
Editorial

Salem Y. Lakhali

University of Moncton,
Moncton, NB,
Canada E1A 3E9
Fax: +1-506-858-4093
E-mail: lakhals@umoncton.ca

Abstract: Papers selected for this issue address important research questions about technology transfer when faced with the situation of partners' imbalanced power, which has not been examined extensively in previous literature. These papers provide new insights and important empirical findings. Seven papers, reporting recent research results on the main topics of governance technology transfer management, have been chosen. The papers' summary of insights are provided for the readers of the *International Journal of Technology Management*.

Keywords: knowledge transfer; technology transfer; alliances.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Lakhali, S.Y. (2009), 'Editorial', *Int. J. Technology Management*, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp.277–279.

Biographical notes: Salem Y. Lakhali is a Full Professor in the Faculty of Business Administration at the University of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada. He teaches Management Science, Project Management and Supply Chain Management. In the last five years, he has published more than 30 scientific papers. His ongoing research includes the environment dimension in supply chain management. He is studying offshore platform decommissioning and the lumber industry supply chain. He received a BS in Electromechanical Engineering, an MSc in Operations Management and a PhD in Operations Management and Decision Sciences.

1 Introduction

Since the 1980s, researchers have investigated several aspects of partnerships and alliances between companies aimed at technology and knowledge transfer. The most general form that these partnerships took is technology licensing contracts, which have been extensively studied; however, empirical evidence is scarce (Vishwasrao, 2007). Furthermore, there is scant literature on *imbalanced* partnerships or asymmetries in strategic alliances (Cimon, 2004; Hingley, 2005). Currently, only a few studies have investigated this issue and many scholars have called for further research in this area.

In keeping up with the increasing importance of managing knowledge transfer, the *International Journal of Technology Management (IJTM)* has planned a Special Issue to

advance the understanding of the governance of international technology transfer partnerships with partners having imbalanced power.

The papers appearing in this Special Issue deal with the following and other related issues:

- 1 The paper from Chu, Lin, Huang and Liu proposes a framework, which explores technology transfer externality using the Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI), a national industrial technology development research institution in Taiwan as case study. The authors analysed the implication of the ITRI model on large R&D institutes as well as emergent countries to initiate and operate projects with high risk and desirable massive externalities.
- 2 The paper from Lin examines how mergers and acquisitions and technological alliances affect internal technological innovation in the global automobile industry. He uses a hierarchical regression analysis to reveal that MA's intensity is related negatively to innovation, whereas technological alliance is not associated significantly with internal innovation.
- 3 The paper by Lakhali analyses five international cases of technology transfer and investigates the governance of knowledge partnerships, which form a relationship where each partner keeps its identity while knowledge is transferred from a more powerful to a weaker partner. The results of this paper show that many studies dealing with alliances between equal partners may lose their validity when one of the partners has more power.
- 4 The paper from Wu, Liu and Chen explores the alliances between two e-business MNEs – IBM and HP – and Taiwan local companies. This paper presents interesting findings related to an asymmetric behaviour of the MNEs' subsidiaries by using *non-equity* alliances. This paper demonstrates how the local companies deal with the MNEs' behaviour.
- 5 The paper by Sheu and Pan deals with a special case of alliance: the coopetition (cooperation and competition). He presents an interesting model resolving the multidivision questions mentioned by Mishra and Vaysman (2001). This paper considers an R&D and a marketing member in a virtual enterprise, and presents findings based on mathematical developments. This paper also provides numerical examples and case study to illustrate the proposed models.
- 6 Millar and Choi's paper establishes a theoretical framework to investigate barriers in successful reverse knowledge transfers. The conceptualisation developed emphasises the importance of informal mechanisms such as social networks, builds on research in the area of reverse knowledge transfer and integrates cognitive barriers to reverse knowledge transfer.
- 7 The paper by Contractor and Woodley explores when firms are likely to adopt licensing agreements without equity arrangements, in contrast to hybrid alliances, which use joint equity ventures and licensing agreements together. This paper provides interesting findings related to the 'mutual hostage' and equity-based alliances formed when the primary technology holder has stronger bargaining power.

Acknowledgements

I extend my thanks to the reviewers for their candid and strict, but friendly comments to improve the quality of the contributions. Most of all, I appreciate all of the authors' efforts in making this Special Issue a valuable publication. Finally, I thank Dr. Dorgham and the Publisher for inviting me to guest-edit this Special Issue and for creating the opportunity to publish a journal.

References

- Cimon, Y. (2004) 'Knowledge-related asymmetries in strategic alliances', *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol. 8, pp.17–30.
- Hingley, M. (2005) 'Power to all our friends? Living with supplier-retailer relationships', *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 34, pp.848–858.
- Mishra, B. and Vaysman, I. (2001) 'Cost-system choice and incentives-traditional vs. activity-based costing', *Journal of Accounting Research*, Vol. 39, pp.619–641.
- Vishwasrao, S. (2007) 'Royalties vs. fees: How do firms pay for foreign technology?' *International Journal of Industrial Organization*, Vol. 25, pp.741–759.