EXAMINING THE QUALITY AND APPLICABILITY OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFERS AT A UNIVERSITY-BASED CONFERENCE: A CASE STUDY OF THE 10TH WORLD BUSINESS DIALOGUE IN COLOGNE, GERMANY

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Lund University

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Abstract

The focus of this thesis is on conferences as a knowledge transfer channel between university and industry. A case study of the 10th World Business Dialogue (10th WBD) in Cologne, Germany, examines whether participants were able to gain knowledge during the conference and if they were able to apply the knowledge they gained after the conference. An online questionnaire was sent to former participants; several respondents also agreed to participate in a complementary phone interview. Results showed that most respondents did gain new knowledge and were also able to apply the knowledge after the conference. Respondents claimed that knowledge was transmitted most frequently through speeches and discussions. Private sector representatives were primarily responsible for the creation of new knowledge. Most respondents applied the knowledge that they gained sometimes and found it had a moderate impact. Respondents gained theoretical and practical knowledge that they applied in professional and personal settings. Small interactive sessions were more effective in transmitting knowledge than large lecture-style gatherings, suggesting that interactivity played a role in knowledge transmission. Knowledge transfer did occur at the 10th WBD but occurred most frequently between industries rather than between university and industry.
Acknowledgements

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Lund, Sweden – 19 September 2007
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10th WBD</td>
<td>10th World Business Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th WBD</td>
<td>11th World Business Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTML</td>
<td>Hyper Text Markup Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Internet Protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDR</td>
<td>Non-Delivery Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFW</td>
<td>Organisationsforum Wirtschaftskongress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHP</td>
<td>Hypertext Preprocessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>Respondent 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>Respondent 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>Respondent 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>Respondent 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SABF</td>
<td>South American Business Forum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1
Introduction

Knowledge transfer from university to industry can occur through a variety of transfer channels. Some transfer channels, such as patent data and publication data, have been studied extensively, while others, such as informal conversations and conferences have not. Transfer channels that produce a “paper trail” such as patent data, are much easier to study because the data is readily available and can be easily analyzed. Transfer channels that do not produce measurable and accessible data, such as conferences, have largely been neglected in scholarly research. Accordingly, I have chosen to examine the impact of a conference on the knowledge transfer that occurs between university and industry.

A study such as this is particularly important in assessing the effectiveness of a conference as a platform to facilitate knowledge transfer. Conferences are unique because they bring people together – people who may not otherwise meet – and allow them to interact face to face. The assumed result of a conference is that participants will gain knowledge from each other whether it is in the form of a new analytical tool or a network contact. One of the ways a conference can be said to have been successful, is if its participants are able to apply the knowledge they gained in contexts outside of the conference. If the participants at a conference claim to have gained a great amount of knowledge but are unable to apply it, the function of the conference has been more like that of a social gathering. Thus, evaluating the value of a conference as a knowledge transfer platform is two-fold: first, one must consider the quality of knowledge that is gained by the participants, and second, one must assess the applicability of that knowledge.
1.1 The 10th World Business Dialogue

This thesis is a case study on the 10th World Business Dialogue (10th WBD), a bi-annual conference that takes place at the University of Cologne in Cologne, Germany. The conference is organized by the Organisationsforum Wirtschaftskongress (OFW), “a student-run, non-profit organization that enables … innovative forms of exchange between business, science and interested young talents” (OFW 2004a). The 10th WBD took place on April 6th and 7th, 2005. The theme of the 10th WBD was “Transforming the Company – How to Face Dynamic Forces” (OFW 2004b). Discussions focused on “creating and implementing strategies that cope with adverse economic conditions” (OFW 2004c).

The conference brought together private sector representatives, faculty from academic institutions, students, and some public officials. In total approximately 900 people took part in the conference (OFW Statistics 20071). Student participants were selected based on an essay competition that took place several months prior to the conference. All participants had to pay a conference fee in order to attend.

The conference was divided into three types of events: Panel Discussions, Executive Sessions, and Informal Gatherings (OFW 2005). There were 4 Panel Discussions per day on various topics, that featured 3-4 private sector representatives each. Their speeches were followed by a discussion between panelists and questions from the audience. Executive Sessions ran once per day and were designed as small meetings with one speaker and 20-30 participants per session. Unlike Panel Discussions, Executive Sessions sometimes incorporated activities that allowed participants to interact more with the speaker and each other. Informal Gatherings occurred throughout the conference and ranged from coffee breaks to a formal dinner.

---

1 Jost Löhnenbach, personal communication, 6 June 2007
Chapter 1 Introduction

The 11th World Business Dialogue (11th WBD) took place more recently on March 28th and 29th, 2007 (OFW 2006). The 11th WBD, however, was not selected because my study took place approximately 6 weeks after this conference and participants may not have had enough time to apply the knowledge that they had gained.

1.2 Objectives

This research takes a micro-level perspective on the Triple Helix model of innovation presented by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000) (cf. Edquist 1997; Lundvall 1992). I will focus specifically on knowledge transfer between university and industry. The main objectives are to: evaluate the effectiveness of a conference in transferring knowledge between university and industry, and assess the ways that knowledge is disseminated between participants at a conference. Figure 1-1 illustrates how a conference as a knowledge transfer channel, between university and industry, fits into the Triple Helix model.
Chapter 1 Introduction

Figure 1-1. The Triple Helix and University-Industry Knowledge Transfer Channels
† Source: Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000: 111)

The three questions that will be answered through this research are:

1. Did participants of the 10th WBD gain knowledge?
2. Did participants of the 10th WBD apply the knowledge gained in another setting?
3. Did the 10th WBD contribute to university-industry knowledge transfer?

Each of these questions are complemented by sub-questions that aim to reveal further details about the conference as a knowledge transfer channel. If participants did gain knowledge from the conference, who did they gain that knowledge from and in what context? For example, was knowledge gained from a private sector representative during a Panel Discussion, or from a representative of an academic institution during an Informal Gathering? How often did participants apply the knowledge that they gained at the conference, frequently or infrequently?
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What degree of impact did that knowledge have when applied? By answering these sub-questions, I will provide a comprehensive picture of the 10th WBD as a knowledge transfer channel.

1.3 Background to the Study

My interest in the 10th WBD as an example of a knowledge transfer channel between university and industry stemmed from my own participation as a student-representative at the conference. I felt that the 10th WBD was a novel way of gathering people from different disciplines to discuss common socioeconomic themes. I also found that the speakers of the conference presented information that was insightful and well researched. I suspected, however, because I came from a background in the social sciences, specifically sociology, that the information was particularly novel for me since there was a large business and innovation focus during the conference. Participants with a background in business and innovation, however, might not have found the information to be as informative. I also suspected that since speeches from private sector representatives occurred frequently during the conference, students were able to gain more knowledge from these participants than vice versa. However, given the structure of the conference, in particular the incorporation of Executive Sessions, I was curious about whether some knowledge was in fact transmitted from students to private sector representatives.

My current disciplinary focus on innovation compelled me to consider the 10th WBD as a knowledge transfer channel in greater depth. The study of conferences has been largely neglected in scholarly research, and I found this problematic because conferences occur frequently within universities and industries. Moreover, since conferences often require extensive planning and funding, formal research on what makes a conference effective in transmitting
knowledge would be useful for conference organizers. By examining this conference in detail, this study will determine what role the 10th WBD played in transferring knowledge between university and industry.
Chapter 2
Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides a structured and logical examination of the theoretical underpinnings of the knowledge transfer that occurs between participants at a university-based conference, accordingly a large part of this review is devoted to the idea of knowledge transfer and related concepts. The body of literature reviewed here is drawn from a variety of disciplines ranging from organizational studies, to knowledge management, to innovation studies. The three thematic elements that will be discussed are the concept of knowledge, knowledge transfer, and the university-industry link.

I will first examine the concept of knowledge along with several definitions that have been proposed by various scholars. Building on the idea of knowledge, the codification of knowledge will be examined and knowledge transfer between different areas of the knowledge taxonomy, specifically between tacit and explicit will be analyzed. In the second section I will examine knowledge transfer and distinguish between knowledge transfer and technology transfer. A dissection of knowledge transfer will focus on the various knowledge transfer channels that are used in university-industry linkages. Then, the concept of an effective meeting will be examined on a micro-level. Two related concepts will also be examined: knowledge migration and knowledge transformation. The last section will look at the university and its ability to transfer knowledge to industry. Moreover, it will examine competing discourses that focus on the relation between university, industry, and state. A review of the university in light of the “triple helix” model (Etzkowitz 2002; Gibert and Zaharia 2005) is presented along with some criticisms.
Knowledge transfer occurs at different times and in different places, making it contextual. In addition, knowledge transfer is content specific, meaning that it depends on the recipient: different forms of knowledge travel across different channels. A channel that is effective for one recipient may not be effective for another. When examining meetings as a transfer channel, scholars argue that certain conditions must be met in order to transfer knowledge successfully. Related to the concept of knowledge transfer are knowledge migration and knowledge transformation, where cultural and contextual differences between two parties will inevitably lead to a redefinition of knowledge. Further transitional problems may occur when knowledge is transferred between knowledge types, specifically between tacit and explicit knowledge, again this can be attributed to the context in which the knowledge was created, and the context in which it was used. Last, the role that universities play in transmitting knowledge is linked to the convergence of actors: university, industry, and state. This convergence has led to a transformation of knowledge and its role in the university. Some critics argue that this change has systematically devalued knowledge itself. Knowledge transfer is a complex process that is context, content, and time specific, and subject to interpretation by those who transfer and those who receive it.

2.1 What is Knowledge?

2.1.1 Knowledge Taxonomy

Coming to a consensus about what knowledge is, has been a difficult task for scholars and remains open to interpretation. Some characteristics of knowledge, such as the distinction between tacit and explicit are generally agreed upon, while many others are not. The following discussion, although not exhaustive, will provide a good overview of the competing definitions of knowledge.
According to Brennenraedts et al. (2006: 2) knowledge can be distinguished as: explicit vs. tacit knowledge, mono-disciplinary vs. multidisciplinary research, or basic vs. applied research. In the first category knowledge is broken down into explicit (or codified) and tacit knowledge. In the former knowledge is transferred via books, journals, patents, and so forth, but in the latter knowledge “is embodied in people and cannot be transferred without them” (Brennenraedts et al. 2006: 2). In the second category, knowledge can be mono-disciplinary, meaning that knowledge is specialized and focused in one area, such as physics or mathematics. By contrast, it can be multidisciplinary combining knowledge from a variety of different areas in order to form a new hybrid area of knowledge, such as aeronautical engineering (Ibid. et al. 2006: 2). In the last category knowledge is linked to the OECD definition, as found in the Frascati Manual (1994), of basic and applied research. Under this definition “basic research is aimed at gaining insight in the world surrounding us. Applied research focuses on the creation of actual knowledge that can be used, for example in artifacts” (Ibid. et al. 2006: 2).

Lam’s taxonomy involves tacit and explicit knowledge, and adds another dimension. She distinguishes between four kinds of knowledge that can be placed at the individual or collective level (Lam 2000: 491-492). According to Lam tacit and explicit knowledge can be distinguished on three levels: expression, acquisition, and aggregation. Apart from the distinction made by Brennenraedts et al. (2006) Lam also adds that explicit knowledge is “understood and shared without a ‘knowing subject’” (Lam 2000: 490). Tacit knowledge on the other hand “cannot be communicated, understood or used without the ‘knowing subject’” (Ibid. 2000: 490). The acquisition of these kinds of knowledge differ in that explicit knowledge can be gained via formal study whereas tacit knowledge requires practical experience (Ibid. 2000: 490). Last, explicit
knowledge can easily be aggregated by almost anyone, while tacit knowledge cannot (Ibid. 2000: 490).

Lam further separates the kind of knowledge that individuals and groups have by using the example of the firm. The individual’s explicit knowledge is known as “Embrained knowledge” and refers to “conceptual and cognitive abilities” (Ibid. 2000: 492) for example, a scientist has certain formal training and understanding of the world around him/her. An individual’s explicit knowledge is known as “embodied knowledge” and refers to the experiences of the individual gained in a specific context (Ibid. 2000: 492). At the collective level explicit knowledge is known as “encoded knowledge,” where knowledge is codified into blueprints, written rules, and various other forms (Ibid. 2000: 492). Last, the tacit knowledge at the collective level is known as “embedded knowledge” that is found in “organizational routines and shared norms” (Ibid. 2000: 492).

In a final taxonomy Blackler (1995) argues that knowledge is: mediated, situated, provisional, pragmatic, and contested. Much like Lam’s (2000) taxonomy, this taxonomy is focused around the organizational aspects of knowledge. In the first instance knowledge is mediated, meaning that knowledge is never disseminated directly from one actor to another, but rather it is transmitted through various other intermediary actors, such as institutes and artifacts (Blackler 1995: 1040). Knowledge is also situated, meaning knowledge is contextual and open to interpretation within certain contexts; knowledge in one situation may not have the same meaning in another (Ibid. 1995: 1041). Knowledge is also provisional, meaning that it is an ongoing process of development, subject to changes at any moment. For example, the development of information communication technologies has altered knowledge creation and diffusion (Ibid. 1995: 1041). Knowledge is also pragmatic meaning that the individual’s perceptions
about, and experiences with, the subject at hand will influence collective action (Ibid. 1995: 1041). Last, knowledge is contested, meaning that power and knowledge are intertwined, for example between those interpreting knowledge, such as analysts, and those applying it, such as managers (Ibid. 1995: 1042).

In this thesis I have evaluated the aforementioned definitions of knowledge, and considered them in light of the conference, and in the context of this paper I have decided to use the following definition of knowledge: ideas and insights into theoretical and practical issues. For example:

- An understanding of an issue
- An organizational, public policy, or professional strategy
- A piece of useful information
- A professional network contact
- A technique, way of thinking, or analytical tool

I have defined knowledge in a broad sense, but have used examples that make it more specific to this study. Thus the definition itself can be applied in other contexts, but the supporting examples may not always be relevant in other contexts.

2.1.2 Codifying Knowledge

Several works point to the importance of codifying knowledge, and should be considered accordingly when examining the concept of knowledge transfer since knowledge transfer channels may include different types of knowledge. For example a conference may lead one participant to bring an idea back to his/her company, but without the effective knowledge
codification abilities, the other members of the company may not be able to fully comprehend the idea since they were not there themselves.

Hershel et al. (2001) explore the possibilities of transferring knowledge between the different forms, specifically turning tacit knowledge into codified knowledge. In their study they tested various existing knowledge exchange protocols and found that the exchange of tacit to codified knowledge occurs best when the protocol is structured (Hershel et al. 2001: 115). They distinguish between the narrative, the actual event, and the recall process. They claim that a highly detailed narrative may go to waste if the recall process is not well structured, i.e. designed to effectively extract details of the narrative from the individual (Ibid. 2001: 115).

The more recent study by Hall (2006) further details the process of knowledge codification. His approach incorporates ideas found in semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, and claims that the process of codification and de-codification is the most important aspect of conversion. In his study of a UK consultancy he found that effective codification largely depends on the defining of codes; and that codes defined in one context are easiest to de-coded in similar contexts (Hall 2006: 122). Bearing this in mind he recommends that codes should be made as understandable as possible, allowing those outside the original context to understand the message as well as those in the original context (Ibid. 2004: 123). This relates to the idea of knowledge transformation discussed by Iles et al. (2004) where knowledge taken outside of its original context is transformed and reinterpreted within the new context. The works by Hall (2006) and Hershel et al. (2001) suggest that successful knowledge conversion from one form to another is dependent on a proper method of knowledge conversion and an understandable system of codification/de-codification.
2.2 Knowledge Transfer

2.2.1 Distinguishing Between Knowledge Transfer and Technology Transfer

In its simplest sense knowledge transfer is closely related to communication theory. Classic communication theory presents a linear model where messages are sent from sender to receiver, either directly or through the use of an intermediary (Heath and Bryant 2000: 46). Further definitions of communication theory argue that communication is not linear but rather shaped by individuals and is an ongoing process (Heath and Bryant 2000: 48) (cf. Attallah and Shade 2006; Hargie and Dickson 2004; and Leydesdorff 2003). Knowledge transfer, like communication theory, has also been defined and interpreted in various ways. Knowledge transfer can occur in different settings and depending on the setting can be defined in different ways. Its broad application can lead to ambiguity and confusion particularly with the term technology transfer. Although the terms are similar they are two separate concepts.

There are two discourses in existing literature, one which claims that the two concepts are inextricably linked and are therefore synonymous, whereas the second argues that although the concepts are related they are nevertheless two separate concepts (Gopalakrishnan and Santoro 2004: 58). Gopalakrishnan and Santoro argue that the latter discourse is correct (Ibid. 2004: 58). They argue that “technology is more about knowing how things are done while knowledge is more about knowing why things occur” (Ibid. 2004: 58). For these scholars, technology is narrow, precise, and explicit, whereas knowledge is broad, amorphous, and tacit (Ibid. 2004: 59). In the context of this paper the term knowledge transfer will remain separate from technology transfer since the underlying aims and objectives of the 10th World Business Dialogue (10th WBD) were not to facilitate technology transfer but rather to create a forum where entrepreneurs, academics, and students, could discuss topics related to the pre-determined socio-
economic theme (OFW 2004c). For the purpose of this thesis, I have defined knowledge transfer as the exchange of ideas and insights into practical and theoretical issues between individuals. Table 2-1 compares in detail the different characteristics between technology and knowledge transfer according to Gopalakrishnan and Santoro (2004: 58). What Table 2-1 lacks is a further distinction between the different kinds of knowledge and how each kind would differ from technology transfer. As was highlighted in section 2.1.1. Knowledge Taxonomy, the concept of knowledge is difficult to define. Gopalakrishnan and Santoro (2004), however, generalize when distinguishing between technology transfer and knowledge transfer. Taking into consideration the different definitions of knowledge, some kinds of knowledge transfer, for example the transfer of codified knowledge, will share some of the characteristics of technology transfer, such as being tangible and explicit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breadth of Construct</td>
<td>Narrower and more specific construct. Technology can be seen as an instrumentality or set of tools for changing the environment.</td>
<td>Broader and more inclusive construct. Knowledge embodies underlying theories and principles related to cause and effect relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observability</td>
<td>More tangible and precise</td>
<td>Less tangible and more amorphous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overarching Characteristic</td>
<td>More explicit and codified where learning can be taught and information is stored more in blueprints, data bases, and manuals.</td>
<td>More tacit where learning is by doing and information is stored more in people's heads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Phase(s) of most consequence</td>
<td>Post-competitive phase of technological development (Integral for the commercialization of ideas and inventions).</td>
<td>Pre- and Post competitive phases of technological development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Learning</td>
<td>More reliance on controlled experiments, simulations, and pilot-tests.</td>
<td>More trial and error, wider use of gestals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Interactions</td>
<td>Inter- and intra-organizational interactions that deal most with operational issues and how things work.</td>
<td>Inter-and intra-organizational interactions that deal most with strategic issues and why things work the way they do.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2-1. Key Dimensions of Technology and Knowledge Transfer
Source: Gopalakrishnan and Santoro (2004: 59)
2.2.2 Knowledge Transfer Channels

When studying knowledge transfer between universities and industries, researchers often rely on patent data and publication statistics. Although a popular choice for researchers, these two channels are not the only sources of knowledge transfer between university and industry. Moreover, it has been proven that these channels are perceived to be less significant than was once believed (Cohen et al. 2000 as cited in Agrawal 2001: 298). In his literature review of knowledge transfer between university and industry, Agrawal (2001) examines several important studies, including those by Cohen et al. (1998; 2000) and Agrawal and Henderson (2002), that point to the importance of all types of knowledge transfer channels. Building on this Brennenraedts et al. (2006) examine knowledge transfer channels from the perspective of university faculty, and find that knowledge transfer is a dispersed process spread across a variety of channels, rather than a single process occurring across one or two channels. The following discussion deals with knowledge transfer channels between university and industry exclusively, and not between industries, or within industries. For an in-depth look at knowledge transfer, and knowledge transfer channels within and between industries see Capasso et al. (2005).

In the first study by Cohen et al. a taxonomy of knowledge transfer channels is created. They deconstruct knowledge transfer channels between university and industry into the following: “patents, publications, meetings or conferences, information channels, hires, licenses, joint ventures, contract research, consulting, and personal exchange” (Cohen et al. 1998 as cited in Agrawal 2001: 297). With these categories established, Cohen et al. examine the perceived importance of the channels used by different industries. Their findings “suggest that some channels, such as publications, conferences, informal conversations, and consulting, are considered more important overall for knowledge transfer and also that different industries value
different channels differently” (Ibid. 2001: 297). A second study by Cohen et al. reveals that a large majority of industry-based respondents felt that “publications, conferences, and consulting” (Cohen et al. 2000 as cited in Agrawal 2001: 298) were important channels of knowledge transfer.

In the last study by Agrawal and Henderson (2002) patents are evaluated in light of other knowledge transfer channels via a survey administered to Engineering, both mechanical and electrical, and Computer Science professors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Findings indicated a strong consensus among professors who believed that patents only accounted for 7% of the knowledge transferred from universities to the private sector (Agrawal and Henderson 2002: 52). Further, in their qualitative interviews professors claimed that patents are not a good indicator of their research (Ibid. 2002: 49).

Supporting Agrawal’s review is a recent working paper by Brennenraedts et al. (2006) that uses a case study to examine knowledge transfer channels between university and industry. Unlike Agrawal, Brennenraedts et al. (2006) adopt a taxonomy proposed by Bongers et al. (2003) rather than by Cohen et al. (1998). Unlike the Cohen et al. (1998) taxonomy which provided an overview for knowledge channels in the US, the Bongers et al. (2003) taxonomy originates from the Netherlands and is more detailed2. Bongers et al. define the following categories of knowledge transfer:

- Publications, participation in conference/professional networks & boards,
- mobility of people, other informal contacts/networks, cooperation in R&D,
- sharing of facilities, cooperation in education, contract research and advisement,

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2 Brennenraedts et al. allude that the taxonomies by Cohen et al. (1998) and Bongers et al. (2003) are country/culture specific (2006:5).
These main categories are further broken down into 21 subcategories. The case study found that depending on the position held by the faculty member, they would use different knowledge channels to acquire or disseminate knowledge. For example, part-time faculty, holding a position within the industry as well as within the university, place a greater emphasis on personal networks; by contrast full-time faculty members preferred traditional methods such as publishing and attending conferences (Brennenraedts et al. 2006: 16).

It is evident that informal channels of knowledge transfer, although difficult to measure, are nonetheless important in university-industry links. When examining existing literature Agrawal emphasizes that “non-patent channels of knowledge transfer are economically important” (2001: 299). In light of existing studies that emphasize alternate knowledge transfer channels, he stresses the need for further research on non-patent channels (2001: 299). The recent case study by Brennenraedts et al. (2006) reinforces the idea that different knowledge is transferred across different channels. By placing too much emphasis on traditional and easily measurable channels, such as patents and publications, the alternate channels have been neglected in scholarly work. As the aforementioned literature suggests, these alternate channels are in reality perceived to be more important, since not all knowledge is codified and transmitted/accessed across traditional patent and publication channels.

2.2.3 Different Knowledge, Different Channels

Building on the knowledge transfer taxonomy discussed above, Audretsch et al. (2004) examine whether different knowledge channels and content, influence a recipient’s geographic positioning. This is complemented by Cohen et al. (2002) who claim that the use of knowledge transfer channels is industry-specific. Taken together it can be said that recipients will locate
themselves according to the transfer channels they use most, moreover transfer channels are often industry-specific.

The study by Audretsch et al. (2004) indicates that the geographic positioning of organizations is dependent on the kind of transfer channels they use. Deciding on which channel then depends on the type of knowledge organizations wish to gain. Specifically, they examined whether discipline played a role in how close firms would locate themselves in relation to a university. They examined two different knowledge transfer channels, publications and students (human capital), in disseminating knowledge from the social sciences and natural sciences. Their findings revealed that the publication channel had little influence on whether firms would locate close to a university because access to publication information could be done remotely (Audretsch et al. 2004: 203). By contrast students, specifically the total number enrolled at a university, greatly influenced the firms’ decision on where to locate (Audretsch et al. 2004: 203). Evidently not all knowledge channels are created equal. This study could complement claims for greater scholarly focus on less tangible knowledge channels, specifically those that disseminate tacit knowledge, as these channels can influence recipients’ actions.

Reflecting critically, the study by Audretsch et al. (2004) only focused on German universities and firms and thus generalizations about other universities and firms in other countries cannot be made. Moreover, the study focused on social and natural sciences, leaving out other disciplines, such as mathematics and engineering. The study only focused on two knowledge transfer channels out of a possible 21, as proposed by Bongers et al. (2003). Such limitations could be compensated by case studies in other countries, of other disciplines, and of other knowledge transfer channels.
To complement the study by Audretsch et al. (2004), Cohen et al. (2002) emphasize that industry-specific knowledge will be obtained by different transfer channels; for example, 50% of respondents in the glass industry felt that meetings or conferences, and recent hires, were an important source of information. By contrast the respondents in the drug industry said that 64.7% of meetings and conferences were important sources, whereas only 30.0% said that recent hires were important sources (Cohen et al. 2002: 15). Cohen et al. reflect that their study is not complete since data was obtained by using only one method. They emphasize that if one is to obtain an accurate overall picture, a variety of different methods must be employed (2002: 22).

2.2.4 Knowledge Transfers at Meetings

One of the goals of this thesis is to find out whether participants at the 10th WBD were able to gain knowledge, thus it is appropriate to examine literature on what makes meetings effective. Although the 10th WBD was labeled as a conference by the organizers, the Organisationsforum Wirtschaftskongress (OFW), it was actually comprised of a series of large meetings, in the form of Panel Discussions, and small meetings in the form of Executive Sessions. Haynes defines a meeting as “a gathering of three or more people sharing common objectives where communication (oral and/or written), is the primary means of achieving those objectives” (1997: 2). By this definition, each subcomponent of the conference can be classified as a meeting, with the exception of informal gatherings which were not structured to achieve any objectives per se. Haynes goes on to say that “a meeting is effective when it achieves its objectives in a minimum amount of time to the satisfaction of the participants” (1997: 2). According to Haynes, meetings can be categorized as either information meetings or decision-making meetings. The objective of the former is to advise or update participants on issues, whereas the
latter is used to set goals or solve problems (1997: 4). Panel Discussions and Executive Sessions in the 10th WBD could be categorized as information meetings since the objective was to discuss a predetermined topic, rather than to solve a particular problem or to set goals.

Hayes further describes the three main components in any meeting: content, interaction, and structure (1997: 35). Content is “the information, knowledge, experience, opinions, ideas, myths, attitudes, and expectations that participants bring to the meeting” (1997: 35). Interaction is “the way participants work together while processing the meeting’s content. Includes feelings, attitudes, and expectations that bear on cooperation, listening, participation, trust, and openness” (1997: 35). Finally, structure is “the way in which both information and participants are organized to achieve the meeting’s purpose” (1997: 35). To add to these three components, Welch (2001: 77) and Lucas (2001: 90) emphasize the importance of location when conducting a meeting. According to Lucas, “the location should facilitate the purpose of the meeting … the meeting room should be comfortable with minimal distractions” (2001: 90). Thus an effective meeting is one that appropriately incorporates the aforementioned components, and achieves the objectives set forth by the organizer of the meeting. As it relates to the 10th WBD, the Panel Discussions and Executive Sessions could be classified as successful if participants were able to gain knowledge from the speaker and from other participants.

2.2.5 Related Concepts: Knowledge Migration and Knowledge Transformation

Recent scholarly work (Shariq 1999, Iles et al. 2004) argues that knowledge is transformed as it is transferred. Shariq (1999) approaches the topic in an abstract sense, while Iles et al. (2004) use an example of cross-cultural knowledge transfers to illustrate how knowledge is transformed. Shariq points out that knowledge transfer, whether tacit or codified is subject to
transformation and interpretation (2004: 243). For example, tacit knowledge transfer is a human-to-human activity and is an interactive process (Shariq 2004: 243). The interactive nature of this process means that knowledge can be transformed as it is being transferred between individuals. Conversely, codified knowledge is also susceptible to transformation because the recipient must have the same contextual background as the sender (Ibid. 2004: 244). Shariq illustrates this point through an example of a message written in one language and losing its meaning when translated into another (Ibid. 2004: 243-244).

Furthering this notion, Iles et al. (2004) examine the idea of knowledge migration, where knowledge is taken from one cultural context and exported to another. They argue that knowledge transfer is not always a straightforward and linear process when being transferred from one culture to another; rather, knowledge “is subject to redefinition every time it migrates” (Iles et al. 2004: 652). They use the example of knowledge being transferred from “Western” to “Eastern” cultures, and claim that knowledge in one context will have a certain meaning for actors within that context, while the same knowledge in another context will have a different meaning for the actors in that context (Ibid. 2004: 653, 659). Thus the knowledge transferred between cultures is never interpreted from the same perspective and thus never truly means the same thing, migration in this sense is the “local re-creation of knowledge” (Ibid. 2004: 659). Knowledge is time and location specific and is used by recipients in a variety of ways and is often influenced by culture. This would suggest that any notion of optimal knowledge transfer would be almost impossible to define since all knowledge transfers are subject to cultural and contextual interpretation.
2.3 University and Industry Linkages

2.3.1 University and Industry

Turning to the connection between university and industry Pavitt argues that there are three distinct features in the university-industry link: informal networks, research interests, and human capital (2005: 93-94). Informal networks permit firms to gain access to the latest developments in academia, moreover, the informal network facilitates a connection between key industry people and key academics, potentially leading to formal activities (Pavitt 2005: 93-94). Second, the interests of industry are often reflective of academic interests, and thus research performed at universities is often applicable in industry settings (Ibid. 2005: 94). Third, universities provide human capital for industry in the form of graduates and researchers who transmit knowledge from the university directly into the industry setting (Ibid. 2005: 94). Combined with the aforementioned understanding of knowledge transfers, these three links are the sites through which knowledge is transferred, and thus close attention will be paid to the concepts of informal networks, research interests, and human capital.

2.3.2 Competing Discourses: National Systems, Mode 2, and Triple Helix

A macro-perspective on the role of the university reveals that its role has changed several times since the 1940s. The more recent discourses are, however, at odds with each other. The “Mode 2” perspective defines the role of university in one way while the “triple helix” model defines it in another. The role of the university under the “triple helix” model is supported by several scholars (Etzkowitz 2002, Gibert and Zaharia 2005) who further define the university as an “entrepreneurial” organization. The following literature examines various definitions and then provides some insight into the current role of the university.
Mowery and Sampat (2005) highlight the different roles played by the university in the competing discourses under the umbrella of national innovation systems. The “national systems” interpretation goes back to the Vannevar Bush model of the 1940s where he claimed that universities are integral in economic growth and thus should be supported by public funds (Mowery and Sampat 2005: 212). This logic became known as the “linear model” where funding would be invested into university research which would result in technical advances and subsequent economic growth (Ibid. 2005: 212). In the “Mode 2” interpretation universities have closer relations to industry, and rather than being disconnected they were more involved in a network of actors, and their research correspondingly reflected the diversity of the network (Ibid. 2005: 213). The “triple helix” model is similar to “Mode 2” in that universities remain closely linked to other actors, however, in the “triple helix” model the role of the university and the role of industry is swapped; where some aspects of industry are performed by the university, such as firm creation, while industry performs some of the traditional university roles, such as knowledge dissemination (Etzkowitz et al. 1998 as cited in Mowery and Sampat 2005: 214). Moreover in this model, university, industry, and government are brought together in the same sphere which results in overlapping roles (Etzkowitz 2002: 117).

Building on the concept of academic and industry convergence the idea of the “entrepreneurial university” is proposed by Etzkowitz (2002) and Gibert and Zaharia (2005) and claims that in light of various global changes, universities must also incorporate an entrepreneurial aspect in tandem with their traditional roles (Gibert and Zaharia 2005: 36). Restructuring the university to facilitate the entrepreneurial aspect involves: institutional construction, human resource management, organizational management, and openness and internalization (Ibid. 2005: 37-38). Since the university is now intrinsically linked to industry it must also begin to act...
Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework

according to its new role in society (Ibid. 2005: 40). This concept of a new redefined university is not without its critics, and this will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.3 Critical Response

Buchbinder argues that the role of the university as a close associate of industry, or the private sector, has adverse effects on the university’s ability to perform its primary roles, research and education (1993: 342). He focuses specifically on the role of knowledge in the university, and how it has been transformed from “social knowledge to market knowledge” (Buchbinder 1993: 341). He argues that the full societal benefits of knowledge occur when knowledge is free, accessible, and nonproprietary. Unfortunately partnerships between universities and firms commodify social knowledge into market knowledge, which in turn leads universities to focus on “cultivating entrepreneurial professors, attracting corporate clients and securing intellectual property rights” (Ibid. 1993: 342). He further elaborates that once knowledge is within the realm of the market it must also abide by the rules of the market, meaning that knowledge is given a market value, is owned by individuals (or firms), and is bought and sold (Ibid. 1993: 344). In short, a university-industry alignment leads to a reorientation of objectives and converted knowledge, which comes at the expense of the public good.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the themes of knowledge and knowledge transfer while also attempting to relate these to the university-industry link. Admittedly, there are issues of contention under each of the themes, from an appropriate definition of knowledge, to a culture/context
specific knowledge transfer taxonomy. The impact of university-industry linkages has also faced 
criticism for turning knowledge into a commercial commodity.

In the case of knowledge transfer, there is some allusion by Brennenraedts et al. that the 
taxonomies by Cohen et al. (1998) and Bongers et al. (2003) are country/culture specific 
(2006:5). This warrants further analysis and discussion, but for the sake of this study the 
taxonomy developed by Bongers et al. (2003) will be used since it was developed in Europe and 
applied in a European context. The literature suggests that further research must support pre-
liminary findings which indicate that knowledge transfers occur through a wide variety of 
channels and is industry-specific. Agrawal claims that the absence of scholarly work on knowl-
edge transfer via non-patent channels can be attributed to the difficulty in acquiring data (2001: 
299). This implies the research that I have undertaken is necessary in order to better understand 
the concept of knowledge transfer. Chapter 5 will discuss the findings of my research against the 
theoretical perspectives presented in this chapter.
Chapter 3
Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodological approach used to conduct the case study on the 10th World Business Dialogue (10th WBD). First, I will identify the methods selected and the reasons for their selection. The study population will be defined along with a description of the recruitment techniques used. An outline of the procedures and content of each method will be given, and last, I will critically examine the methods employed and discuss the limitations of each method. This chapter focuses specifically on the methods used to gather data; the methods used to analyze the data will be presented in the next chapter.

3.1 Methods Employed

The aim of this study is to assess whether participants were able to gain knowledge from the 10th WBD; and if so, to determine the applicability of the knowledge in other settings. Related to the first aim, knowledge gain, I was also interested in how knowledge was transmitted to the participants and what kind of knowledge participants gained. When examining knowledge application I was also interested in assessing the frequency of its application and the impact it had when it was applied. To find out whether participants gained knowledge and whether they were able to apply it, a survey and phone interview were used. The survey was in the form of an electronic self-administered questionnaire (hereafter referred to as the “questionnaire”). An optional section at the end of the questionnaire presented respondents with the choice of completing a written response or participating in a phone interview. The questionnaire gathered
measurable responses while the written response and phone interview allowed for a more exploratory approach.

Coleman (2006: 115) describes a standard self-administered questionnaire as a tool that allows researchers to collect large amounts of data at a low cost and in a short period of time. Given the international nature of the conference, the questionnaire was deemed to be the most appropriate and effective means of reaching former participants. Moreover, since participants were able to register for the 10th WBD online (OFW 2004c), I assumed that many participants would have internet access. Admittedly, online registration was not the only way one could sign up for the conference. The questionnaire was in the form of a webpage that was hosted on a publicly accessible server.

The respondent was presented with an open-ended question in the section that allowed for a more detailed written response, while the phone interview was semi-structured, and included four questions based on the respondent’s questionnaire answers. These two alternatives to the initial questionnaire were provided so that respondents could answer in a way that they felt most comfortable. I did this because English was not the first language of many participants in the 10th WBD and accordingly some may have felt more comfortable writing in English rather than discussing in English, or vice versa. Further, all student participants were selected based on an essay competition, thus an optional written response seemed appropriate for the study, since students had already proven themselves to be articulate writers.

When I first considered using phone interviews, it seemed impractical due to the associated costs of international phone calls. With the advent of internet telephony, however, the 5-10 minute phone interviews were relatively affordable. Both the written responses and

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3 The questionnaire was hosted at http://www.wbdsurvey.denkel.net
4 The internet telephony program used was “Skype” v3.2, downloaded from http://www.skype.com
phone interviews were meant to complement the questionnaire responses, and encourage the respondents to elaborate on their thoughts.

3.2 Study Population

In the planning stages of this study, the aim was that the study population would encompass all former participants, including speakers, paying attendees, and students. This particular study population was selected, over press agents for example, because each group had taken some interest in participating in the conference. Presumably, these groups expected to get a “return” for their participation. Speakers volunteered their time and perhaps hoped to gain insight from other speakers. Paying attendees likely expected professional gain for their admission fee. Students had already expressed an interest in the conference topic when they submitted their essays in the essay competition prior to the conference.

Contacting the defined study population, however, was limited to email communication. Thus those within the study population that did not communicate with the Organisationsforum Wirtschaftskongress (OFW) via email were excluded. The OFW pointed out that with many of the participants, communication was done through an indirect means; for example through a speaker’s secretary\(^5\) or through other communication channels, such as phone calls. As a result, the study population was limited to the available email addresses in the OFW database. Table 3-1 shows the total number of people involved in the 10\(^{th}\) WBD, and the total number of participants that were included in the study based on available email addresses. No speakers were included in the questionnaire since their correspondence with the OFW had occurred through secretaries or through means other than email.

\(^5\) Jost Löhnenbach, personal communication, 5 June 2007
### Chapter 3 Methodology

#### Table 3-1. Study Population by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Available Email Addresses</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive participants†</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>755</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† This is the OFW’s category for what I refer to as “paying attendees”

#### 3.3 Recruitment of Participants

In April 2007 I contacted the OFW and presented the idea for the study to the Director of Public Relations, Katharina Kosak. She then presented the proposed study to the Chairpersons of the OFW, Jost Löhnenbach and Sebastian Schaefer. Participation in the study was approved by the OFW at the end of April 2007. It was agreed that the study population would be contacted via email by Jost Löhnenbach, Chairperson of the OFW, on my behalf. By having the OFW contact former participants directly, privacy issues regarding the use of participants’ email addresses were avoided. Further, support from the OFW gave my questionnaire recognizable legitimacy in the eyes of former participants, and as a result they were more likely to respond. According to Groves *et al.* legitimacy, or “authority of sponsor” (2004: 177) is an important factor considered by respondents when faced with a questionnaire request.

Potential respondents received three emails regarding the questionnaire, one invitation email and two reminder emails. The invitation to participate was sent on 11 May 2007 by Jost Löhnenbach (See Appendix A). The subsequent reminder emails were sent on 4 June 2007 (See Appendix B) and 13 June 2007 (See Appendix C). In the email participants were given an incentive to respond to the questionnaire: for each completed questionnaire I would plant one tree in order to mitigate the impact of carbon dioxide on the environment. Groves *et al.* explain...
that an individual’s participation in a study may be influenced by the presence of an incentive (2004: 177). Planting trees on behalf of respondents was economical, feasible, and socially appealing. Last, the email emphasized that the questionnaire only took 10 minutes to complete.

3.4 The Questionnaire

3.4.1 Pilot Questionnaire

Prior to administering the questionnaire, a pilot questionnaire (See Appendix D) was constructed and sent to a number of individuals who were not involved in the conference. Recipients of the pilot questionnaire were selected according to the categories defined in the questionnaire: private sector representatives, public sector representatives, representatives from academic institutions, and students. Pilot questionnaire testers were drawn from my personal network of professors, classmates, co-workers, friends and family. In total 18 people were involved in the pilot test: 5 private sector representatives, 1 public sector representative, 3 representatives from academic institutions, and 9 students. Pilot testers resided in Argentina, Canada, Germany, and Sweden. Pilot testers were selected according to category in order to ensure that the questionnaire would be understandable for the actual respondents in those categories.

The pilot test was divided into two stages: the first evaluated the content of the questionnaire while the second assessed the layout of the questionnaire. In the first stage pilot testers were emailed a copy of the pilot questionnaire in a Microsoft Word format. They were asked to review the questionnaire content and provide feedback on the clarity of the language, the format of the questions, and the length of the questionnaire. Once the pilot testers gave their feedback, revisions were made and a second version of the questionnaire was constructed. One example of content revision was changing the term “Academic” to “Representative from an academic
institution” (for a complete list of content revisions see Appendix E). The second version was coded into HTML format and hosted on a publicly accessible server. Pilot testers were then sent an email with a copy of the link and asked to provide feedback on the website’s accessibility, design, and functionality. The objectives of the second stage were to ensure that the link in the email functioned properly, and that the recipient was able to fill in and submit the questionnaire. Feedback from the second version was assessed and appropriate changes were made to the website. After the second stage of the pilot test was complete, the website for the final questionnaire was constructed and uploaded to a domain created specifically for the final questionnaire.

3.4.2 Questionnaire Design

I designed and coded the pilot questionnaire website and the final questionnaire website, while the PHP script used to send responses to my email address was programmed by Joe Lumbroso, and downloaded from “Jack’s Scripts” 6. Based on feedback from the pilot test website the final questionnaire website was accessible by three of the most popular browsers: Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0 and 7.0), Mozilla Firefox (2.0), and Apple Safari (2.0) (Refsnes Data 2007). The website was also designed to be viewed on a low resolution screen (800x600) ensuring that respondents using older computers would be able to view the questionnaire properly.

3.4.3 Final Questionnaire Content

The online questionnaire was divided into three webpages: the first page displayed the welcome letter (See Appendix F), the second displayed the actual questionnaire (See Appendix

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6 The script used was “Jack’s FormMail.php” v5.0, downloaded from http://www.dtheatre.com/scripts/formmail
G), and the third displayed a thank you message (See Appendix H). The introductory page informed respondents of the study’s objectives, how their responses would be used, and the incentive for completing the questionnaire. Respondents were instructed to click on a link to begin the actual questionnaire. The entire questionnaire was kept on a single webpage since it was only 16 questions long, and was divided into the following areas:

- Instructions
- Definitions
- Section 1: About You (5 questions)
- Section 2: Knowledge Quality (5 questions)
- Section 3: Knowledge Applicability (5 questions)
- Section 4: Further Details (Optional) (1 question)

All responses from the questionnaire were anonymous. Although a name and phone number was required for those who opted to participate in the phone interview, those responses were made anonymous when discussed in this study. The questionnaire did not assume that respondents were able to apply the knowledge gained, or even that they gained knowledge. In Figure 3-1, a flow chart is used to outline the questionnaire design. In “Section 4: Further Details (Optional)” respondents could either complete a written response in the form of an open-ended question or fill in contact details to participate in a phone interview.
3.5 The Phone Interview

3.5.1 Phone Interview Procedures

Respondents who wished to participate in a phone interview were asked to provide their name, phone number, and the best day and time to call. Respondents were told that they would be contacted prior to 20 June 2007 on the day and time that they specified. In order to keep costs low, phone interviews were no longer than 10 minutes in length. In the event that a respondent was unreachable at the designated day and time, a second attempt was made 30-60 minutes later. If still unreachable, a third attempt was made the following week at the same day and time.
3.5.2 Phone Interview Content

Participants of the phone interview were asked to give their permission for the conversation to be recorded. If they did not give permission, written notes were used in lieu of a recorder. Respondents were asked four open-ended questions regarding their responses from the questionnaire, and were encouraged to provide examples in their responses. The focus of the interview was divided between knowledge transmission and knowledge application (For a list of questions asked see 4.3.2 Phone Interview).

3.6 Limitations

This section discusses general limitations of each method. The actual issues that arose during the administration of the questionnaire and the phone interview will be discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

3.6.1 Questionnaire Limitations

The questionnaire as a method for gathering qualitative information was faced with a variety of technical limitations: email limitations, duplicate responses, and incomplete or erroneous responses (Deming 1970: 323). There were several limitations with respect to email. First, some of the email addresses on file at the OFW may not have been active, others may have been active but not checked by their owners on a regular basis. Second, spam filters may have prevented the invitation and reminder emails from reaching the recipient. Third, because former participants were contacted via email for the purposes of this study, those who were not reachable via email were excluded. Last, the email addresses were a poor indicator of the sample’s
characteristics, for example participants’ country of origin. Chapter 5 will analyze email limitations in greater depth.

Duplicate responses could partially be controlled by comparing the internet protocol (IP) address of respondents. An IP address is a unique number that is assigned to any computer connected to the internet. Thus if two responses with the same IP addresses were received, one of them could be discarded. If, however, the respondent filled out the response twice, but from two different computers, for example once from a work computer, and a second time from their home computer, then the IP addresses would be different and it would be impossible to tell if it was a duplicate response. This was not considered a serious limitation since it seemed unlikely that a respondent would fill out the questionnaire more than once, either by accident or on purpose.

Bearing in mind that conference participants came from various countries including newly industrialized countries, developing countries, and less developed countries, the questionnaire was designed as basic HTML page and used a generic PHP script. This ensured that a greater number of potential respondents would be able to access the page without problems. However, the simplicity of the questionnaire page simultaneously prevented the implementation of a more complicated script that would detect incomplete responses or erroneously completed questionnaires. As a result respondents were not informed of incomplete or invalid responses. Chapter 4 will discuss the actions taken when incomplete or erroneous questionnaires were received.

7 Admittedly the PHP script did incorporate an error function (i.e. when a required field is not completed the form cannot be submitted), however it was not activated since it was unable to detect errors in contingency questions.
3.6.2 Phone Interview Limitations

The phone interview faced a practical and technical problem: the language of the conversation and poor call quality. All interviews were conducted in English, however, this was not the native language of those interviewed, and as a result respondents may not have been able to express themselves completely. Fortunately, I did not encounter poor call quality during interviews, however, I will briefly describe how this technical problem could have affected responses. The audio quality of the internet telephony program ("Skype") depends on the server status at the time of the call, if the server is inundated with users then the quality of the call will be poor. Moreover, calls placed to mobile phones are subject to reception issues. These technical problems can cause conversations to be asynchronous and distorted, leading to miscommunication or irritation.
Chapter 4
Presentation of Responses

This chapter contains the results of the questionnaire and the phone interview. In the first section the response rate for the questionnaire, written responses, and phone interviews are discussed. Descriptive results are presented according to category/question, starting with the questionnaire and then moving on to the written responses and phone interviews. This chapter does not present correlative or comparative statistics; those are contained in Chapter 5. Since the number of respondents was relatively low most results discussed in this chapter are given in absolute value.

4.1 Response Rate

When calculating the response rate for the questionnaire, the number of undeliverable emails, or emails that bounced back, were deducted from the total number of emails sent. The number of undelivered emails were recorded by the Chairperson of the OFW since emails were sent from his account. The number of responses received was 26, however, 2 of the 26 questionnaires were completed incorrectly, and thus the total number of correctly completed questionnaires was 24. The overall response rate was 10.1%, though discussion in the following chapter will examine why this figure might actually have been higher when considering the limitations of email. Table 4-1 illustrates how the response rate was calculated.
Chapter 4 Presentation of Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Available Emails</th>
<th>Undelivered Emails</th>
<th>Assumed* Reachable</th>
<th>Responses Received</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive participants</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>12‡</td>
<td>7.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‡ This figure excludes 2 questionnaires that were received but were completed incorrectly.
* Chapter 5 will discuss why these figures may not necessarily reflect the number of people who actually received the email.

Table 4-1. Questionnaire Response Rate by Category

Of the 24 questionnaires received, a total of 3 people completed the optional written response. 2 of the people who completed the written response also requested a phone interview. 1 person requested a phone interview and did not complete a written response. Section 4.3 provides details on the respondents of the written response and phone interview.

4.2 The Questionnaire

4.2.1 Section 1: About You (Questions 1.1-1.5)

The first section of the questionnaire was devoted to general questions about sex, age, country of residence, occupation, and involvement in the conference. Of the 24 respondents 20 were male and 4 were female. The age of respondents were as follows:

- Less than 25 years (9 respondents)
- Between 25 and 39 (8 respondents)
- Between 40 and 55 (5 respondents)
- Greater than 55 (2 respondents)

Figure 4-1 divides respondents according to country of residence. There were 12 students, 11 private sector representatives, and 1 representative from an academic institution who responded. No responses were received from public sector representatives.
When asked about conference participation half of all respondents indicated that they were present for 1 to 4 Panel Discussions while the other half were present for 5 to 8 Panel Discussions. A majority of respondents, 14 in total, were present for both Executive Sessions, while 8 were only present for one session, and 2 were not present for any. When it came to Informal Gatherings a majority of respondents, 15 in total, were present for the Lunch or Break periods and the Reception or Gala Dinner. 7 were present for only the Lunch or Break periods, while 1 was present for only the Reception or Gala Dinner. 1 Respondent was not present for any informal gathering. The results indicate that most respondents attended every aspect of the conference, though some attended more Executive Sessions and Informal Gatherings than others.

4.2.2 Section 2: Knowledge Quality (Questions 2.1-2.5)

Out of the 24 responses 23 people claimed they gained new knowledge at the 10th WBD. A private sector representative was the only respondent who claimed that he did not gain any new knowledge; he stated that the “topics were irrelevant for my business.”
Chapter 4 Presentation of Responses

The following section describes what respondents thought to be the most important aspect for knowledge transfer, where they gained most of their new knowledge from, how it was transmitted to them, and what they thought about the quality of knowledge that they gained. Question 2.2 asked respondents to rank the aspects of the conference from the greatest source of new knowledge to the smallest. Table 4-2 reveals that most respondents thought the Executive Sessions were the greatest source of new knowledge, followed by Panel Discussions and then Informal Gatherings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect (Rank)</th>
<th>Greatest Source</th>
<th>Average Source</th>
<th>Smallest Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Sessions 1</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel Discussions 2</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Gatherings 3</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 23 with the exception of Executive Sessions which N = 22 since one respondent was not present for any Executive Sessions.

Table 4-2. Aspects Ranked According to Source of New Knowledge in Percent

When asked who was primarily responsible for the dissemination of knowledge, 19 respondents selected private sector representatives. Four respondents selected representatives from academic institutions. None of the respondents selected students or public sector representatives. Question 2.4 asked respondents to select the way that new knowledge was transmitted to them. Multiple selections were allowed. Figure 4-2 ranks the most popular means of knowledge transmission to the least.
The final question asked respondents to rate the quality of knowledge gained using a five point Likert scale, for example how insightful, unique, or creative it was. A majority of respondents found the knowledge to be Very Good, while no respondents found the knowledge to be Fair or Poor. The results were as follows:

- Excellent (5 respondents)
- Very Good (13 respondents)
- Good (5 respondents)
- Fair (0 respondents)
- Poor (0 respondents)

4.2.3 Section 3: Knowledge Applicability (Questions 3.1-3.5)

Out of the 23 respondents who did gain new knowledge, 22 were able to apply this new knowledge outside the conference, while 1 was not. The person who was unable to apply the new knowledge provided the following reason: “interesting knowledge that could not have (yet) been transformed into new business opportunities (=no value realisation yet).”

The following section will discuss where respondents were able to apply their new knowledge, how frequently they applied it, its impact, and the type of knowledge that they gained.
Question 3.2 asked respondents where they had applied the knowledge that they gained; the results were as follows:

- In a professional setting (11 respondents)
- In their personal life (0 respondents)
- In a professional setting and in their personal life (11 respondents)

Next, respondents were asked how frequently they applied what they had learned: 16 respondents applied what they learned “Sometimes,” while 3 respondents applied it “Often,” and another 3 applied it “Not Often.” Question 3.4 asked respondents about the impact of applying the new knowledge: 13 respondents believed it had a “Moderate Impact,” while 5 believed it had a “Great Impact,” and 4 believed it had “Little Impact.” The final question asked respondents what kind of knowledge they gained. Figure 4-3 presents the results of this question. One respondent who gained both Theoretical and Practical knowledge claimed to gain something else: “creative energy that taught me that I can do everything that I want.”

![Figure 4-3. Type of Knowledge Gained](image-url)
4.3 Written Response and Phone Interview

Both the written response and phone interview proved successful in having respondents elaborate on their thoughts and experiences. In two instances respondents filled in the written response and also participated in a phone interview. Table 4-3 provides details on the respondents’ sex, age, country of residence since the 10th WBD, and occupation during the 10th WBD. Chapter 5 will further discuss the responses from the written response and phone interviews in light of the responses from the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Number</th>
<th>Form of Response</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age During Conference</th>
<th>Country of Residence Since Conference</th>
<th>Occupation During Conference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Written</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Less than 25</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Written and Phone</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Less than 25</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Written and Phone</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Less than 25</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40 to 55</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Private Sector Representative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-3. Details of Written and Phone Interview Respondents

4.3.1 Written Response

The last section of the questionnaire was optional and respondents who chose to answer this section were asked to either provide a written response or participate in a phone interview. 3 respondents, all students, completed a written response. Respondents were presented with the following question: “Please further elaborate on how you have applied your knowledge in your professional or personal life, for example how you have used ideas raised during the 10th WBD in an essay, business strategy, policy making decision, etc.” Although answers varied in length from 53 words to 366 words, all respondents provided examples to support their answers (See Appendix I).
4.3.2 Phone Interview

In the phone interview, respondents were asked four open-ended questions about their responses in the questionnaire; they were encouraged to reply using examples if possible. The four questions were:

1. Why did you choose ________________ as the greatest source of new knowledge?  
   (Referring to question 2.1 of the questionnaire)
2. Why did you choose ________________ as the smallest source of new knowledge?  
   (Referring to question 2.1 of the questionnaire)
3. Can you provide any examples of its application in a professional and/or personal setting?  
   (Referring to question 3.2 of the questionnaire)
4. Did you have difficulty applying the knowledge that you gained from the 10th WBD in the country that you have resided in since the conference?  
   (Referring to questions 3.3 and 3.4 of the questionnaire)

Respondents understood the questions and did not appear to have any trouble expressing themselves, even though English was not their first language. Respondents were easy to talk to and supported their answers with examples (See Appendix J). The interviews with Respondent 2 (R2) and Respondent 3 (R3) lasted just under 10 minutes while the interview with Respondent 4 (R4) lasted about 5 minutes. I did not encounter any technical difficulties during the interviews.
Chapter 5
Discussion

This chapter evaluates answers from the questionnaire, written responses, and phone interviews, in light of the theories presented in Chapter 2. I will first discuss the results from the questionnaire and subsequent correlative findings. Second, through a discussion of responses relating to knowledge gain, I will address issues such as format of the conference in light of knowledge transmission. Third, a discussion with respect to knowledge applicability will touch upon knowledge and culture. The last section will make an analysis of non-respondents.

The lack of available participant data makes it impossible to construct a representative sample according to sex, age, etc. According to Deming (1970: 336) this does not make the findings irrelevant, however. He claims that although surveys may not meet the expected level of accurate representation, the results are nonetheless important in “helping to provide a rational basis for action” (Deming 1970: 336). The results of this study, although not completely representative, can nevertheless provide insight for researchers and conference organizers. Moreover, I was not concerned with having a representative sample based on sex, age, etc. but rather was interested in individual cases. Accordingly this chapter will not generalize but rather particularize from the results.

5.1 Correlative Findings

This section focuses on the correlative findings between several ordinal characteristics of the questionnaire. The three ordinal characteristics that were compared were question 2.5 (quality of knowledge gained), question 3.3 (frequency of application), and question 3.4 (impact
Chapter 5 Discussion

When applied). As Fink highlights, the aim of correlative analysis is “to estimate the relationships between two characteristics” (1995: 38) and not “to establish cause and effect, or causation” (1995: 38). The following is meant to illustrate the relationship between the aforementioned ordinal characteristics. Calculations were done using Spearman’s rank order correlation. Table 5-2 lists the results after Spearman’s rank order was applied to the aforementioned questions. The table suggests that a positive correlation exists between the compared questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2.5 Quality</th>
<th>3.3 Frequency</th>
<th>3.4 Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Quality</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.420*</td>
<td>.450*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Frequency</td>
<td>.420*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.677**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Impact</td>
<td>.450*</td>
<td>.677**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* “Fair degree of relationship” (Fink 1995: 36)
** “Moderate to good relationship” (Fink 1995: 36)

Table 5-1. Spearman’s Rank Order Applied to Various Questions

A fair degree of relationship exists between how respondents rated the quality of knowledge that they gained and the frequency and impact of its application. Knowledge application cannot come without knowledge gain, and in this study 95% of the respondents who gained knowledge also said they were able to apply it. The correlation between quality and frequency suggests that the higher the quality of knowledge a respondent gained, the more likely they were to apply it. Furthermore, the higher the quality of knowledge a respondent gained the greater the impact it had when it was applied. Evidently, the quality of knowledge is a determining factor in the frequency and impact of its application.

A stronger relationship exists between the frequency of knowledge application and its impact: those who applied their knowledge more frequently claimed it had a greater impact when applied. Conversely those who applied their knowledge less frequently found that it had a smaller
impact when applied. This relationship, however, is not necessarily causal, as it is impossible to tell whether respondents applied their knowledge often because it had a great impact, or whether respondents found their knowledge to have a great impact because it was applied often.

In hindsight I would have incorporated a Likert scale with more than three options for questions 3.3 (frequency of application), and 3.4 (impact when applied), in order to determine whether such correlations are as strong as they appear to be. Alternatively, question 3.3 (frequency of application) could have been turned into a numerical characteristic, allowing for a more quantifiable answer. Finally, given that more than half of the respondents rated Executive Sessions to be the most important source of knowledge, a sub-question on the level of interactivity may have been useful in assessing the relation between interactivity and knowledge applicability.

5.2 Knowledge Gain

This section includes a number of interesting results from the questions that focused on knowledge gain, both in the questionnaire and in the phone interviews. First, is a comparative analysis between students and private sector representatives; second is an examination of effective leadership as a source of knowledge. In the final section, I will consider responses from two respondents who claimed to gain new knowledge from organizational actions.

5.2.1 Students Versus Private Sector Representatives

Of the 24 respondents, 12 were students, all who claimed that they gained new knowledge from the 10th WBD and were able to apply this knowledge after the conference. Another 11 respondents were from the private sector: 10 respondents claimed they gained new knowledge
from the 10th WBD, and 9 claimed that they were able to apply it after the conference. The last respondent was a representative from an academic institution who claimed that he gained new knowledge and was also able to apply the new knowledge. The overall response rate for students was 15% while the response rate for paying attendees was only 7.64%. Eighty students were sent the invitation email, while almost double the amount of paying attendees, 157 in total, were sent the same email. At the outset, I would have suspected that the response rates would be representative of the total number per category, but this was not the case. This leads me to believe that there was some respondent bias between students and paying attendees, not only in the response rate, but also in the actual responses. The regular attendance fee for both days ranged from 1,080 Euros to 1,550 Euros, depending on the date of registration, whereas university faculty paid 300 Euros. A one-day ticket was approximately 35% cheaper than a two-day ticket (OFW 2004d). Students, on the other hand, paid a participation fee of between 100 and 260 Euros – depending on where the participant was coming from and how long they would be staying. The student fee covered travel, food, accommodation, and the conference admission fee, whereas the regular attendance fee and fee for university faculty only covered food and the conference admission fee.

Being required to pay a relatively larger fee in order to participate in the 10th WBD may have influenced the expectations that paying attendees had for the conference. Thus, if the expectations were not met, the paying attendees may have been reluctant to answer the survey. Students, on the other hand, were selected based on an essay competition, and apart from the participation fee that they paid, all expenses were covered by the OFW. By getting more in return for their participation fee, students could have felt more compelled to respond, but moreover, to respond in a positive way. Unfortunately, based on the low number of total

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8 A Value Added Tax (VAT) of 4% was applied on top of these fees.
responses I am unable to substantiate whether a respondent bias exists between students and paying attendees.

5.2.2 Effective Leadership

When Respondent 2 (R2) was asked why he chose the Executive Sessions as the smallest source of new knowledge, he said that the speaker in the first Executive Session got into an argument with the moderator, which disappointed him. The speaker of the second Executive Session conducted a workshop where people were divided into groups for an activity, which he thought was good, but not exceptional. The negative actions of the speaker in the first session was not what he expected. He stated, “usually I think the workshops, and those small groups at conferences, are one of the best things.” In both of R2’s sessions leadership from the speaker was either absent or poorly guided. According to Haynes:

An effective leader is attentive to each of the above meeting components [content, interaction, and structure]. The meeting leader’s role is to monitor progress and provoke direction. In some meetings participants help provide direction. This makes the leader’s job easier. In other meetings the leader is required to provide most of the direction. (1997: 35)

Thus knowledge transfer was hindered in this particular instance from a leader who engaged in counterproductive interaction, an argument, and a leader who presented an interactive structure, but lacked appropriate content. This example illustrates the importance of a good leader in the process of knowledge transmission.
5.2.3 Different Ways of Transferring Knowledge

Returning to the idea of knowledge transfer as a related concept to communication theory, this section addresses the different ways in which respondents claimed to gain new knowledge. The three sources of knowledge transmission discussed in this section are speeches, discussions, and organizational actions. Speeches were the most frequently cited source of knowledge transmission: 15 out of 23 respondents in the questionnaire selected this option. To support this finding, Respondent 1 (R1) and Respondent 3 (R3) both clearly recalled one speech in particular that figured prominently in their minds. The speech that R1 and R2 recalled was entitled “Blue Ocean Strategy,” and both claimed to have applied what they learned in that speech in their own lives. For instance, R1 “remembered that concept [Blue Ocean Strategy] in discussions about the potential that startup businesses may have to succeed,” while R3 used ideas from the speech “as examples during my lessons and as well for conference papers.”

Although speeches may have had the most lasting impression on respondents, participation in discussions ranked a close second, with 13 out of 23 respondents selecting this option. Information gathered from R4 supports this; when R4 was asked why he chose Executive Sessions as the greatest source of new knowledge he stated that, “it allowed me to interact the most with people. You know this type of interaction really helps, well, it helps you to hear other people’s opinions.” Further R2, although disappointed with the Executive Sessions in general, did state that workshops, or small meetings like the Executive Sessions, are generally, “better than when you have a panelist and everybody is listening to them because, you can, like take more advantage of it; everybody asks questions and there is like more interaction.” Both respondents point to the level of interactivity as influencing the way they gain new knowledge. Rather than the one-way nature of the Panel Discussions, the Executive Sessions allowed for a dialogue.
between participants that proved valuable in gaining insight from other people. R2, however, pointed out that this was not always the case.

When looking at organizational actions, R2 and R3 claimed to gain knowledge from unconventional aspects of the conference. On the questionnaire, 4 out of 23 respondents, including R2 and R3, selected organizational action as a way in which new knowledge was transferred. According to Lorimer and Gasher:

[Communication is] the act of transmitting and exchanging information and meaning through any form of language; while communication typically refers to exchanges through verbal, written, and electronic forms of language, clothing style, gesture, and architecture can also communicate. (2004: 304)

Building on this broad definition of communication, Cohen et al. (Cohen et al. 1998 as cited in Agrawal 2001: 297) present the idea that transferring knowledge will occur through different channels for different industries. Much like communication theory, different channels, or mediums, are used to communicate different messages. One of the less obvious means of communication at the 10th WBD occurred through the actions of the organizers, the OFW. In R2’s written response he stated that he gained new knowledge from the way the Panel Discussions were organized. In particular he found the idea of a moderator to be useful in directing the discussion. When R3 was asked about applying what she learned at the conference in her professional or personal life she responded by saying that the design of the conference made her feel comfortable. She then cited an example where parts of the 10th WBD logo were placed between steps in the main staircase, so when standing at the bottom of the staircase one sees the entire logo. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the OFW transmitted knowledge
5.3 Knowledge Application

The previous section discussed knowledge gain at the conference and also touched upon knowledge application. This section is about knowledge application, in particular the link between knowledge and culture, and university and industry. It must be stated in the outset, that it might have been difficult for respondents to recall the exact instance where they applied their knowledge. The conference took place in April 2005, and the study ran from May-June of 2007; the space of two years may have been a factor that contributed to respondents forgetting specific examples of when they applied their knowledge. Moreover, when applying new or existing knowledge they might have attributed its source to another event, for example another conference that they attended since the 10th WBD. R2 and R3 supported the possibility of the former in their responses during the phone interviews. When R2 was asked about its application he gave one example but went on to say, “it’s difficult to think, which thing I applied directly. I don’t remember.” When asked the same question, R3 gave an example, but went on to say, “I really cannot remember right now the exact example, but I am sure that I used that knowledge.” Thus respondents were sometimes able to give an example of their knowledge application, but were often unable to recall more examples.

5.3.1 Knowledge and Culture

As discussed in the literature review, for Shariq (1999) and Iles et al. (2004) knowledge is often contextual and influenced by culture. When transferred between contexts, knowledge is
susceptible to transformation, meaning it is reinterpreted within the context of its reception (Iles et al. 2004: 651-652). Accordingly respondents of the phone interview were asked whether they had trouble applying the knowledge that they gained in the country that they have resided in since the 10th WBD. The respondents presented answers that do not directly support or oppose assertions made by Shariq (1999) and Iles et al. (2004), but suggest a more in-depth study is required to draw any conclusions.

When asked to provide an example of knowledge application, R2 said that he wrote an article about the 10th WBD for the Business Today Journal,9 which is based in Princeton, USA. This illustrates that although R2 has resided in Argentina since the time of the conference he had been able to publish an article related to the conference outside of his own country. R2, also an organizer of the South American Business Forum10 (SABF), in Buenos Aires, Argentina, recommended to his colleagues that they structure their panel discussions identical to the ones he saw in the 10th WBD, specifically by implementing a moderator for the discussions. He did provide a caveat stating that he was unsure whether the 10th WBD represented the first time he saw moderators used in a discussion. This suggests that the 10th WBD may have reinforced existing knowledge in R2 rather than create it. R2 did express some disappointment in the content of the conference, stating that he “was quite surprised that the main thing everybody was talking about was India and China, it’s like the whole conference was around that.” He did not discuss whether this limited the application of knowledge in Argentina. R2’s response about modeling the SABF around an aspect of the 10th WBD suggests limited transformation took place, since the aim was to replicate a particular aspect. Since the journal article was unavailable to me I cannot say whether it was in some way customized to suit the journal’s audience.

9 More information about Business Today can be found at http://www.businesstoday.org
10 More information about the South American Business Forum can be found at http://www.sabf.org.ar
When R3 was asked whether she encountered any barriers in applying the knowledge in her own country, she said that the knowledge presented at the conference was from “world leaders” and that the content dealt with issues around the globe. She did not further elaborate in that question about difficulties in application, but in discussing where she applied her knowledge, she stated that she had done so in the marketing courses that she teaches at the University of Sarajevo, in Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina. From her response I was unable to tell whether or not she presented knowledge that she gained in a customized way for her students.

When R4 was asked whether he encountered any problems in applying what he gained, he said, “it was not so difficult to use the things that I learned at the conference.” The brevity of his response does not leave room for much analysis. Further, it is unclear why exactly he did not have difficulties: was it because much of the conference was conducted in German? Or was it because many of the private sector representatives at the conference were from Germany? R4’s answer, like the answer of R2 and R3, does not permit me to draw any conclusions on the link between knowledge transfers and culture.

5.4 Analysis of Non-Respondents

This section will make an analysis of non-respondents. I will focus in particular on the shortcomings of using email to contact former participants. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the actual rate of undeliverable emails was in reality higher than the number that bounced back. First, the technical limitations of email will be discussed briefly. Second, measures to assess email limitations will be discussed. Third, I present a hypothesis regarding why some people did not reply even though they received the email. Finally, I will analyze the impact of non-responses on the study.
Although email was a fast and economical option for contacting former participants, it was not without its limitations (see Appendix K). The technical limitations of email created four sub-groups of non-respondents:

- Participants who did not receive the email because the email address was inactive or not checked
- Participants who did receive the email but were not able to check their email account during the study period
- Participants who received the email but did not read it because it was marked as spam
- Participants who received and read the email but were not able to access the website

In order to determine whether participants were receiving emails, I wanted to use a ‘read receipt’ feature when sending the emails. I discovered, however, that this feature works only with certain email clients such as Microsoft Outlook. Moreover, depending on the email client, the ‘read receipt’ feature could be disabled, and thus only those that used the specific email clients and had the feature enabled would be able to acknowledge receipt of the email. In light of the aforementioned shortcomings I opted not to use a ‘read receipt’ feature when sending emails.

One measure that I was able to implement was a web counter\textsuperscript{11} on the website that measured the number of unique visitors from 10 May 2007 to 20 June 2007. The web counter measured a total number of 67 unique visits during the designated study period. Admittedly, the total number of unique visitors may actually be lower than 67 because the web counter used a cookie to identify visitors, and thus if a respondent visited the site once, and cleared his or her web browser cache, and then visited it again, the web counter would detect them as a new visitor.

\textsuperscript{11} The web counter that was used was “StatCounter”, found at http://www.statcounter.com
This suggests that a large majority of participants who were sent the email did not actually go to the website. This fact supports the idea that the limitations of email prevented a greater response rate.

Moving away from the technical limitations of email, another problem that was discovered after the survey was administered was that the email invited participants to participate in a survey on knowledge transfers. If the participant felt that he or she did not gain anything from the conference, they may have assumed that the survey did not apply to them. In hindsight the invitation should have invited all participants, regardless of their experience at the conference, to participate. Along the same lines, the option to participate in the phone interview did not say how long the interview was going to be, and thus respondents pressed for time may have decided not to participate.

Considering the aforementioned limitations of email, and the errors in omission from the email invitation and questionnaire, I would suspect that the number of participants who did not receive the email, or did but were unable to complete the questionnaire, to be much higher. Table 5-1 illustrates the disparity between the number of emails that did not bounce back, and the number of unique visitors to the website. Although anecdotal, this suggests that many of the assumed reachable participants could have been unreachable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available Emails</th>
<th>Undelivered Emails</th>
<th>Assumed Reachable</th>
<th>Unique Visits</th>
<th>Responses Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‡ This figure excludes 2 questionnaires that were received but were completed incorrectly.

Table 5-2. Comparison of Assumed Reachable Participants to Unique Visits and Responses Received

I can only speculate about how their responses would have differed from people who did respond. It would be reasonable to assume that some participants did not respond because they
did not gain knowledge from the conference. If this was the case, results from this study would be inflated, and the total population may have gained less knowledge than respondents suggest. This in turn would mean that knowledge was applied less frequently, since respondents who gained knowledge were not always able to apply it.
This final chapter will begin with a summary of the findings of the study and then proceed with a discussion of implications and limitations. Then, recommendations will be made regarding future studies, how to research other WBD conferences, past and present, and how to approach other conferences in general. A final thought will reflect on what could have been done differently and how this study contributes to the development of knowledge transfer.

6.1 Responses to Research Questions

This section lists the questions of the study outlined at the beginning of this thesis and provides answers based on the information discussed in previous chapters. These answers must be viewed in light of the low response rate and potential bias from non-respondents.

Q1. Did participants of the 10th WBD gain knowledge?

A1. Based on the responses received, 95% of respondents claimed to gain knowledge from the 10th WBD. In most cases, private sector representatives were primarily responsible for the creation of knowledge. Executive Sessions were selected as the site of greatest knowledge transmission, and speeches were the most effective means of transmitting knowledge. Overall, respondents ranked the knowledge gained to be very good.

Q2. Did participants of the 10th WBD apply the knowledge gained in another setting?

A2. 95% of respondents who claimed to gain knowledge from the 10th WBD also said they were able to apply the knowledge outside of the conference. On average respondents were
sometimes able to apply the knowledge in professional and personal settings. Respondents claimed on average to gain both theoretical and practical knowledge and said it had a moderate impact when applied.

Q3. Did the 10th WBD contribute to university-industry knowledge transfer?

A3. The results would suggest that knowledge transfer from university to industry did occur, however knowledge transfer from industry to industry occurred more frequently. Respondents who gained knowledge claimed that it came primarily from private sector representatives, rather than from representatives from academic institutions. This would suggest that much of the knowledge that respondents gained did not come from the university itself, but from industry. Judging from the list of former speakers (OFW 2005), in both the Panel Discussions and Executive Sessions, there were 73 private sector representatives and 7 representatives from academic institutions. Thus it seems appropriate that most new knowledge would come from private sector representatives. Interestingly, none of the respondents indicated that their primary source of new knowledge came from students. R2 and R3, however, said that they gained new knowledge through organizational actions, meaning that the OFW, an entirely student-run organization, unintentionally transferred knowledge to respondents through their actions.

This conference can be seen as a platform for knowledge transfer, rather than a direct conduit between university and industry. According to my findings, the 10th WBD was an effective platform for knowledge transfer, however, given the response rate the level of effectiveness is difficult to determine. Respondents applied the knowledge gained at the
conference in a variety of ways and at a number of different events. Moreover, the knowledge that respondents gained at the conference was not always applicable in the respondents’ professions. For instance, R4 claimed “because it [the knowledge he gained] was dealing with many things outside of our business I could not use everything that I learned.” The one respondent who did gain new knowledge but was unable to apply it claimed that it had “no value realization.” I take that to mean that the knowledge, although useful, had no value for the company. Figure 5-1 uses a diagram to illustrate how knowledge transfer occurred between university and industry. The diagram indicates that at this particular conference, knowledge was transferred in large part from industry to industry but was facilitated through the university.
6.2 Key Findings and Implications

Three key findings emerged from this study: (i) a meeting with interactivity can be more effective in transmitting knowledge than a meeting with little or no interactivity, (ii) the effectiveness of a meeting depends on the person that leads the meeting, and (iii) participants of meetings are more likely to disseminate knowledge if they are given the chance to speak and discuss ideas. Executive Sessions during the 10th WBD were smaller and more interactive than
the large lecture-style Panel Discussions. The intimacy of a small meeting facilitates discussion between participants and is less intimidating for people to voice their opinions. This is not to say that conference organizers should design conferences to consist of small meetings exclusively. Rather, they should be mindful that small meetings can encourage participants to freely discuss concepts, ideas, and opinions.

Scholars have suggested there are four main components in any meeting: content, interaction, structure, and location (Hayes 1997; Welch 2001; Lucas 2001). The results of this study suggest that in addition to these components, leadership also plays an important role in a meeting. The success or failure of an Executive Session depended not only on good content, high interaction, appropriate structure, and a suitable location, but also on the person who led the Session. The OFW, and organizers of any meeting, should bear in mind that the person in charge of running the meeting should be knowledgeable, organized, and able to facilitate constructive discussion.

The results also reveal that private sector representatives were primarily responsible for the creation of knowledge. This comes as no surprise since the number of private sector representatives greatly outnumbered representatives from academic institutions. There must be a greater number of representatives from academic institutions if organizers of the WBD and other conferences wish to encourage greater knowledge transmission from university to industry. Moreover, the target audience has to be proportionately represented as well. For example if organizers wish to transmit knowledge from university to industry then the majority of speakers should be from academic institutions while a majority of participants should be from private institutions.
6.3 Limitations

I submit that the findings of this study are limited to the 10th WBD. This is a case study on a single conference, and it would be difficult to make comparisons to other conferences with different content and format. I also expect conferences with different content to yield different results. For example, a computer programming conference may lead to more direct and frequent application of knowledge since computer code is explicit rather than tacit. Moreover, participants at such a conference could easily apply what they learn since programming language, albeit depending on the type, is universally understandable among programmers and thus more transferable.

The findings also do not speak for any previous or upcoming WBDs. Given the thematic changes that occur from one WBD to the next, it would be impossible to tell whether the 10th WBD’s theme of innovation would have the same impact on participants as the 11th WBD’s theme of demographics (OFW 2006). However, the findings from this case study can be used to structure the format of future conferences to be more effective in transmitting knowledge between participants. The findings from the 10th WBD would be useful for other WBDs because they reveal how knowledge was transmitted, which events transmitted the most knowledge, and who was most effective at transmitting knowledge.

The final limitation to this study is the low response rate and potential respondent bias that may have skewed results. Since this case study was conducted approximately 2 years after the 10th WBD took place, the number of former participants that I was able to contact was relatively low. This was largely attributed to the shortcomings of email as a way to contact participants. I suspected that respondent bias occurred because those who did gain knowledge from the
conference may have been more likely to answer the questionnaire than those who did not gain knowledge.

6.4 Future Studies

This study paves the way for two types of future studies: studies that continue to look specifically at the WBD, and studies that focus on different conferences. In the first kind, a longitudinal study would be able to assess whether knowledge gain and application is a trend that occurs in all WBD conferences, or whether the 10\textsuperscript{th} WBD was an isolated case. I suspect that because the OFW has organized WBDs for the past 20 years and continues to do so, knowledge gain and application occurs at all WBDs in some form or another. The second kind of study could assess the effectiveness of conferences that explicitly aim to transfer knowledge from university to industry. Moreover, focusing on conferences that attempt to foster state-university-industry knowledge transfer would prove valuable in assessing how state actors apply what they learn. Other studies could focus on the professional and personal settings of respondents who applied their knowledge, specifically individuals in these settings. Were these individuals able to gain something from former participants of the 10\textsuperscript{th} WBD? If so what was it that they gained? And were they able to apply it elsewhere? A complementary study such as this would examine the ripple effects of the 10\textsuperscript{th} WBD in greater depth.

Future studies in general may also benefit from focusing on the creative aspect of presenting information. Although the content of the 10\textsuperscript{th} WBD may have been exceptional, the way it was presented to participants was very traditional for example by using speeches and having discussions. A future study may want to examine whether alternative presentation styles, such as interactive games, are more effective in transmitting knowledge to participants. Novel
ways of presenting information may have a more lasting impact on participants. Participants might find that the way in which information is presented can be more important than the information itself.

6.5 Final Thought

If I were to repeat this study, I would focus on the impact of culture on knowledge. Comments by R2 and R4 indicate that culture did have some influence on the knowledge they gained and the knowledge they applied. These comments support the idea that knowledge is situated and contextual (Blackler 1995: 1041). It would also be interesting to find out if speakers gained knowledge from the conference. I would suspect that because speakers participated in Panel Discussions and Executive Sessions, they were just as likely to gain knowledge as non-speakers. Last, R3’s response about what she gained from the conference, suggests that beyond practical and theoretical knowledge, she gained inspiration and motivation. Although more difficult to measure, the motivational effects of a conference might also influence how participants apply the knowledge that they gained.

The 10th WBD has served as an analytical plateau for evaluating knowledge gain and application. The findings have revealed that knowledge transfer did occur between participants. Given that most respondents gained knowledge from private sector representatives, the conference can be considered to be a knowledge transfer platform rather than a direct link from university to industry. If future conferences aspire to become a direct link, organizers must first understand how knowledge transfer occurs. This understanding will allow conference organizers to construct a platform that facilitates the transfer of insightful and applicable knowledge.
Bibliography


Invitation to Participate

From: Jost Löhnenbach <jost.loehnenbach@ofw.de>
To: (recipient list suppressed)
Subject: OFW | 10th WBD Survey on Knowledge Transfers
Sent: 11 May 2007 12:29 CEST

Dear participant of the 10th World Business Dialogue,

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate in a survey about knowledge transfers at the 10th World Business Dialogue. The survey is being conducted by Michael Sefcik, a student at Lund University (Sweden). His research will examine what people learned during the conference and how they have used it in their lives.

For every completed survey Mr. Sefcik will plant a tree on behalf of the respondent in order to mitigate the impact of carbon dioxide on the environment.

The survey is located online at: http://www.wbdsurvey.denkel.net/, and takes about 10 minutes to complete. All responses are anonymous. The final day to respond to the survey is 20 June 2007.

On behalf of Mr. Sefcik and the OFW I hope you will find the time to complete this short survey.

Best regards,

Jost Löhnenbach
Chairperson

Organisationsforum Wirtschaftskongress (OFW) e.V.
Organizer of the world’s largest student-run business convention

11th World Business Dialogue
March 28-29, 2007 | University of Cologne
Population Dynamics | Ageing Societies & Megacities

Salierring 48 | D-50677 Cologne
P.O. box 27 04 43 | D-50510 Cologne
Phone: +49 (0) 2 21 / 92 18 26-40
Mobile: +49 (0) 177 / 59 86 10 7
Fax: +49 (0) 2 21 / 92 18 26 9
E-Mail: jost.loehnenbach@ofw.de

For your registration please visit www.world-business-dialogue.de
Appendix B

First Reminder Email

From: Jost Löhnenbach <jost.loehnenbach@ofw.de>
To: (recipient list suppressed)
Subject: OFW | 10th WBD Survey on Knowledge Transfers - Friendly Reminder
Sent: 4 June 2007 10:09 CEST

Dear participant of the 10th World Business Dialogue,

Reaction to the survey on knowledge transfers at the 10th World Business Dialogue has been exceptional, and on behalf of Mr. Sefcik and the OFW I would like to thank those who have taken the time to respond.

I take this opportunity to extend a friendly reminder to those who have not completed the survey to please do so at your earliest convenience. The survey can be found online at: http://www.wbdsurvey.denkel.net/, and only takes 10 minutes to complete. The final day to respond to the survey is 20 June 2007.

For every completed survey Mr. Sefcik will plant a tree in order to mitigate the impact of carbon dioxide on the environment.

On behalf of Mr. Sefcik and the OFW I would like to thank you for your valuable contribution!

Best regards,

Jost Löhnenbach
Chairperson
Organisationsforum Wirtschaftskongress (OFW) e.V.
Organizer of the world's largest student-run business convention

------------------------------------------------------------------------

11th World Business Dialogue
March 28-29, 2007 | University of Cologne
Population Dynamics | Ageing Societies & Megacities
------------------------------------------------------------------------

Salierring 48 | D-50677 Cologne
P.O. box 27 04 43 | D-50510 Cologne
Phone: +49 (0) 2 21 / 92 18 26-40
Mobile: +49 (0) 177 / 59 86 10 7
Fax: +49 (0) 2 21 / 92 18 26 9
E-Mail: jost.loehnenbach@ofw.de

Please visit www.world-business-dialogue.de
Appendix C

Second Reminder Email

From: Jost Löhnenbach <jost.loehnenbach@ofw.de>
To: (recipient list suppressed)
Subject: OFW | Final Reminder - 10th WBD Survey on Knowledge Transfers
Sent: 13 June 2007 13:45 CEST

Dear participant of the 10th World Business Dialogue,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have completed the survey on knowledge transfers. For those who have not yet completed the survey there is still time to do so and your participation would be greatly appreciated.

The final day to complete the survey is next Wednesday (20 June 2007). The survey can be found online at: http://www.wbdsurvey.denkel.net/, and only takes 10 minutes to complete. For every completed survey Mr. Sefcik will plant a tree in order to mitigate the impact of carbon dioxide on the environment.

As a final reminder I would like to express a sincere thanks to all respondents on behalf of Mr. Sefcik and the OFW. We wish you an enjoyable summer!

Best regards,

Jost Löhnenbach
Chairperson

Organisationsforum Wirtschaftskongress (OFW) e.V.
Organizer of the world’s largest student-run business convention

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E-Mail: jost.loehnenbach@ofw.de

Please visit www.world-business-dialogue.de
Appendices

Appendix D

Pilot Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS
This survey is comprised of four sections:

1. “about you” - questions about you and your involvement during the 10th World Business Dialogue (10th WBD)
2. “knowledge quality” - questions about the kind of knowledge you gained at the 10th WBD.
3. “knowledge applicability” - questions about how you applied the knowledge you gained from the 10th WBD.
4. “What exactly did you learn, and where exactly did you apply it?” – this section is optional and allows you to respond through a written response or phone interview.

There are 13 questions in total. Please answer all questions. This survey should take approximately 10 minutes. All responses are anonymous.

To clear the form of your answers (i.e. if you’d like to start over) you can press the “Reset Form” button at the bottom of the page. When you have completed your responses please click the “Submit” button at the end of the survey.

DEFINITIONS
• Knowledge:
• Participant: Anyone who attended the 10th World Business Dialogue (April 6-7, 2005) either partially (e.g. for one panel discussion) or completely (e.g. for the entire duration).

SECTION 1: About you
1.1) What country have you primarily resided in since April 2005? (select)
1.2) Please choose the most appropriate classification for yourself during the 10th WBD (please select one):
   o Student (participant, volunteer, spectator, or otherwise)
   o Private sector representative (speaker, spectator, or otherwise)
   o Public sector representative (speaker, spectator, or otherwise)
   o Academic
1.3) Which of the following aspects of the conference were you present for (please select all that apply):
   Panel discussions
   o I was present for 1-4 panel discussions
   o I was present for 5-8 panel discussions
   Executive sessions
   o I was present for 1 executive session
   o I was present for 2 executive sessions
   o I was present for 3 executive sessions
   Informal gatherings
   □ I was present during at least one break or lunch period
   □ I was present at the Reception or Gala Dinner

SECTION 2: Knowledge quality
2.1) Did you gain new knowledge from the 10th WBD?
   o Yes
   o No
      ▪ If No, Please specify why, and then press “Submit” at the bottom of the page (do not answer any more questions beyond this point if you select No):
2.2) Which part of the conference did you feel provided you with new knowledge? (please select all that apply):

- Panel discussion(s)
- Executive session(s)
- Informal gathering(s)

2.3) From which source did your knowledge primarily come from? (please select all that apply):

- Representative(s) from the public sector
- Representative(s) from the private sector
- Student(s)
- An academic

2.4) By what means was this knowledge transmitted to you? (please select all that apply)

- Through a speech given by another participant (e.g. during a panel discussion or at the Gala Dinner)
- Through a discussion that you participated in (e.g. a question you posed to a speaker during an executive session or at an informal gathering)
- Through a discussion that you witnessed but did not participate in (e.g. a discussion between panelists or between participants)
- Through a piece of formal literature (e.g. a brochure)
- Through a visual device (e.g. a chart or graph)
- Through an organizational action (e.g. the structure of the conference)
- Through another means not listed above, please specify: __________________________________________

2.5) How would you rate the quality of the knowledge that you gained at the conference (please select one):

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

SECTION 3: Knowledge applicability

3.1) Have you been able to apply the knowledge that you gained from the 10th WBD in your own life (professional or personal).

- Yes
- No

If No, Please specify why, and then press “Submit” at the bottom of the page (do not answer any more questions beyond this point if you select No):

3.2) Where have you applied the knowledge that you gained (please select all that apply):

- In a professional setting (e.g. at work, at an internship, etc.)
- In your personal life (e.g. at home, in your community, etc.)
- At another place not listed above, please specify: ____________________________

3.3) How frequently have you applied what you learned? (please select one)

- On 1 occasion
- On 2 occasions
- On 3 occasions
- On 4 or more occasions

3.4) During the occasion(s) that you applied your knowledge, on average, how would you rate the impact of its application? (please select one)

- Great impact
- Moderate impact
- Little impact
- No impact
3.5) How applicable was the knowledge that you gained from the 10th WBD in your own life? (professional or personal) (please select one)
  o Very applicable
  o Somewhat applicable
  o Not very applicable

3.6) In what discipline was your knowledge primarily applied (please select one)
e.g. law, commerce, banking, tourism, etc.

SECTION 4 (OPTIONAL): What exactly did you learn, and where exactly did you apply it?
This final section is optional, and you may either provide a written response or discuss via a phone interview.

Written Response:
If you would like to further elaborate on how you have applied your knowledge in your personal or professional life, please do so below (e.g. how you applied ideas raised during the 10th WBD in an essay, business strategy, policy making decision, etc.)
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________

Phone Interview:
If you would prefer to discuss the above question via telephone then I, Michael Sefcik, will contact you at your convenience. Please complete all of the following fields:
Name:___________________________
Phone number:_______________________
Best times to call (your local time):_______________
Best days to call:_________________________

PILOT SUB QUESTIONS:
Did you understand all questions?
  o Yes
  o No,
    - If No, please specify which ones were unclear, and why:
    - ______________________________________

Other recommendations (e.g. structure, form, clarity, etc.):
_________________________________________________________________________________
# Appendix E

## List of Pilot Questionnaire Revisions

| Instructions       | • Specified number of questions per section  
|                   | • Renamed Section 4 to “further details”  
|                   | • Reworded some sentences  
| Definitions        | • Defined the term Knowledge  
| Section 1: About you | • Included two questions about Sex and Age (questions 1.1 and 1.2 in the final version)  
|                   | • Changed “Academic” to “Representative from an academic institution” (question 1.2 in the pilot; question 1.4 in the final version)  
|                   | • Added an option for “Other” under classification during the 10th WBD (question 1.2 in the pilot; question 1.4 in the final version)  
| Section 2: Knowledge quality | • Changed the wording of question 2.2 to “Rank which aspects of the conference provided you with the most new knowledge”, and inserted a chart for ranking different aspects of the conference  
|                   | • Inserted an option for “Other” in question 2.3  
|                   | • Revised some sentences in question 2.4  
| Section 3: Knowledge applicability | • Changed options in question 3.3 to: “Very Often,” “Often,” and “Not Often”  
|                   | • Removed the option for “No Impact” in question 3.4  
|                   | • Removed questions 3.5 and 3.6 from the pilot; replaced with a question asking the respondent what kind of knowledge they gained  
| Section 4: Further details | • Revised some sentences  
| Layout Changes     | • Removed the “Reset Form” button  
|                   | • Added a link to a copy of the 10th WBD schedule and a list of the Executive Sessions  
|                   | • Inserted Lund University logo and OFW logo  
|                   | • Included my contact information  

Appendices

Appendix F

Questionnaire Welcome Letter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dear participant of the 10th World Business Dialogue,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am inviting you to participate in a short survey that aims to assess the quality and applicability of knowledge gained by participants at the 10th World Business Dialogue. The aim of this study is to examine what participants learned at the conference and how they have used it in their lives. The survey consists of 16 questions and will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The final section of the survey is optional. All responses are anonymous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The survey results will be analyzed in my M.A. thesis and also shared with the Organisationsforum Wirtschaftskongress (OFW), the organizers of the conference. For every completed survey I will plant one tree in order to mitigate the impact of carbon dioxide on the environment. The final day to respond to this survey is 20 June 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you have any questions or comments about the survey, or about your participation, please do not hesitate to contact me at +46 (0) 76 211 44 30 (Monday-Friday 9:00-17:00) or via email at <a href="mailto:michael.sefcik.806@student.lu.se">michael.sefcik.806@student.lu.se</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you kindly for your support!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Michael Sefcik, M.A. Candidate
Lund University (Lund, Sweden)

Please click here to start the survey
Appendix G

Questionnaire

Examine the Quality and Applicability of Knowledge Transfers at a University-based Conference: A Case Study of the 10th World Business Dialogue in Cologne, Germany

Michael Sefcik, M.A. Candidate
Lund University (Lund, Sweden)
+46 (0) 76 211 44 30
michael.sefcik.806@student.lu.se

Centre for Innovation, Research and Competence in the Learning Economy (CIRCLE)
Lund University, Stora Algatan 4
P. O. Box 117, SE-221 00 Lund
Sweden

Instructions

This survey is comprised of four sections:
1. “about you” – 5 questions about you and your involvement during the 10th World Business Dialogue (10th WBD).
2. “knowledge quality” – 5 questions about the kind of knowledge you gained at the 10th WBD.
3. “knowledge applicability” – 5 questions about how you applied the knowledge you gained from the 10th WBD.
4. “further details” – this section is optional. If you choose to answer this section you may do so either through a written response or a phone interview.

When you have completed your responses please click the “Submit” button at the end of the survey. For your convenience a schedule of the 10th WBD and the Executive Sessions are located in the left-hand columns below.

Definitions

Knowledge: Ideas and insights into theoretical and practical issues. For example:

- An understanding of an issue
- An organizational, public policy, or professional strategy
- A piece of information useful to you
- A professional network contact
- A technique, way of thinking, or analytical tool

Participant: Anyone who attended the 10th WBD (April 6-7, 2005) either partially (e.g. for one panel discussion) or completely (i.e. for the entire duration).

Section 1: about you

1.1) Your sex:
   - Male
   - Female

1.2) Your age when you attended the conference (April 6-7, 2005):
   - < 25 years old
   - 25-39 years old
   - 40-55 years old
   - 55 years old

1.3) What country have you primarily resided in since April 2005?

1.4) Select the most appropriate classification for yourself when you attended the conference:
   - Private sector representative (speaker, spectator, or otherwise)
   - Public sector representative (speaker, spectator, or otherwise)
   - Representative from an academic institution (speaker, spectator, or otherwise)
   - Student (spectator, volunteer, or otherwise)
   - Other, please specify:

1.5) Which of the following aspects of the conference were you present for:
Appendices

Panel discussions
- I was present for 1-4 panel discussions
- I was present for 5-8 panel discussions
- None

Executive sessions
- I was present for 1 executive session
- I was present for 2 executive sessions
- None

Informal gatherings (please select all that apply)
- I was present during at least one break or lunch period
- I was present at the Reception or Gala Dinner

SECTION 2: knowledge quality

2.1) Using the broad definition of knowledge given above, did you gain new knowledge from the 10th WBD?
- Yes
- No***, please specify why:

***If you select “No” please specify why and then press “Submit” at the bottom of this page. Do not answer any more questions beyond this point if you select “No.”

2.2) Rank which aspects of the conference provided you with the most new knowledge:

Greatest source of new knowledge
Average source of new knowledge
Smallest source of new knowledge

Panel discussion(s) | Executive session(s) | Informal gathering(s)
--- | --- | ---
○ | ○ | ○
○ | ○ | ○
○ | ○ | ○

2.3) Who was primarily responsible for the creation of your new knowledge?
- Private sector representative(s) (speaker, spectator, or otherwise)
- Public sector representative(s) (speaker, spectator, or otherwise)
- Representative(s) from an academic institution (speaker, spectator, or otherwise)
- Student(s) (spectator, volunteer, or otherwise)
- Other(s), please specify:

2.4) By what means was this knowledge transmitted to you? (please select all that apply)
- Through a speech given by another participant (e.g. during an executive session)
- Through a discussion that you participated in (e.g. at an informal gathering)
- Through a discussion that you witnessed but did not actively take part in (e.g. a discussion between panelists)
- Through a piece of formal literature (e.g. a brochure)
- Through a visual device (e.g. a chart or graph)
- Through an organizational action (e.g. the structure of the conference)
- Through another means not listed above, please specify:

2.5) How would you rate the quality of the knowledge that you gained at the conference? (e.g. was it insightful, unique, creative, etc.)
- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

SECTION 3: knowledge applicability

3.1) Have you been able to apply the knowledge that you gained from the 10th WBD in your own life, professional or personal?
- Yes
SECTION 4: further details (optional)

This final section is optional. If you choose to respond you may do so either through a written response or a phone interview. If you do not wish to respond please press “Submit” at the bottom of this page.

4.1a) Written Response:
Please further elaborate on how you have applied your knowledge in your professional or personal life, for example how you have used ideas raised during the 10th WBD in an essay, business strategy, policy making decision, etc. There is no word limit.

4.1b) Phone Interview:
If you would prefer to discuss the above question via telephone then I, Michael Sefcik, will contact you at your convenience. The interview will be conducted prior to the 20th of June 2007. Please complete all of the following fields:

Name:

Phone number (including country code):

Best times to call (your local time):
☐ 8:00-10:00 ☐ 12:00-14:00 ☐ 16:00-18:00
☐ 10:00-12:00 ☐ 14:00-16:00 ☐ 18:00-20:00

Best days to call:
☐ Monday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Friday ☐ Sunday
☐ Tuesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Saturday

Please ensure that you have completed all questions.

Submit
Appendix H

Questionnaire Thank You Message

Thank you for your time and support!

Michael Sefcik, M.A. Candidate
Lund University (Lund, Sweden)

Centre for Innovation, Research and Competence in the Learning Economy (CIRCLE)
Lund University, Stora Algatan 4
P. O. Box 117, SE-221 00 Lund
Sweden
Appendix I

Selected Excerpts from Written Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| R1         | • “Theoretical - I particularly remember the talk on Blue Ocean Strategy and have remembered that concept in discussions about the potential that startup businesses may have to succeed.”  
            • “Practical - Several of the people I met at the event have remained part of my personal network and we are still in touch today.” |
| R2         | • “… I really don’t know if I learned anything new, since it is hard to say if I learned it here or there. For me, learning and applying is a process that takes time, and because of this, in most of the cases is done in different places … that conference was one of the best experiences of my life, not only in an academic matter, but also personal, so I can say it should have given me more than one type of knowledge.”  
            • “The first example that comes into my mind is about the panels’ moderators. During April 2005, in Buenos Aires we were preparing the first “South American Business Forum” conference … I convinced my colleagues that it was the best way to set our panels … As I said before, I can’t assure that I saw this in the WBD for the first time in my life, but it was for sure a form of applied knowledge.” |
| R3         | • “I am at the moment working at University of Sarajevo, Faculty of economics and business teaching Marketing courses. … I have been using knowledge that I gained from the OFW, to do something or to teach my students how to do it.” |
## Appendix J

### Selected Excerpts from Phone Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Question 1: Why did you choose ________________ as the greatest source of new knowledge?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R2 (Panel Discussions)</td>
<td>“… now that I think about it again maybe it depends on the experience you have in conferences. At the beginning you are very very impressed with all the speakers and all that, but when you start going to more and more conferences, you like the gathering, talking with others, with other people. As the OFW 2005 was like one of my first ones, maybe I was surprised with that … I can remember some of the panelists, I like them very well – but it depends I think on the experience you have.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3 (Panel Discussions)</td>
<td>“… I found out that it was a lot of new information for me … in that time some, in Bosnia, some of the information that I heard during the panel was first known for me so that’s why I thought it was really really useful.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4 (Executive Sessions)</td>
<td>“… it allowed me to interact the most with people. You know this type of interaction really helps, well, it helps you to hear other people’s opinions. But you know for me I really enjoy when you can talk to people, you know, rather than only listening.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Question 2: Why did you choose ________________ as the smallest source of new knowledge? |
| R2 (Executive Sessions) | “… I was very unlucky with that one … usually I think the workshops, and those small groups at conferences, are one of the best things. Better than when you have a panelist and everybody is listening to them because, you can, like take more advantage of it; everybody asks questions and there is like more interaction … some conferences maybe the best speakers they put them on the panels not to the executive sessions, it depends on each conference. … I wasn’t lucky in my choices.” |
| R3 (Informal Gatherings) | “… that questionnaire, was working that way, that only one option could be the most informative the one could be the middle and that one, but for me actually all three of them were really really informative … the whole WBD was really informative.” |
| R4 (Panel Discussions) | “… the panel was very nice, but they had speeches, then maybe some short type of discussion and then some questions. And you know sometime it’s like the persons who were discussing were sometimes only discussing at a superficial level. But most of the speakers were really informative.” |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 3: Can you provide any examples of its application in a professional and/or personal setting?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### R2 (Professional and Personal)
- “... I wrote an article for Business Today’s Journal ... let me think why I put studies ... yeah it’s difficult to think, which thing I applied directly. I don’t remember.”

### R3 (Professional and Personal)
- “… it was during the WBD, you know like those stickers on the stairs when you look from downstairs to above you can see written WBD all those kind of details that make you actually feel really really comfortable in that surrounding. ... as well during that time there was a book, I think “Blue Ocean Strategy,” some of those things that I learned over there I use as examples during my lessons and as well for conference papers. ... everything that I learned I sort of applied to my personal life, so I really cannot remember right now the exact example, but I am sure that I used that knowledge because, I don’t know, everything that was surrounding me over there at that time was really really useful. ... I always see when I go to those kind of events that I return like a better person, a richer person, you know, I am more certain that I can do everything that I want.”

### R4 (Professional)
- “... I tried to apply some theory from the conference in some problems but sometimes they just don’t apply, but there was still some new understanding that I got about other industries. This understanding was helpful because you know we deal with all sorts of different kinds of enterprises so it is important to know some things about the people you deal with and how they see certain things.”

### Question 4: Did you have difficulty applying the knowledge that you gained from the 10th WBD in the country that you since resided in?

| R2 (Applied Sometimes with Moderate Impact) | “... I was quite surprised that the main thing everybody was talking about was India and China, it’s like the whole conference was around that ... I don’t know I had a problem with applying all the things we learned there ... it’s difficult not to be subjective with all the, after being in other conferences, and again in the same conference.” Referring to the 11th World Business Dialogue that he attended in April 2007. |
| R3 (Applied Often with Great Impact) | “... I would say that that was knowledge from world leaders ... because everything that they told us was something that was going on in the whole world.” |
| R4 (Not Often applied with Little Impact) | “Well you know for me it was not so difficult to use the things that I learned at the conference. But of course because it was dealing with many things outside of our business I could not use everything that I learned.” |
Appendix K

Email Limitations

Participants who did not receive the email because the email address was inactive or not checked

- The Chairperson of the OFW sent the invitation and reminder emails from his work email address. He then reported how many email messages came back. This however, presupposes that inactive email accounts will generate a non-delivery report (NDR) indicating that the email address is no longer active. Enabling the NDR feature, however, is at the discretion of domain administrators. This makes it impossible to tell exactly how many of the email addresses are still active. Another possibility is that the email account could be active, just not checked on a regular basis.

Participants who did receive the email but were not able to check their email account during the study period

- The next situation would be that the email address was in use and checked regularly, but was unavailable, or inaccessible during the survey period. Supporting this possibility, it was noted that 4 email addresses returned an automated “out of office” reply. These replies however, were not used when calculating the response rate.

Participants who received the email but did not read it because it was marked as spam

- Another possibility is that the email was received but not read by the sender. The participant may not have recognized the name of the current OFW Chairperson, who became Chairperson after the 10th WBD, and marked the email as spam. Alternatively, spam filters could have automatically flagged the email as spam. Whether manual or automatic, once flagged as spam all subsequent emails would have been sent to the participant’s spam folder.

Participants who received and read the email but were not able to access the website

- Another scenario is that the email was received and the participant took an interest but could not participate because they were unable to access the external website. This could have been due to firewall restrictions or because participation in this survey would have violated the company’s internet/email use policy. Moreover, participants may have encountered problems if they tried to access the website from a portable device such as a BlackBerry.