

# A Comparative Study of Cross- Cultural Values on the Standardised Approach to Knowledge Management

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## Abstract

Knowledge Management (KM) initiatives adopted by multinational organizations often yield inconclusive empirical results. These findings pertain to the effect of KM practices on the individual-level KM success indicator of KM engagement. While KM practices in the literature are perceived as universally relevant, their effects seems to be influenced by the socio-cultural values of the particular context. Based on that argument, the current study evaluates the appropriateness of the universal KM approach by taking a sample of 200 employees in a knowledge-based multinational company consisting of its headquarters in the USA and other three subsidiaries in India, Sri Lanka and Hungary. The comparative findings show that the three universal KM practices of teamwork, incentives and learning produce varied effects on employee KM engagement, according to these employees' varied cultural value orientations towards self-transcendence and openness to change. The implication, therefore, is that knowledge workers in each country are significantly different to their global counterparts in their predisposition towards certain socio- cultural values, and failure to take into account this difference is the reason why mixed results related to KM engagement are observed across host countries.

**Keywords:** Cross cultural values, Universal KM approach, Knowledge based organisations and KM engagement.