

USE OF CASE RESEARCH METHOD TO ASSESS FACTORS INFLUENCING CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSFER OF MANAGEMENT THEORIES

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In this study, the author argues that adequate transfer of management theories and technologies from one culture to another often fails for several reasons. These reasons include the lack of knowledge and understanding of the diversity of cultures, government ideologies, and other ecological or environmental factors that influence theory development. Cultural researchers and theorists such as Hofstede (1994), Trompenaar (1994) and Sarpong and Rawls (1976) discussed several cultural profiles used to identify and define management theories for example the Japanese Theory Z (Ouchi, 1981) and American Theories X and Y. Effective theory or technology transfer must take into consideration the differences in the ecological and environmental factors of the transferor/donor and recipient society.

This article uses a case study approach under the qualitative research methodology to explore and identify the factors that influence effective theory development and thus a potentially successful cross-cultural transfer. A study to determine whether findings of firms' growth strategies and structures in industrialized countries were applicable to developing country was undertaken. The studies in the industrialized nations identified "ideal stages of firm growth", thereby theorizing that "structure always follow strategy". However, differences in environmental factors such as cultural values and belief systems, government ideologies and policies, level of economic development, etc. provided some evidence why this theory did not hold true in the developing society. The study also examined theory development processes designed to support the impact of case studies on theory building and applications.

Key Words: Cross-Culture, Management, Theory Transfer, Case Study Research, Qualitative Research, theory development, ecology, environment, government ideologies, developed country, developing country,

INTRODUCTION:

The transfer of management theories and or technology often occur from western industrialized countries to developing or less developed countries. Several

researchers (Edoho, 2001; Gilmore, 1978) have questioned the appropriateness and discussed the lack of success of these transfers which include knowledge, technology, and education, yet fewer and limited studies (Findley, 1978) have been devoted to the discussions of specific reasons for failure nor provided some framework for developing and sustaining appropriate management theories for the recipient nations. Studies on the appropriateness, effectiveness, and costs abound (Edoho, 2001, Lall, 1994; Zeleny, 1986). Many of these studies focused on the types and concepts of technology and theory transferred to the developing nations. However, there were no discussions on the implications on why these transfers fail or are not sustainable. Prasad (1967) proposed an examination and the correlation of management capacity for economic development as a basis for appropriate and effective transfer. He suggested that the transfer of management technology or theory should focus on development of talent in the host country rather than manufacturing and exporting them to the developing country. Developing the national skills base requires leadership and sustained efforts from the governments of the recipient nations. Several authors (Edoho, 2001; Fayol, 1949; Wren, 1994) have attempted to define the term management as both a science and a set of activities. Edoho, refers to it as a set of complex process that encompasses a universe of activities and Wren believe that management is an open-ended activity in that what is done and thought is affected by the prevailing economic, social and political values and institutions. Contrary to Wren, Henry Fayols' fourteen universal principles of Scientific Management (1941-1949) will not be appropriate for developing economies. As Wren indicated, the universality of management is only an idea grounded in some logic that managers perform the same set of functions in all organizations and in all cultures. This logic assumes that all organizations across-cultures share similar patterns of evolution. In the words of Udo-Aka, Director General for the Center for Management Development [CMD], Nigeria (1981), regarding management education materials at the center, we will like to enhance the impact management training through the use of case studies, however, indigenous cases are rare and whenever we find a good case, it is imported and most of the time the theories and contents do not apply to Nigerian situation.

It is proposed that transfer of knowledge or technology is a “people-centric” phenomenon which requires interactions and relationship building among key agents (Edoho, 2001). The significant question is why management theories or knowledge transferred from developed economy to developing often failed. The focus has been the transfer of “appropriate versus inappropriate” theories. There is a need to examine the criteria (factors that facilitate or inhibit effective transfer) for determining appropriateness of theories for developing countries - the type that impact and support socio-economic development through public and private enterprises and or the type that is developed locally and is sustainable within the country.

This article applies a case study technique of qualitative research methodology to test the findings in five industrialized country studies that concluded that the emergent strategies and structures of business organizations seem to be the same in all the studies conducted in England, Italy, France, Germany, and USA. Chandler (1962), Wrigley, (1970), and Scott, (1971), in their respective research developed themes of ideal organization types as well as the stages of organization's development. However, Greiner (1972), stated that theories of organization's development go beyond ideal types and argues that firm development is influenced by many environmental variables. Other mid-60's authors (Burns & Stalker, 1966; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Miles & Snow, 1978) presented empirical support for the existence of clusters of attributes in organizations which resemble ideal types. All the same these authors including Galbraith and Nathanson (1979) also provided evidence of the impact of socio-economic factors on organizations' growth patterns.

In the effort to see if the findings in the developed countries - ideal growth stages and emergent strategies followed by structures will apply to a developing country, this study replicated the research in a developing, West African country. The author further examines the theory development process as a way of discovering relevant factors that may shed light on the reasons why theories do not transfer effectively across cultures. For the purposes of this article, theory is defined as a technique, concept, or model that permits people to better understand how different variables fit together (Dublin, 1976)

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSFER

International managers with ethnocentric predisposition to business practices are more likely to fail in this global economy because they usually believe that they can transfer home country management theories and practices to operations in a foreign market or country. However, multinational corporate managers must recognize the need to adapt theories to local characteristics of the market, including legislation, socio-political and cultural systems. Culture, defined as a shared value and belief of a group of people, on the other hand plays a major role in successful international operations and it is important that management theories developed in one culture be adequately reviewed and adapted for effective transfer to another culture. It is this way of life that determines the people's attitude to the product or service. It is important to understand the factors that shape the culture of a society, how these factors may translate into a better understanding of the people, and thus create a greater chance of successful business interaction.

Edoho (2001) pointed out the importance of understanding that there are certain indigenous trends of thought, cultural influence, and value orientations that are commonly shared in every society. These common trends tend to form the basis of

the ideas that have intrinsic values and create the framework for evolution and articulation of society's management philosophy. These common trends can be further observed in the following contexts, macro-environmental factors of political-legal context (government, governance, law, regulations, etc.), Socio-cultural context (values, beliefs, attitude, religion, education, etc.), techno-economic context (science, level of technology available, gross domestic product, purchasing power parity, etc.) and managerial skills context (technical skills, conceptual, analytic, creative, strategic planning, etc.).

For example, although various African countries may exhibit diverse and specific cultures, there are some common cultural differences among many of the developing nations in Africa. The same can be said of the developed nations of the West including the United States of America. As evidenced in the cultural dimension clusters (Hofstede, 1980a,1980b; Trompenaars, 1994), these cultural differences include but are not limited to the practice of communalism among Africans versus individualism in the west, group centeredness and traditionalism among Africans versus unit centeredness and modernism in the West. Table 1, below, presents other common differences. For example, the level of extended family system seen in communalism is common among many African Nations, and it is a form of culture that spills into the organizational structures of many private and family owned businesses. Respect for age relates to the extended family system where old age is associated with wisdom which demands allegiance and respect for the elder who is the authority. This belief leads to extreme emphasis on titles, protocol, politeness and slow pace of life (Nnadozie, 2001).

Table 1
Dimension of Differences

AFRICA	WEST
Communalism	Individualism
Associative Thinking	Abstract Thinking
Realism	Idealism
Age	Position
Present; Past	Present, Future
Social Intelligence	Technical Intelligence
Moralism	Pragmatism
External Attribution	Internal Attribution

In addition to cultural differences, there are also issues of government ideologies in politics, economics, and socio-cultural systems which often drive the legal foundations, policies, regulations, and other development planning. These

ideologies create the basis for economic development especially the type of economic and social programs that shape the thinking and practices in society. They also tend to form the basis for material cultures such as economic infrastructure, social infrastructure, financial infrastructure and marketing infrastructure, all of which are critical for effective management theory development and application. As much as cultural convergence- increasing similarities among nations which is driven by advanced technology and globalization (Friedman, 2007) is on the rise, it is imperative that these issues and challenges be taken into some consideration when selecting and transferring management theories from one culture to another.

RESEARCH PURPOSE AND DEVELOPMENT:

This study was designed to determine if the management theory that establishes that “Structure follows strategy” in most developed and industrialized nations will transfer effectively in a developing and non-industrialized nation of Africa. At the backdrop of the study are the findings of scholars (Channon, 1971; Dias, 1972; Pavan, 1972; Thanheiser, 1972) from Harvard Business School who studied the stages of organizational growth in four industrialized nations, England, France, Italy, and Germany, respectively, under Scott’s (1971) supervision. In the span of three years when these studies were completed, there was no similar study conducted in a developing economy.

This study specifically addressed the following questions, 1. “How do firms evolve and grow in a developing country such as Nigeria? 2. “Are patterns of evolution in a developing nation similar to or different from those found in developed industrialized nations?” and 3.” What factors, if any, influenced the evolution patterns established?” The findings of this study will add value to the knowledge of the assessment of cross-cultural transfer of management theories as well as provide some data base for the development of effective management theories and other management education concepts for the developing economies.

The above studies in industrialized nations started with Rostow’s book (1960) on the stages of economic growth. This study was followed by Chandler (1962), Wrigley (1970), and Scott (1971) and Greiner (1972), who studied the stages of organizational development. These researchers found that many environmental factors influence patterns of organizational development. Chandler (1962) investigated the changing strategy and structure of large enterprises in the US using data from firm’s annual reports, government publications, articles in periodicals, and business biographies. He suggested five stages of organizational development ranging from very small firms with little or no full-time management to a multi-divisional structure. Chandler’s study concluded that structure usually follows strategy as indicated in his summary statement, “A new strategy required a new or at least a refashioned structure if the enlarged enterprise was to be operated

efficiently.” Building on Chandler, Scott’s study focused on managerial characteristics and systems/culture within the organization. In contrast to Chandler’s findings, he identified three stages of development. Two major differences between the five and three stage models were Scott’s investigation of nine organizational characteristics (product line, distribution, organizational structure, product/service transactions, R&D, performance, rewards, Control System, Strategic choices,) instead of one (structure) in Chandler’s and Scott’s reduction of emphasis on geographical growth. Further studies coordinated by Scott were designed, using Wrigley’s classification schemes, to determine whether “the above relationships were strictly an American phenomenon or requirements for managing large enterprises in the technologically advanced industrial societies.” The studies in England, France, Italy, and Germany were planned together with similar methodologies to test a common hypothesis – “There are no patterns to the way large companies have developed over time and there are no similarities of patterns among the major industrialized nations of the west.” The findings suggested similar trends affecting growth in respective nations. Both Pavan and Dias (Italy and France) explicitly reported the dominance of family firms among the companies studied. All four studies traced the roles of government, war, and other economic factors in the evolution of the enterprises.

Ouchi, a theorist, and associates, in their later studies of Japanese firms identified another factor that may influence growth stages. They termed this mechanism the “clans” indicating that clans provide for the control of transactions by means of values that are shared among and interpersonally linked group of people. Other major writers on social change (Hagen, 1962; McClelland, 1976; Lauer, 1982; Rostow, 1960) suggest that national ideological and cultural factors influence change. These authors also maintain that patterns of change for development differ across cultures. Nigeria is a developing society and differs from countries such as England, the United States, and other western industrialized nations where the Harvard studies were conducted. However, up to this period in time, most of the management education materials and books are based on data collected from these industrially advanced nations and as stated earlier; Udo-Aka (1985) stated that these management education materials were not always appropriate for the needs of the Nigerian society. This research, therefore, yields multiple benefits to several kinds of audience, including educational institutions, the government, management of local and foreign businesses, consultants, and the society.

RESEARCH TECHNIQUE

The case study approach under the qualitative research method is applied to produce a sequence of transactions among the group of organizations studied. This approach is the best for this type of study as it calls for strong discussion section, summary of findings, and ultimately identification of the “theoretical and practical

implications” of the phenomenon being studied (Bansel & Corley, 2012). This research method involves in-depth interviews, participant and field observations, interpretative analysis, examination of company records, review of reports and publications of the companies, etc. which were all necessary and applied for effective data collection. This method of study according to Reichardt and Cook (1979) subscribes to attributes such as “subjective, close to data, “insider” perspective, grounded, discovery-oriented, exploratory-expansionist, descriptive, inductive, and process oriented” This method of “inquiry from inside” (Evered & Louis, 1981), presents the best technique to explore and test the potentials for theory building and successful cross-cultural transfer. As testified in Becker and Associates (1958), “Such a method afforded us the greatest opportunity to discover what things were of importance to the people we were studying and to follow up the interconnections of those phenomena. It allowed us to revise our model of the organization and the process we were studying by furnishing us with instances of phenomena we had not yet made part of our overall picture.” It should also be noted that the absence or scarcity of existing literature on this topic made calls for an exploratory qualitative evaluation method rather than a reductionist approach. This case research approach allowed the variables to emerge and evolve as the study progressed.

SAMPLE SELECTION AND DATA COLLECTION

A preliminary population of over one thousand firms was identified from three major listings which included the International Commerce Organization of Nigeria (ICON) company handbook, The Federal Government of Nigeria Register of Companies, and the Nigerian Institute of Management list of Companies. Effort to include companies that represent the five major industrial sectors (Services, manufacturing, Agriculture, Wholesale/Retail, and Construction) in the country was made but the major criteria were – privately held firm, family –owned and/or controlled, and must have been in existence for at least a decade. A total of 438 private firms were identified, including 247 family-owned and/or controlled. As in France and Italy, family firms were dominant among private enterprises in Nigeria.

The final selection of twelve firms was based on potential available sources of data and access. These firms are also limited to indigenous companies in order to observe and identify possible effects of the environment/culture on the firms’ evolution. The twelve firms range from small/medium to large and diversified firms. They represent the industries including pharmaceutical services, construction/real estate, Agriculture, mining and chemical production, soft drink and beer brewing, etc. Average employees were 150 and total assets ranged from 200 to 500 million US dollars.

According to Sherlock Holmes (*A Study in Scarlet* (1887)), “it is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. One begins to twist the facts to suit theories instead of theories to suit facts” Given this statement, it is therefore important that appropriate data set be collected for effective theory assessment. Useful data on eight of the twelve select firms were gathered through interviews with owners and other knowledgeable individuals in the organization, observation of meetings, public articles on the companies, questionnaire completion, site visits, business journal articles, documentaries, government papers, etc. Fifty percent of those interviewed agree to be tape recorded. Tape recorded interview were transcribed and to assure the reliability of the interview data, all factual statements were cross-checked with documents or with data from other interviewees. As a rule, the same question was asked of all those who would be in a position to respond to them. Visits to the sites took place over a period of six months.

For purposes of this paper, the author also collected secondary data (documents, journal and newspaper articles, company publications, internet websites, etc.) on six of the eight companies to help upgrade available information. All the eight participating firms were privately- owned, started as a family –owned company and grew into diversified conglomerated. Six out of the eight were registered as holding companies and same number have integrated second generation family members into the management positions.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The data was content analyzed using the comprehensive case study on each of the participating firms. Content analysis is this study comprises a “technique of reducing texts to a unit-by-variable matrix and analyzing that matrix quantitatively to test hypotheses” (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). For example, the initial characterization of the firms in this study was done in a two by two matrix that categorized the participating firms’ family type and levels of involvement in the business operation. This analysis found that there was one medium firm with a “nuclear” family type and high level of family involvement in the operation of the business; one large firm with “extended” family type, and low level of family involvement in the operations; and six large firms with “extended family type and high level of family involvement in operations of business. Content analysis allows the researcher to create a matrix by developing and applying a set of codes to qualitative data with some assumption that the codes of interest have already been discovered and described in the research. For example, in this study, nuclear family is defined as one with immediate family of only the father, mother, and children, while extended family is the typical African family of the nuclear plus the grandparents, brothers, sisters, nephews, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. as members of the family. Although content analysis method was more popular among journalists, historians, and anthropologists (Kaplan, 1964) in the past, this method has been

gaining popularity among organizational and policy researchers (Udy, 1961). Recently, Bryman (2004) defined qualitative content analysis as “an approach to documents that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of meaning of and in texts. There is an emphasis on allowing categories to emerge out of data that is recognizing the significance for understanding the meaning of the context in which the item that is analyzed (and the categories derived from it) appeared. Based on these definitions and others, the application of content analysis to the data presented the following findings-

Table 2:
Stages in the Evolution of Firms in the USA and Nigeria

Stages	Chandler's Developed Country Model	Developing Country Model
I	Very small firms with little or no full-time management; (Expansion of sales volume)	Small Family firms: owner managed, informal structure
II	One function, one area: (Geographic expansion)	Initial expansion: seek profitable growth through diverse products, informal structure
III	Departmental structure with HQ and field units (Vertical Integration, new functions)	Future planning for growth: based on government priority; Initial functional structure
IV	Central offices and Multi-departmental Structure (Diversification)	Major Diversification: into unrelated industry with objective of creating a dynasty; Holding/Centralized structure
V	Multi-Divisional Structure	Reorganization: Integration of operations with holding/decentralized structure

Major findings include but not limited to: 1) the economic and industrial environment of Nigeria was more trade and service oriented than manufacturing, 2) the companies evolve through stages, growing from simple expansion (volume of products offered and market) to diversification, 3) family “type/constellation” largely influenced the pattern of structural evolution while other environmental/ecological factors and government actions influenced strategic choices, 4) conflict resolution mechanisms/processes were influenced by cultural and other traditional norms in the society, and 5) the mechanisms employed in resolving or reducing conflict influenced the firms’ evolution in a more functional than dysfunctional way. Five major categories of evolution were identified using the content analysis (See table 2 above.) These stages presented in the table

comparing the Chandler's USA model to the Nigerian. While Chandler's model was focusing on the structural change to fit the new strategy, the Nigerian model was developing a structure to uphold the family dynasty before embarking on new strategy that will drive new structure.

Although five major stages were identified, they were in no way the same as those identified by Chandler. The findings in this study show that unlike Chandler's finding where strategy drove structure; this study found that structure depends on family type and thus drives strategy. In relation to Scott's finding that there were only three major stages of evolution, this study identified five stages that spanned across the pre-colonial and post-colonial evolution stages. These stages were influenced by government development plans, civil war (1968-1970), and cultural elements which were different from those of advanced industrialized nations.

FIGURE 1:
Relationships Among Factors That Influence Evolution Patterns

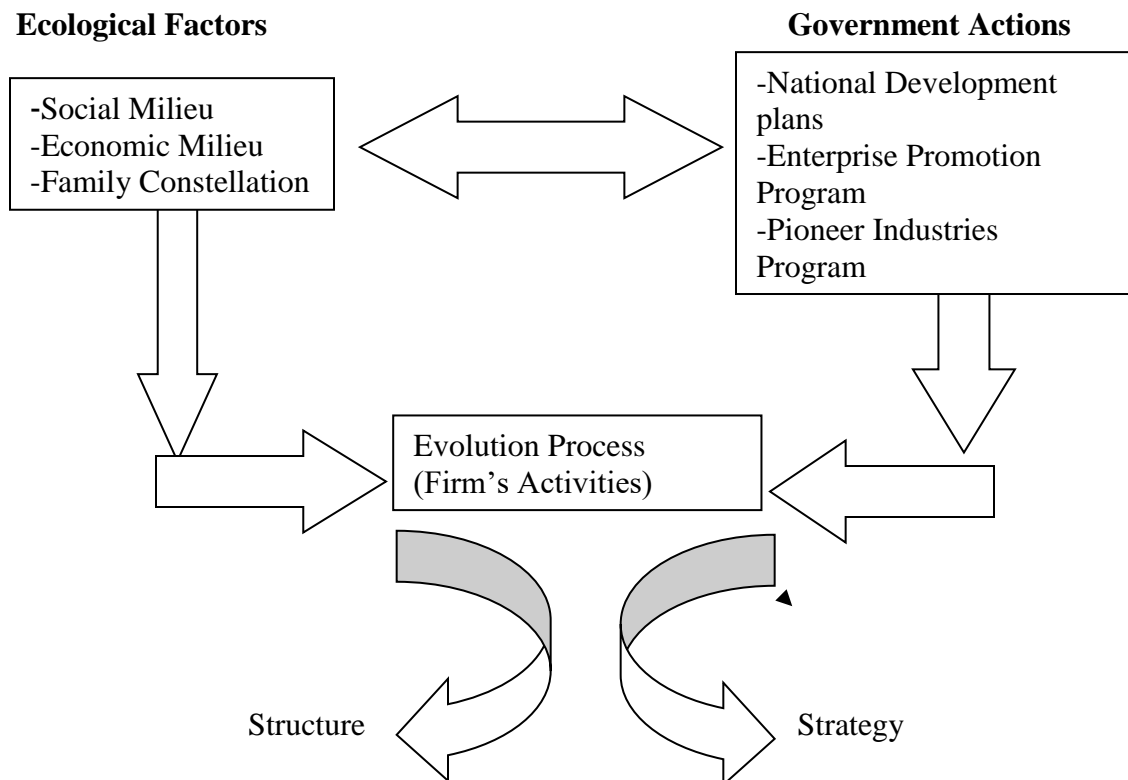


Figure 1, above, depicts the relationship among the environmental factors that influenced the evolution patterns of strategy and structure in Nigeria. The figure indicates that environmental/ecological factors which include socio-cultural and economic milieu as well as family type/constellation influenced emergent

structures while the government actions, policies, economic plans, etc. influenced the firms' strategies. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), Woodward (1965), and Burns and Stalker (1966), in their contingency theory orientation suggested that attributes of environment play a major role in the economic structure of organizations. Saiyandain and Nambuduri (1981) equally suggest that all processes of economic development start with "attempt for mastery over economic and political institutions, the attitudes of the people, their predispositions and values." Although the above studies did not empirically examine the impact of the ecology, the findings in this study tend to lean towards these suggestions. The interaction among environmental /ecological factors and the government actions such as priorities of government economic development plans, policies of privatization through enterprise promotion programs, etc., combine to influence enterprise diversification strategies and do not affect the company structure which is based primarily on the family type. For example, the enterprise structure is most likely to change whenever a new member of the family (especially male child) is old enough to head a division of the firm. All the eight companies which were highly diversified and organized as a holding company admitted to structural changes only when it is necessary to provide opportunity for a close family member to take a leadership position.

In summary, findings in this study did not support Chandler and some associates' view that "structure must follow strategy or the organization is not being managed efficiently" In the developing society of this study, structure did not follow a new strategy. The Feminine (Hofstede) tendencies of this developing society was a major factor in structural adjustment.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to Dublin (1976), theory is a technique or model that permits people to better understand how different variables fit together. Uses of theory are invaluable in the study of management and the three major uses that must be noted – first, theories help organize knowledge about a given subject in a pattern of relationships that lend meaning to a series of observed events. Second, theories help to summarize diverse findings so that one can focus on major relationships rather than details. Third, theories point the way to further research efforts as well as raise new questions and suggest possible answers.

Although findings in this study show that ecological factors and government ideologies, which are identifiable through the case research approach are critical for effective management theory development, and therefore a more successful cross-cultural transfer, data also relate to several theories of social change. Specific among these theories are those proposed by Hagen (1962), McClelland (1976), and Lauer (1982). Hagen argued that economic development, which may be defined in terms of continuing increase in per capita income through technological advances,

depends on the creative personality. He then described personality in terms of “needs, values, and cognitive elements of world view, together with intelligence and energy level.”

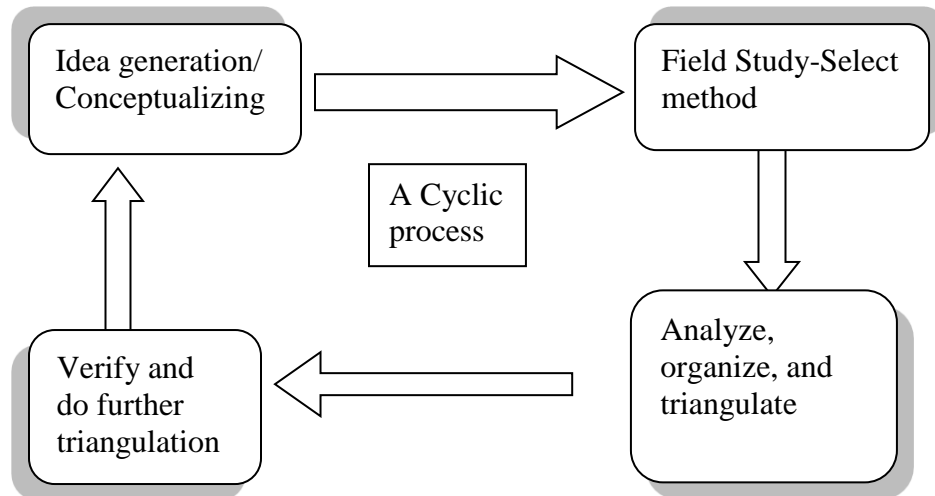
The value systems among other factors seem to be responsible for most of the differences in the patterns of evolution. Of all the studies on organizational forms, Ouchi’s research came closest to the findings of evolution of firm’s strategies and structures found in the setting of this study. Ouchi argued that the leading Japanese firms rely on informal control systems of extending lifetime employment and other practices are based on “clan” and cultural values. The importance of ecological factors in theory building and therefore theory transfer cannot be over emphasized and it is apparent that the case research approach is best suited for effective adaptation of established theories considered for cross-cultural transfer. The environmental factors of culture, level of economic development, government’s political, economic development plans, sociological ideologies, family values and type, all influenced the evolution stages of the firms studied. In contrast to the Chandler and other studies, structure is not based on strategic decisions but on family type and the cultural values. This study supports the need to adapt theories to local environmental factors for effective transfer and sustainability. The study further recommends a process for adapting or developing theories for effective cross-cultural transfer and implementation. This calls for a qualitative case study processes that recognize and integrate national or regional value systems in the application of management theories. In the value proposal that this paper presents and overview of theory building process and its relationship to case study research.

OVERVIEW OF THEORY BUILDING PROCESS

The proposed application of case research in assessing factors that influence cross-cultural transfer of theories is supported by other studies. Yin (1989) and Glaser and Strauss (1965) respectively stated that case studies integrate information/data from several sources and serve as the first step in a theory building process. Also, Anyansi-Archibong (2001) identified the role of case study approach in theory building and indicates the importance of defining or developing a scope of what a theory is or is not. Generally, a theory is a coherent group of general propositions used as principles of explanation for a class of phenomena. It involves analysis of facts in their relationship to one another. There are diverse applications of the term and several synonyms including model, philosophy, concept, system, scheme, principle, rule, technique, etc.

Figure 2, (next page), presents the stages in the framework for theory building. The field study or case study stage, its activities, and context will be applied in determining the potential role cases play in theory development.

FIGURE 2:
Framework for Theory Development



Theory building is a complex and cyclic process, which needs to be channeled to the theme or focus of the expected outcome. For example, the framework is designed to discover and create a steady trend or pattern in any selected management concept or phenomenon. The first stage of the framework is the idea or concept generation, which lists what will be investigated, for example, job design, decision making, leadership, evolution pattern of organization, etc. just like in a case study where the phenomenon to be studied is identified. .

The research underlying this study focuses on the second stage of field work. This stage includes activities such as site selection, data gathering, analysis, and much more. A qualitative research design with its major advantage of versatility in data gathering and process-orientation makes it viable for theory building. Case research requires integrated, holistic, and comprehensive understanding of the subject in order to create and transfer knowledge. Among other attributes, a good theory building process should satisfy the following criteria- be generalizable, verifiable, have consistency in context and content, and provide evidence of scientific parsimony.

The third stage in the process deals with data organization and analysis and covers explanation of relationships among facts collected in the second stage. This stage of content analysis just as in the case research method include triangulation of data (cross-examination and confirmation of data from various sources) and it is important for the researcher to limit the likelihood of misinterpreting data, description, or present an image of subjective evaluation. In most situations

researchers employ two procedures which include “redundancy of data gathering and procedural Challenges to explanations” (Denzin, 1989; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

The fourth stage is the verification- testing and re-testing of data until a trend leading to a good theory emerges. This is the stage of knowledge and theory transfer. This activity persuades both researcher and reader that what is known about one case study may be true of a similar case (Smith, 1978). Another activity of this stage is discussion of the experiential knowledge. The summary report helps convey knowledge and the case study in particular facilitates the conveyance of experiences of researchers and the objects of study. There is a need at this point to examine and compare the variables in the case study research and theory building process. Following the studies and findings of Bansel and Corley (2012) which stated that the “hallmark of qualitative research is in its ability to expose theoretical boundaries and push theoretical insights.” This study further supports the influence of environmental factors on appropriate theory adaptation and transfer.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Suggested future research includes but is not limited to an expansion studies to other developing nations and a focus on the key environmental factors that influence theory development. A better understanding of this phenomenon will help create a better approach for cross-cultural transfer of management theories and education in general. It may appear that technological advancement and globalization processes are increasing the convergence of cultures and economic status across national borders, however, an examination of the Millennium Development Goals and other United Nations reports indicate otherwise.

There are three major methodological issues in this study. 1. Generalizability of the findings to other developing economy is an issue, however, this is designed to serve as a pilot study (8 firms selected from a population of 247 private family firms, in one country) to assess and identify potential factors that may influence ineffective cross-cultural transfer of theories. Validity and verifiability are the other two issues. These issues are common to case study research but could easily be corrected through triangulation of data collected from various sources. The major finding (impact of ecological factors) in this study has broad impact, particularly for management in developing countries in particular. It is expected to provide the basis for the development of appropriate management techniques and theories for developing countries. It is therefore imperative that societal cultures and levels of economic development or industrialization be seriously considered for adequate and effective cross-cultural transfer of management theories.

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