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## **HOFSTEDE VECTORS: A VISUALIZATION APPROACH TO CULTURAL FACTORS IN THE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER - INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TEAM OPTIMIZATION MODEL**

### **Abstract:**

There is no universal management style. Managing across diverse cultural teams in this age of diffused, widespread globalization can be a challenge. Diversity, within a workplace represented by multiple time-zones, is the new norm for many companies. With this in mind, there is an increasing need to understand the processes & systems, organizational and managerial mechanisms & styles that contribute to successful internationally-based projects. At the core of such systems and teams is the notion of effective communication, of effective transfer of real meaning leading to real knowledge transfer across international team members and managers. This then is expected to greatly and directly affect the success of global business projects.

This fundamental relationship between knowledge transfer and international business project success has been investigated, quantitatively modeled, and results published in an original doctoral dissertation by the author. The foundation of the work was based on research and data gathered from 69 international companies across the US, Europe, and Japan. The original model was further optimized and new results were published and presented in the form of a software-based decision tool which offered greater utility.

This paper further expands the original work of the author in two areas. It presents a rigorous system test in the form of verification and validation analysis of the original concept and decision-tool. This is accomplished using specific data from 56 large industrial projects, across 16 countries, involving 5 subsidiaries of a well-known international corporation over a two year period from January 2013 to December 2014. Furthermore and as a subsequent step towards further improvement of utility, the distinct and original concept of 'Hofstede Vectors' is proposed and integrated into the model. The novel concept was established from Dutch psychologist Geert Hofstede's well-known and widely-accepted research establishing his cultural dimensions theory.

Hofstede Vectors are presented as a visualization knowledge optimization tool in the knowledge transfer - team culture - business success relationship triad. After establishing the concept, the paper further presents ways of visualizing the analysis through graphical vector based techniques, and, interpreting quantitative results into practical real-world constructs for optimizing business teams. Utilizing actual project data, the concept is then verified, validated and integrated into the original model.

The paper makes contributions on various levels of international business. The newly-established Hofstede Vector concept provides a construct for optimizing knowledge transfer and global business team performance.

**Keywords:**

International business, knowledge transfer, Hofstede-Vector, business teams, corporate culture

**JEL Classification:** L00, O22