiors are generally more respected than younger ones” (Hofstede 2010, 74). It creates huge difference in knowledge exchange between interviewees. As Vn2 referred that Vietnamese juniors do not have enough confidence to share and much more chit-chat or lobby discuss. This indicates the degree of knowledge sharing does depend on culture. The culture difference in large power distance might prevent Vietnamese team members to share frequently

with other lower power distance cultures. While one of importance point in sharing knowledge is based on trust building especially tacit knowledge. Low degree of sharing knowledge leads to hardly share the highly personal knowledge – tacit knowledge from Vietnamese side towards Finns. This could lead to a problem and did become a challenge at first for Vietnamese researchers or employees to be able to share tacit knowledge with Finnish colleagues. The other presupposition about saving face attitude also does exist in findings. As Fi3 mentioned, Vietnamese do try to hide if there is any problem. And this does confuse Finns to understand the content of knowledge exchanging process.

Communication style

Research findings indicate the communication styles of two countries (Finland and Vietnam) is opposite as theoretical presupposition. While Finnish is direct using many facts and figures to explain the case, Vietnamese on the other hand uses stories, metaphors and idioms to describe indirectly. In knowledge sharing process there are two roles: the one who has knowledge and the one who gets knowledge. The knowledge sharing will only come out when those involved parties recognize its importance or possible values (Hendrik 2004: 6). Thus, two ways of expressing ideas (direct vice versa indirect) does create barrier or unsuccessful sharing process among Finns and Vietnamese. With the different cultural presumes, the person who get knowledge could not evaluate or recognize the importance or valuable points of sender's message. As the findings show, all interviewees are always careful or use confirmation to make sure if they understand correctly.

There was also notable factor between non-verbal and verbal communication as in theoretical presumption. Finnish represents verbal communication preferring written emails, phone calls and virtual meetings. In contrary, Vietnamese who emphasize relationship development, use more physical meetings. Thus different communication media contributes as well one element to the degree of knowledge sharing. The more non-verbal communicator as Vietnamese might find difficulties in sharing tacit knowledge with Finns via

emails or virtual meeting but not face to face. The deep reason could be trust missing to share in Vietnamese mind-set. The contents of the knowledge sharing process might be unclear. In particular, Vietnamese interviewee mentioned that it takes time to know to share knowledge and idea with Finnish colleagues.

Another element for unclear content of sharing knowledge as well as low rate of sharing process between these two cultures is that Vietnamese and Finns often gather together in their own nationality group as the familiar culture. The sharing knowledge here within the group is more open. The content consequently is much integrated by all parties and trust is developed between Finns or Vietnamese solely. As the result, more implicit knowledge could more easily share and explain in only Finns side or Vietnamese side.

Another factor as visual details in the face (Hall 1996: 121) correspondingly generates misunderstanding in knowledge sharing process of Finnish and Vietnamese teamwork. This is new factor comparing to theory frameworks. The example would be eyes contact of Vietnamese is sometimes missing which confuses Finns. Finnish colleagues could interpret Vietnamese have something unsure or unclear in their messages. The interpretation now could lead to wrong understandings in sharing process.

Interpretation and Language

The interpretation of silence appears as one influential matter for Vietnamese interviewees. Finnish do keep silence in their speeches. And Vietnamese do not understand if there was any problem in their own replies or explanation towards Finnish colleagues. This did cause a negative factor to sharing process additionally. Finns as obtaining parties are not intentionally keep coldness or silence which might be their natural expression. However, the recognition of the value of knowledge could be affected due to bringing party- Vietnamese misinterpretation about Finnish positive value to silence.

The most frequent replies from interviews indicate language is one of the biggest barriers in term of difficulty to share knowledge. It could become also a strong factor for affecting contents of knowledge sharing process.

Although there are many different cultural influential factors in communication and sharing knowledge methods, there can be found the other positive similarity between Finns and Vietnamese. The common idea is both of sides try to adapt and understand the others. Vietnamese want to adjust and work effectively in the working atmosphere. Finns on the other hand want to keep harmony and since it is not their custom too dramatic but to make sure everything is clear.

Interview findings compared on Hofstede theory

Hofstede's research has still strong applications in case studies. However, the research of Hofstede (1994) which was done more 20 years ago and many issues have transformed. Culture itself does evolve time to time; Finnish culture particularly was not entirely the same as 20 years ago. New technology and globalization has huge impacts on any culture these days. The number of foreigners in Finland nowadays grows clearly more than 20 years ago.

As stated above, there are various similarities when comparing the theory and research results. The chief similarity is that Vietnam culture is considered as a high power distance. The importance of boss and supervisor was clearly acknowledged in the research as well as in the theory findings. This came apparent also in the interviews. The interviewees replied that juniors hardly raise voices in organization. Another vital similarity between theory and interview findings was that the Vietnamese collectivistic vice versus Finnish individualistic.

Also the differences in indirect and direct which are very similar to Hofstede study. This was shown clearly as well in interviews, Vietnamese described Finns in the similar ways to those found in the theory for example Finns are punctual. It takes long time to get to know Finns. There are also elements which Finnish interviewees witnessed about time concept and working allocation

which is similar to Trompenaars study about Sequential time and synchronous time.

5.2 Further study and self-evaluation

This research focused on Finnish and Vietnamese teamwork which first made in term of knowledge sharing context. Hence, it is recommended to do further research. Since one of the big differences among Finnish and Vietnamese colleagues is communication style (non-verbal and verbal), it might require more research. The communication plays as “vehicle” for knowledge transferring, hence there could be more detail research. Another facet which could provide deeper research is suggestion for more effective teamwork between two cultures. The solutions for teamwork improvement could support both Finnish and Vietnamese to prevent as well as enhance the organization learning and reach team targets.

The research could have more participants for interviews. Although there were limited interviewees but the author believes their answers are accurate because there were matching influential factors came from both Finnish and Vietnamese. The interviews could use more practical questions to get further detail answers. Also via those questions the author could have better comparison the differences between Finns and Vietnams.

6. CONCLUSION

In this thesis the writer researched the influential factors of Finnish and Vietnamese culture differences in sharing knowledge process. The study was collected with open questions. By the research it can be stated that there are many cultural differences and factors could influence sharing knowledge process of Finnish and Vietnamese teamwork. To sum up, there are several factors could affect knowledge sharing in Vietnamese-Finnish teamwork:

- Power distance differences influence participation of Vietnamese in sharing process.
- Face-to-face communication and in-group belongings expectation of Vietnamese could affect Vietnamese's willingness to share knowledge with Finns.
- Direct vs. Indirect and verbal vs. non-verbal perspective dissimilarity between Vietnamese and Finnish pose an understanding obstacle in content of knowledge sharing process.
- Same nationality orientation brings the element for unclear content of knowledge exchange as well as low rate of sharing process between these two cultures.
- Language also could be a strong factor to knowledge sharing effectiveness.
- Facial expression and silence in speech might interrupt the exchanging knowledge process.

Some other great differences for instance the relationship orientation clearly apparent in the research findings.

An interesting finding was that the main nationality decides the working and sharing style as interviewees stated. Consequently, it can be noticed is that open mind, respect and owning knowledge of other cultures leading to possibly successful intercultural teamwork and cooperation. This study could be useful as a guideline for researchers or employees who are going to join in Finnish or Vietnamese team.

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Appendix

Interview questions and interviewee's answers taking in note

Vietnamese Interviewee 1

General information- Background

1. Nationality: Vietnamese
2. Age:
3. Gender: Female
4. Position or duty: Staff
5. Education: Master Graduate
6. How long have you been working in this current company? 3 years

7. What is your current working environment like? Do you have to work frequently with other Finnish colleagues as a team? (Aim at importance of team work experience)
Quite often, almost everyday

8. How is the team background like? (Only Finnish and Vietnamese or More than two nationalities)
The team includes more than 2 nationalities (Vietnamese and Finnish and some other North Asian members)

9. What is your current job about? (Categorize knowledge/ academic career)
Service sector

Knowledge roles and sharing in interviewee's daily work

10. Do you think knowledge is valuable resource for your study/company competitive advantages?
Yes, I do.

11. How often you have to exchange knowledge with other colleagues? Would you be willing to share knowledge with other members in your team? And in which forms do you share knowledge with them?

The exchange of knowledge does happen frequently.

But I am willing to share my knowledge with other team members. We have shared knowledge and experience by discussion in official meetings.

12. What is your view about importance of sharing knowledge to support your organization learning?

It is crucial to share knowledge among employees in an organization. Sharing knowledge builds up a friendly and open-minded working environment and helps employees work better and more efficient.

Culture effects

13. How did you adjust to your new working style in Finland?

I quite like Finnish working style, and I did not have to adjust much to my new working style. I just become more straightforward when I work with Finnish co-workers.

14. Culture can be divided into high-context and low context cultures. The high context culture is a more indirect communication style which considers words less important. The low context cultures focus and express more in words and less using nonverbal context. How does the teamwork communication style differ from your country of residence?

I would say that communication style is high context culture in Vietnam, and it is in another way around in Finland.

15. Is your communication with other Finns working effectively? Do you feel that cultural differences had a strong effect on your interaction with Finnish colleagues?

Yes, it is effective now.

Yes, sometimes as above....and it takes long time to adapt in individual working style, also direct straight speaking.

16. What do you see as advantages/ positive impacts of working with different cultural background employees that you have experienced?

I can learn from different people coming from diversified cultures. I open my mind and I enhance my knowledge.

17. What problems/ difficulties occur when you communicate with Finnish colleagues and try to share knowledge with them?

Finnish is cold in the beginning, but when we work together, they are honest and reliable. Take words as what they mean. Sometimes they have silence in speech → confused if there is something wrong or I say anything not right.

→ *Difficult to get to know them in the beginning, but later on they are good team members.*

18. What are so called “best practices” in Vietnamese-Finnish regarding teamwork experience or knowledge sharing you gained?

Be honest and straightforward.

Vietnamese Interview 2

General information- Background

1. Nationality: *Vietnam*
2. Age: *28*
3. Gender: *Male*
4. Position or duty: *Researcher*
5. Education: *Master degree*
6. How long have you been working in this current company? *2 years*
7. What is your current working environment like? Do you have to work frequently with other Finnish colleagues as a team? (Aim at importance of team work experience)

Intercultural environment, usually work on projects with other Finnish colleagues

8. How is the team background like? (Only Finnish and Vietnamese or More than two nationalities)

Finnish and other nationalities (except for Vietnamese)

9. What is your current job about? (Categorize knowledge/ academic career)

Academic research

Knowledge roles and sharing in interviewee's daily work

10. Do you think knowledge is valuable resource for your study/company competitive advantages?

Yes, we are academic researchers after all.

11. How often you have to exchange knowledge with other colleagues? Would you be willing to share knowledge with other members in your team? And in which forms do you share knowledge with them?

In academic environment, project members have 1-2 weekly meetings. However, researcher communicates daily with his/her direct supervisors (e.g., senior researcher, professor). Sharing knowledge with other project members is a key success to the project. The knowledge sharing can be done through email or in the meeting.

12. What is your view about importance of sharing knowledge to support your organization learning?

I am sure what you mean by "organization learning".

But to my understanding, I think knowledge sharing is important to the learning of my group.

Normally, in each project, we have a big problem to solve. Each member is responsible for a single aspect of the problem. In the daily meeting with supervisor, the junior reports his/her findings with an experienced colleague. In the group meeting, the group member will report what they have found out this week.

After that, all members will have a helicopter view of relevant issues to the problem, and then decide how things should proceed.

Culture effects

13. How did you adjust to your new working style in Finland?

Finnish supervisors trust their juniors. In another word, I have to learn to work on my own because there are no micro-managing bosses lurking around my desk. However, the supervisors are experienced. Coming to

the meetings without deep understanding of the problem will cause you troubles.

The similar problem occurs in the group with many Finnish colleagues too. We don't discuss too much outside the meetings, but when coming to the meeting, everyone is well prepared.

14. Culture can be divided into high-context and low context cultures. The high context culture is a more indirect communication style which considers words less important. The low context cultures focus and express more in words and less using nonverbal context. How does the teamwork communication style differ from your country of residence?

In my country, people are ready to criticize you in the meeting. Tasks are defined by supervisors, and they will closely manage you. Junior members do not have confidences to share new knowledge in the meeting, but in the lobby.

In Finland, people tend not to strongly criticize you. Members have voice over the group matters.

15. Is your communication with other Finns working effectively? Do you feel that cultural differences had a strong effect on your interaction with Finnish colleagues?

Cultural differences indeed had a strong effect on my interaction with Finnish colleagues, especially in self-management. However, after a long learning time (I also worked for a Finnish IT company in 2 years before), I get used to their styles.

16. What do you see as advantages/ positive impacts of working with different cultural background employees that you have experienced?

I don't see much difference in intercultural environment. The major nationality will decide the working method.

17. What problems/ difficulties occur when you communicate with Finnish colleagues and try to share knowledge with them?

There should be no problems. Even an expert with 20 years experience will spend time listening on your ideas.

18. What are so called "best practices" in Vietnamese-Finnish regarding teamwork experience or knowledge sharing you gained?

In Vietnam, I worked for a company with intercultural background, but as I said, the majority is still Vietnamese. Sharing knowledge in the meeting seems to be a taboo due to the low confidence of juniors. Therefore, if juniors want to diffuse their knowledge, it is better through the “lobby method” (e.g., chit-chat, discuss in lunch, etc.).

In Finland, people don't prefer discuss about work matters during lunch. It is, therefore, better to write an email to all the relevant members (e.g., CC for non-important person, TO to important person) or directly discuss within the group meeting.

Vietnamese Interviewee 3

General information- Background

1. Nationality: *Vietnam*
2. Age: *34*
3. Gender: *Male*
4. Position or duty: *Academic Researcher*
5. Education: *PhD*
6. How long have you been working in this current company? *3,5 years*
7. What is your current working environment like? Do you have to work frequently with other Finnish colleagues as a team? (Aim at importance of team work experience) *It is intercultural working environment, daily work on projects with other Finnish colleagues*
8. How is the team background like? (Only Finnish and Vietnamese or More than two nationalities) *Finnish and Vietnamese only*
9. What is your current job about? (Categorize knowledge/ academic career) *Academic research*

Knowledge roles and sharing in interviewee's daily work

10. Do you think knowledge is valuable resource for your study/company competitive advantages?

Very important, I am a researcher so it is most important resource for my study.

11. How often you have to exchange knowledge with other colleagues? Would you be willing to share knowledge with other members in your team? And in which forms do you share knowledge with them?

In academic environment, I have joined some projects and there are 2 weekly meetings.

I have to communicate daily with my direct supervisors and colleagues. The key thing is sharing knowledge, projects will achieve succeed. I gain also knowledge from my senior.

We share knowledge in meetings and exchange also in emails.

12. What is your view about importance of sharing knowledge to support your organization learning?

In every project, I and whole team have a problem to deal with. Work is divided into pieces for everyone. In the group meeting, we explain and show what we have done in week.

And we give idea for other team members sometimes for their tasks.

Culture effects

13. How did you adjust to your new working style in Finland?

Finnish respect other opinions and listen much to others. Even the supervisors have much experience but there are always chances for me to give my comments.

Finns are quite separate working and relationship between boss or supervisor with employees and researchers does not affect work.

14. Culture can be divided into high-context and low context cultures. The high context culture is a more indirect communication style which considers words less important. The low context cultures focus and express more in words and less using nonverbal context. How does the teamwork communication style differ from your country of residence?

Vietnamese are high context and Finns are low context. We do not say straight to the problem and try to save face for others.

Sometimes important knowledge and sharing happen outside office in dinner table or lobby in Vietnam.

In Finland, people discuss much more in official meeting.

15. Is your communication with other Finns working effectively? Do you feel that cultural differences had a strong effect on your interaction with Finnish colleagues?

Very strong effects!

First it is hard for me because English is not my mother tongue language, Finnish normally have silence in their speech and look straight in eyes when talking. While we Asians, sometimes avoid seeing straight at elder face.

I as Vietnamese am not used to be so straight... and Finns are much direct in communicating.

Also that made me misunderstanding in very first year working, because their straight talk.

16. What do you see as advantages/ positive impacts of working with different cultural background employees that you have experienced?

Advantage is I learn more effective working way of Finns. But there is disadvantage also I have to adapt and take time to have trust other colleagues to share knowledge. When the main nationality is Finns, the only way is to learn to adapt.

17. What problems/ difficulties occur when you communicate with Finnish colleagues and try to share knowledge with them?

Language, I think. Perhaps also how people interpret words.

18. What are so called “best practices” in Vietnamese-Finnish regarding teamwork experience or knowledge sharing you gained?

My projects with Finnish team are my best practices

Finnish Interviewee 1

General information- Background

1. Nationality: Finn
2. Age: 30
3. Gender: Male
4. Position or duty:
5. Education: Post PhD
6. How long have you been working in this current company? *2 years*
7. What is your current working environment like? Do you have to work frequently with other Finnish colleagues as a team? (Aim at importance of team work experience).
I'm working in a Finn company, so mostly I work with Finn colleagues
8. How is the team background like? (Only Finnish and Vietnamese or More than two nationalities)
more than 2
9. What is your current job about? (Categorize knowledge/ academic career)
Biology

Knowledge roles and sharing in interviewee's daily work

10. Do you think knowledge is valuable resource for your study/company competitive advantages?

Yes. As science always requires the theory and accuracy so the knowledge is the backbone of the job and it decides my competences in the team.

11. How often you have to exchange knowledge with other colleagues?
Would you be willing to share knowledge with other members in your team? And in which forms do you share knowledge with them?

Mostly I work on my own base on the book or the explicit knowledge available.

When I reach a certain point in my job then I share with my colleagues to validate the process I have made. I am willing to share the knowledge with other members if asked. We could discuss in team or in pair, it depends on the case. I mean direct communication in speech as it helps to avoid misunderstanding

12. What is your view about importance of sharing knowledge to support your organization learning?

It is importance because it helps to consolidate the tacit knowledge available in the organization and it is a step to transfer that knowledge into accurate explicit knowledge. Sharing knowledge also helps to stimulate the thinking process to create new knowledge in the organization.

Culture effects

13. How did you adjust to your new working style with Vietnamese colleagues?

I have to be more proactively in sharing the knowledge with them. As much as I know VNese culture is high context so I often ask for their confirmation if I understand correctly.

14. Culture can be divided into high-context and low context cultures. The high context culture is a more indirect communication style which considers words less important. The low context cultures focus and express more in words and less using nonverbal context. How does the teamwork communication style differ from your country of residence?

Most of members in my team come from Finland or Sweden, which has the low context culture, in general the teamwork communication style is quite directly. The members come from high context culture made their attempt to adjust with that but we also ask for their confirmation in order to avoid misunderstanding.

15. Is your communication with other Vietnamese working effectively? Do you feel that cultural differences had a strong effect on your interaction with Vietnamese colleagues?

The communication appeared not to be really effectively as we expected due to the cultural differences as well as the language barriers.

Still, after one or two months the situations has get much better as we has got to know each other much better, including the cultural background so we all try to adjust to a new culture. So we could say that cultural differences had a strong effect on interaction with my Vietnamese colleagues.

16. What do you see as advantages/ positive impacts of working with different cultural background employees that you have experienced?

It improves my intercultural communication skill. It also enriches my knowledge on another hand, in term of social knowledge.

So later on I have the experience in working in an international environment which becomes more and more popular nowadays.

17. What problems/ difficulties occur when you communicate with Vietnamese colleagues and try to share knowledge with them?

Language is the first problem when none of us has English as mother tongue. So the way we use words is different, which may lead to misunderstanding. Because of cultural differences, the way we think about the problem is also different.

And Vietnamese people seem to approaches the problem less directly.

18. What are so called “best practices” in Vietnamese-Finnish regarding teamwork experience or knowledge sharing you gained?

A Vietnamese member in my team was discussing a problem, we tried to explain our idea to each other but there seemed to be a confliction somehow but when another member from Japan came and listened to us, it turned out that we were in the same idea.

Finnish Interviewee 2

General information- Background

1. Nationality: *Finn*
2. Age: *31*
3. Gender: *Female*
4. Position or duty:
5. Education: *PhD*
6. How long have you been working in this current company? *3 years*
7. What is your current working environment like? Do you have to work frequently with other Finnish colleagues as a team? (Aim at importance of team work experience)
I have joined a lot of different projects so mostly I work in team
8. How is the team background like? (Only Finnish and Vietnamese or More than two nationalities)
Only VNese and Finn
9. What is your current job about? (Categorize knowledge/ academic career)
Engineer Mathematic

Knowledge roles and sharing in interviewee's daily work

10. Do you think knowledge is valuable resource for your study/company competitive advantages?
Yes, everything operate based on the knowledge so the more knowledge a company has the better it may perform
11. How often you have to exchange knowledge with other colleagues? Would you be willing to share knowledge with other members in your team? And in which forms do you share knowledge with them?

I share knowledge with my colleagues often as it helps me to gain knowledge and improves my team performance in general when all the members share the equal knowledge. The collaboration within the team then becomes better.
12. What is your view about importance of sharing knowledge to support your organization learning?
It is really important that the member sharing knowledge so that everyone have similar knowledge base so we can back up each other on the task

Culture effects

13. How did you adjust to your new working style with Vietnamese colleagues?

All the member in my teams, including the VNese members are very open and willing to learn so we quickly join with each other and share the same working style without difficulties.

14. Culture can be divided into high-context and low context cultures. The high context culture is a more indirect communication style which considers words less important. The low context cultures focus and express more in words and less using nonverbal context. How does the teamwork communication style differ from your country of residence?

Most of member in my team are Finn so we are quite direct in communication. But the VNese member has adjust to that quite fast so I can say that the communication style in my team is not different from my culture background.

15. Is your communication with other Vietnamese working effectively? Do you feel that cultural differences had a strong effect on your interaction with Vietnamese colleagues?

Yes, as we share the same working style, there is no big problem in the communication. Of course sometimes there is misunderstanding but it is just like any normal Finnish team.

16. What do you see as advantages/ positive impacts of working with different cultural background employees that you have experienced?

This is a good opportunity for me to learn more about different culture. I help lessons from other cultures to improve my competences, not only communication skills.

17. What problems/ difficulties occur when you communicate with Vietnamese colleagues and try to share knowledge with them?

The most significant problem which occurs when communicating with VNese colleagues is the language barrier when we have just started cooperating. But soon it has been solved when we get to know each other better and understand what the other means by body language also.

18. What are so called “best practices” in Vietnamese-Finnish regarding teamwork experience or knowledge sharing you gained?

Finnish Interviewee 3

General information- Background

1. Nationality: *Finnish*
2. Age: *29*
3. Gender: *Male*
4. Position or duty: *Consultant*
5. Education: *Master*
6. How long have you been working in this current company? *4 years*
7. What is your current working environment like? Do you have to work frequently with other Finnish colleagues as a team? (Aim at importance of team work experience)
Much teamwork
8. How is the team background like? (Only Finnish and Vietnamese or More than two nationalities)
more than 2
9. What is your current job about? (Categorize knowledge/ academic career)
Information Technology

Knowledge roles and sharing in interviewee's daily work

10. Do you think knowledge is valuable resource for your study/company competitive advantages?
I think all the resource is valuable and important during my research progress. And as a consultant, I do focus my tasks on knowledge so it has a big impact on my competitiveness.
11. How often you have to exchange knowledge with other colleagues? Would you be willing to share knowledge with other members in your team? And in which forms do you share knowledge with them?
I have to exchange knowledge with my team quite often as I work in a team. It is important to share knowledge with other member and we have used various means to share such as direct communication in pair or in group, indirectly by email or we share the information about knowledge sources also.
12. What is your view about importance of sharing knowledge to support your organization learning?

It is the key to find out the solution to improve the performance or to reach the target.

Culture effects

13. How did you adjust to your new working style with Vietnamese colleagues?

It took time for me to understand the way they work so I can try to co-operate with them in the best way for a good result, for example the time frame, workload allocation.

14. Culture can be divided into high-context and low context cultures. The high context culture is a more indirect communication style which considers words less important. The low context cultures focus and express more in words and less using nonverbal context. How does the teamwork communication style differ from your country of residence?

There are members in my teams coming from high context cultures such as Vietnam or China so some time I also have to be careful in understanding their words.

They sometimes do not use eye contacts, I first have feeling they don't really want to share idea with me.

Vietnamese colleagues want to save face for each other and try not showing problem.

15. Is your communication with other Vietnamese working effectively? Do you feel that cultural differences had a strong effect on your interaction with Vietnamese colleagues?

At the beginning the communication between us was not effective as we had different style in expressing our ideas. I believe it comes from the cultural differences. But later on we got to know each other better and it has been improved a lot

16. What do you see as advantages/ positive impacts of working with different cultural background employees that you have experienced?

It could be considered as disadvantage as it created barriers in our communication. However on another hand it was a good experience and helped to improve my competencies

17. What problems/ difficulties occur when you communicate with Vietnamese colleagues and try to share knowledge with them?

There are two most significant factors that created problem in our communication. Firstly, it is the problem of low and high context culture, it led to different interpretations from what speaker really meant. Secondly the language barrier also created misunderstanding in communication.