

TRABAJO DE INVESTIGACIÓN FINAL

Analyzing the effects of Ecolab's finance teams relocation between Buenos Aires, Argentina and Pune, India.

Autor/es:

BARBERO, Alessandra - LU: 1151465

CRESMANI, Trinidad - LU: 1150399

JURE, Alejo - LU: 1150765

Carrera:

Global Business Management

Tutor/es:

NARDUCCI, Astrid

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the offshoring of the Rebills and Credits (RCC) finance process within Ecolab's Global Business Services (GBS) structure, analyzing the transfer of operational responsibilities from Buenos Aires, Argentina, to the newly established GBS center in Pune, India. Six specific objectives are pursued across five analytical pillars: leadership and change management, knowledge transfer and organizational learning, cross-cultural collaboration and communication, operational coordination and performance outcomes, and strategic implications and transferability of the model. A mixed-methods design was employed, combining ten semi-structured interviews with key participants across both locations and a survey administered to Argentine and Indian professionals with cross-cultural collaboration experience, analyzed through descriptive statistics, regression models, propensity score matching, and decision trees. Findings demonstrate that adaptive leadership was critical in sustaining operational continuity, that structured knowledge transfer mechanisms were effective but extended by absorptive capacity gaps and tacit knowledge resistance, and that cultural and linguistic differences generated initial barriers that diminished progressively as interpersonal trust accumulated. For managers undertaking similar transitions, the study recommends extended training timelines, involvement of operational specialists in recruitment, early workforce communication, and deliberate investment in in-person training and informal relationship-building.

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

El presente estudio examina la migración del proceso de finanzas "Refacturación y Créditos" dentro de la estructura de Servicios Empresariales Globales de Ecolab, analizando la transferencia de responsabilidades operativas desde Buenos Aires, Argentina, hacia el centro recientemente establecido en Pune, India. Se persiguen seis objetivos específicos en torno a cinco pilares analíticos: liderazgo y gestión del cambio, transferencia de conocimiento y aprendizaje organizacional, colaboración y comunicación intercultural, coordinación operativa y resultados de desempeño, e implicancias estratégicas y transferibilidad del modelo. Se empleó un diseño de métodos mixtos, combinando diez entrevistas semiestructuradas con participantes clave en ambas locaciones y una encuesta administrada a profesionales argentinos e indios con experiencia intercultural, analizada mediante estadística descriptiva, modelos de regresión, emparejamiento por puntaje de propensión y árboles de decisión. Los hallazgos demuestran que el liderazgo adaptativo fue determinante para sostener la continuidad operativa, que los mecanismos de transferencia de conocimiento resultaron efectivos pero prolongados por brechas de capacidad de absorción y resistencia del conocimiento tácito, y que las diferencias culturales y lingüísticas generaron barreras iniciales que disminuyeron a medida que se acumuló confianza interpersonal. Para directivos en transiciones similares, el estudio recomienda ampliar los plazos de capacitación, incorporar especialistas operativos en el proceso de selección, comunicar decisiones de personal anticipadamente e invertir en instancias presenciales y construcción informal de relaciones.

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AI DISCLAIMER

This thesis is the original, unpublished work of the authoring team: Barbero, Cresmani, and Jure. All data collected through primary instruments, interviews and surveys, was gathered, analyzed, and interpreted exclusively by the authors. Secondary sources have been cited in APA 7th edition style throughout.

Generative AI tools, specifically Claude (Anthropic), ChatGPT (OpenAI), Notebook LM (Google) and Gemini (Google), were used during the research and writing process to support tasks such as structuring arguments, reviewing academic phrasing, formatting references, and assisting in the organization and presentation of findings. All content produced with AI assistance was reviewed, validated, and substantially revised by the authoring team. No section of this thesis was fully authored by AI without human oversight and editorial control. All research design decisions, thematic coding, data analysis, and conclusions are the exclusive intellectual work of the authors.

Any failure to properly acknowledge source material or AI assistance constitutes academic misconduct under UADE's 2025 policy on the use of artificial intelligence in academic work.

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1. PRESENTATION OF THE TOPIC

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. Organizational Context and Global Business Services Structure

This research analyzes the offshoring of the Rebills and Credits (RCC) process within Ecolab's Global Business Services (GBS) structure, focusing on the transfer of RCC process responsibilities from the RCC team based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to the newly established RCC team based in Pune, India.

Ecolab is an American multinational corporation that provides water, hygiene, and infection prevention solutions across multiple industries. Within its organizational structure, Ecolab operates a Global Business Services (GBS) model, through which global and regional managers centralize and coordinate finance, accounting, customer support, information technology support, logistics, and human resources across geographically dispersed centers to serve internal and external stakeholders.

The Pune GBS center was newly established at the time of the transition, and the RCC team in Pune was composed entirely of employees newly hired for this purpose, none of whom had prior experience within Ecolab's processes, systems, or organizational culture.

1.1.2. The RCC Process and Scope of the Study

The Rebills and Credits (RCC) process is a finance function that involves issuing corrected invoices (rebills), processing customer credits, and resolving billing discrepancies. These activities constitute the core operational responsibilities of the RCC teams involved in this study.

Importantly, both the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune perform these activities exclusively for clients located in the United States. Therefore, despite the offshoring of the RCC process between Argentina and India, the service scope remains aligned with the

requirements, systems, and regulatory context of the United States market, independently of the location where the activities are executed.

1.1.3. Description of the Offshoring Process

The offshoring process involved the transfer of the RCC process, from the RCC team based in Buenos Aires to the RCC team based in Pune, India, and became responsible for executing and managing the RCC process. The Pune GBS center was newly established at the time of the transition, and the RCC team in Pune was composed entirely of employees newly hired for this purpose, none of whom had prior experience within Ecolab's processes, systems, or organizational culture. This structural condition is analytically significant, as it means the receiving team faced the challenge of learning a new process, a new organizational environment, and a new cross-cultural working relationship simultaneously.

In addition, the offshoring process involved not only the transfer of operational responsibilities associated with the RCC process, previously executed by analysts in the RCC team based in Buenos Aires, but also the delegation and redistribution of coordination and supervisory responsibilities initially carried out by team leaders, supervisors, and managers in Buenos Aires, were progressively transferred to corresponding roles within the RCC team in Pune. A detailed description of roles, responsibilities, and the corresponding organizational structure is provided in [Annex 1](#).

This transition did not involve the international relocation of employees from the RCC team in Buenos Aires; instead, it constituted the offshoring of the process across two geographically distinct locations within the same multinational corporation. As a result of the offshoring decision, RCC positions in Buenos Aires were eliminated, and the employees previously occupying those roles were reassigned internally within Ecolab to other functions within the GBS structure.

1.1.4. Research Problem

While offshoring initiatives are typically designed to improve efficiency, standardize processes, and optimize resource allocation, their implementation often involves significant organizational and managerial challenges. In this case, the offshoring of the RCC process between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune required not only the relocation of operational responsibilities but also the effective transfer of knowledge, the coordination of geographically and culturally distinct teams, and the maintenance of performance standards for clients located in the United States.

This creates a tension between the expected efficiency gains of offshoring strategies and the complexity of managing knowledge transfer, cross-cultural collaboration, and multi-level coordination in practice. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how these organizational, intercultural, and operational challenges are managed in practice, and how they influence knowledge transfer, coordination, and performance outcomes.

1.1.5. Comparative Case: EDI Process

In addition to the offshoring of the RCC process from Buenos Aires to Pune, this study incorporates a comparative internal case within Ecolab to strengthen the analytical depth of the research. Specifically, the study considers the subsequent relocation of the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) process, which was originally performed by the EDI team based in Minnesota, United States, and was transferred to the Buenos Aires GBS center following the RCC transition. This subsequent offshoring initiative serves as a point of reference for examining whether the organizational experience accumulated during the RCC transition informed how the Buenos Aires team approached receiving the EDI process. The EDI migration became possible in part because RCC positions in Buenos Aires were progressively freed as responsibilities were transferred to Pune, allowing the Buenos Aires GBS center to absorb new and more analytically complex processes. By comparing both transitions, this research examines whether organizational learning occurred between the

two offshoring initiatives, particularly in relation to knowledge transfer practices, coordination mechanisms, and change management approaches.

1.1.6. Research Focus and Analytical Framework

This study focuses on the operational and intercultural dimensions of this offshoring process, particularly on how activities are transferred, learned, coordinated, and executed between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune. The study is structured around five analytical pillars: leadership and change management, knowledge transfer and organizational learning, cross-cultural collaboration and communication, operational coordination and performance outcomes, and strategic implications and transferability of the model, which together provide a comprehensive framework to evaluate the effectiveness and implications of the offshoring process.

1.2. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to understand the effects of the offshoring of the Rebills and Credits (RCC) process within Ecolab's Global Business Services (GBS) structure, focusing on the transfer of RCC process responsibilities from the RCC team in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to the newly established RCC team in Pune, India.

1.3. Specific Objectives

Specific Objective 1:

Analyze the leadership practices implemented by leaders within Ecolab's GBS structure and their influence on the offshoring of the RCC process particularly regarding coordination effectiveness and process continuity from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune.

Specific Objective 2:

Examine the change management strategies implemented by leaders within Ecolab's GBS structure during the offshoring of the RCC process from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune.

Specific Objective 3:

Examine the key barriers and facilitators influencing knowledge transfer during the offshoring of the RCC process from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune.

Specific Objective 4:

Analyze how cultural and linguistic differences shape communication and collaboration dynamics between Argentine and Indian professionals with cross-cultural work experience.

Specific Objective 5:

Assess the impact of the offshoring of the RCC process on operational coordination and KPI performance continuity between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune.

Specific Objective 6:

Analyze the subsequent offshoring of the EDI process from the United States to Buenos Aires and whether the organizational experience accumulated during the RCC transition contributed to a more effective reception of the EDI process by the Buenos Aires team.

1.4. Research Questions**Research Question 1:**

How did leadership practices implemented by leaders within Ecolab's GBS structure influence the coordination and execution of the RCC process between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune during the offshoring of the RCC process?

Research Question 2:

How did the change management strategies implemented by leaders within Ecolab's GBS structure shape the coordination and execution of the RCC process during the offshoring from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune?

Research Question 3:

Which were the main barriers and facilitators influencing knowledge transfer during the offshoring of the RCC process from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune?

Research Question 4:

How do cultural and linguistic differences influence communication and collaboration between Argentine and Indian professionals with mutual work experience?

Research Question 5:

How did the offshoring of the RCC process affect operational coordination and KPI performance continuity between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune?

Research Question 6

How was the subsequent offshoring of the EDI process from the United States to Buenos Aires influenced by the offshoring of the RCC process from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune?

1.5. Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1:

Adaptive and empathetic leadership practices were the primary determinant of how effectively operational responsibilities were transferred and sustained between the Buenos Aires and Pune RCC teams.

- Supported by RQ1

Hypothesis 2:

Effective change management during the RCC offshoring process relied on a combination of formal corporate strategies and ad-hoc containment practices implemented by local leaders.

- Supported by RQ2

Hypothesis 3:

Structured and effective knowledge transfer mechanisms facilitated effective knowledge transfer between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune during the offshoring of the RCC process.

- Supported by RQ3

Hypothesis 4:

Cultural and linguistic differences between Argentine and Indian professionals generate initial barriers to communication and collaboration, which tend to diminish progressively as cross-cultural working experience accumulates.

- Supported by RQ4

Hypothesis 5:

Standardized workflows mitigated operational coordination disruptions during the offshoring of the RCC process, supporting KPI performance continuity between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune.

- Supported by RQ5

Hypothesis 6:

The organizational experience accumulated during the RCC offshoring process contributed to a more effective reception of the EDI process subsequently transferred from the United States to Buenos Aires, through the application of lessons learned.

- Supported by RQ6

1.6. Justifications**1.6.1. Specific Objectives**

Specific Objective 1: Offshoring transitions require active managerial coordination across geographically and culturally distinct teams. Understanding how leadership was exercised during this transition is essential to explain its impact on process and performance outcomes.

Specific Objective 2: Change management strategies determine how effectively organizational disruptions are anticipated, communicated, and resolved. Examining these strategies allows this study to assess whether the transition minimized operational risk and sustained team engagement on both sides.

Specific Objective 3: The transfer of a finance process involves not only explicit procedures but also tacit operational knowledge developed through direct experience. Identifying barriers and facilitators is essential to understanding why certain aspects of the process were replicated successfully while others required extended support.

Specific Objective 4: Cross-cultural differences in communication styles, authority expectations, and professional norms directly influence the quality of information exchange between sending and receiving teams. Examining these dynamics provides insight into how cultural distance shaped collaboration outcomes in this specific bilateral context.

Specific Objective 5: The success of an offshoring transition is ultimately measured by the receiving team's ability to sustain established performance standards. Assessing coordination and KPI continuity provides an empirically grounded basis for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the offshoring process.

Specific Objective 6: Organizations that have been directly involved in offshoring transitions have the potential to develop institutional knowledge that strengthens their capacity in subsequent ones. Examining the EDI case allows this study to assess whether the Buenos Aires GBS center applied lessons from its experience as a sending team in the RCC transition to improve its performance as a receiving team in the EDI transition.

1.6.2. Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Grounded in Kotter (1995) and Bass and Avolio (1995), this hypothesis anticipates that leadership practices were a primary determinant of how smoothly operational responsibilities were transferred and sustained across geographically and culturally distinct teams.

Hypothesis 2: Based on Lewin (1947) and Kotter (1995), this hypothesis anticipates that the presence or absence of structured change management strategies had a measurable effect on coordination quality and operational stability during the RCC transition.

Hypothesis 3: Drawing on Szulanski (1996), this hypothesis anticipates that structured transfer mechanisms were a critical determinant of whether the Pune team, composed

entirely of new hires with no prior Ecolab experience, achieved independent operational performance within an acceptable timeframe.

Hypothesis 4: Based on Hofstede et al. (2010) and Ting-Toomey (1999), this hypothesis anticipates that cultural and linguistic distance functioned as a structural barrier to effective communication and collaboration between the Buenos Aires and Pune teams during the transition.

Hypothesis 5: Drawing on Malone and Crowston (1994), this hypothesis anticipates that the degree of workflow standardization prior to and during the transition was positively associated with performance continuity in the post-transition period.

Hypothesis 6: Based on Zollo and Winter (2002), this hypothesis anticipates that if the Buenos Aires GBS center articulated and codified lessons from its experience managing the RCC transition, those lessons would contribute to a more effective reception of the EDI process, particularly in areas of knowledge transfer methodology, communication management, and operational coordination.

1.7. Scope and Delimitations

The study focuses on the operational and intercultural dimensions of the offshoring of the Rebills and Credits (RCC) process within Ecolab's Global Business Services (GBS) structure, specifically examining the transfer of the RCC process from the RCC team in Buenos Aires, Argentina to the newly established RCC team in Pune, India. In addition, the study incorporates a comparative internal case within Ecolab's GBS structure involving the subsequent offshoring of the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) process from Minnesota, United States to Buenos Aires, Argentina, which serves as a reference point to examine whether the organizational experience accumulated during the RCC transition informed the Buenos Aires center's capacity to receive and absorb a new process.

The analysis considers both the execution of RCC process responsibilities and the delegation of operational coordination and supervisory responsibilities in the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune. For the comparative case, the study examines the transfer of responsibilities from the EDI team in Minnesota to the EDI team in Buenos Aires , with a focus on identifying similarities and differences in leadership practices, knowledge transfer processes, and coordination dynamics. The study aims to understand how these transitions shape intercultural management and leadership practices, as well as coordination and learning processes between geographically and culturally distinct teams.

This study excludes broader corporate strategy, financial performance outcomes, and high-level decision-making processes beyond the RCC and EDI teams involved. It does not analyze other finance processes within Ecolab's GBS structure, and it does not examine other geographical locations. Furthermore, the comparative EDI case is used for analytical reference and is not examined with the same level of depth as the RCC Buenos Aires–Pune offshoring process. The findings are therefore limited to a process-level analysis of the RCC offshoring case, while providing insights that may inform similar process transitions within Ecolab's Global Business Services (GBS) structure.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The main objective of this chapter is to collect information about the key pillars that will be developed in this investigation and to explain the methodology utilized to select the different sources and literature for a basis to deeply understand each topic by implementing theories, numbers and real cases from people involved in the offshoring process at Ecolab GBS.

2.1. Offshoring

2.1.1. Conceptualizing Offshoring

Within the context of global business expansion, offshoring refers to the strategic relocation of a company's operations to another country, primarily driven by macroeconomic objectives such as reducing operational costs, accessing a specialized international talent pool, or establishing a strategic presence in new global markets (Dossani & Kenney, 2007). A foundational characteristic of the offshoring model is the retention of organizational ownership: when a multinational corporation engages in offshoring, it establishes and directly manages its own teams and facilities abroad rather than delegating responsibilities to a third-party provider (Dossani & Kenney, 2007).

2.2. Global Business Services Model

Global Business Services constitute the most advanced form of shared services model, born in the 1980s in the United States with the objective of centralizing administrative functions, mainly financial, to incentivize economies of scale and reduce operative costs (Silva, 2023; Walsh et al., 2008). Shared Service Centers (SSC) operate in a predominantly regional reach, with focus on efficiency of transactional processes. GBS is defined as a model with a business reach that integrates multiple support functions under a unified global corporate governance (Deloitte, 2013, cited in Morgado, 2025). This integration is materialized in five constitutive dimensions: Multi-function, multi-region, multi-localization, multi-sourcing and

multi-business, which helps GBS to transcend the logic of value preservation from SSC to strategic value creation for the organization.

2.3. Leadership and Change Management

2.3.1. Change Management Models: Lewin and Kotter

The foundational framework for understanding planned organizational change is Lewin's (1947) three-stage model, which conceptualizes change as a process of unfreezing, movement, and refreezing. In the unfreezing stage, existing norms, roles, and routines are destabilized to create readiness for change. The movement stage involves the actual transition toward new behaviors and structures. Finally, refreezing consolidates the new state into stable organizational routines. Lewin argued that without deliberate refreezing, organizations tend to revert to prior practices, making the reinforcement of new behaviors a critical managerial task (Lewin, 1947). Applied to the RCC offshoring case, this model helps examine how leaders in Buenos Aires and Pune managed the dissolution of established workflows in Argentina and the institutionalization of those workflows within the Pune team.

Kotter (1995, 2012) developed an eight-step change model that addresses the people-centered dimensions of organizational transformation. Kotter's steps; creating urgency, building a guiding coalition, forming a strategic vision, enlisting a volunteer army, enabling action by removing barriers, generating short-term wins, sustaining acceleration, and instituting change, have become one of the most applied frameworks in change management literature (Kotter, 2012). A liability associated with the model is its rigid sequential structure, which may be misaligned with the multi-layered nature of complex transitions (Appelbaum et al., 2012). In the context of the RCC–Pune offshoring, Kotter's framework is relevant for examining if leaders established a clear sense of urgency, communicated a coherent vision to both teams, and generated operational wins to sustain momentum during the transition period.

2.3.2. Transformational vs. Transactional Leadership in Change Contexts

Bass and Avolio (1995) established the foundational distinction between transformational and transactional leadership. Transformational leaders motivate followers by articulating a compelling vision, fostering intellectual stimulation, and providing individualized consideration, while transactional leaders operate through contingent reward mechanisms and management-by-exception (Bass & Avolio, 1995).

Peng et al. (2021), in a meta-analysis spanning multiple cultural and organizational contexts, found that transformational leadership was positively correlated with employees' commitment to change, openness to change, and support for change. Notably, this relationship was stronger in Eastern cultural contexts compared to Western ones, a finding directly relevant to the Argentina and India context of this study, where the receiving team in Pune operates within a professional environment shaped by Indian organizational culture. Moreover, the moderation analyses revealed that the scale used to measure transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio's MLQ vs. Podsakoff et al.'s scale) influences the strength of the relationship with resistance to change, suggesting that the operationalization of leadership constructs requires careful methodological consideration in cross-cultural offshoring studies (Peng et al., 2021).

Complementing these findings, Kutzner and Jöns (2019) demonstrated that transformational leaders increase employees' work engagement and perceived attractiveness of change consequences, which in turn drive supportive behavior during organizational change. Two motivational mechanisms; work engagement and valence, are mediators in this process, highlighting that effective leadership during offshoring transitions operates not only through authority or directives, but through the creation of psychological motivation to embrace change. This theoretical lens supports the examination of how leaders within Ecolab's GBS

structure influenced the willingness and engagement of RCC team members during the transition.

At the institutional level, Beer and Nohria (2000) distinguished between Theory E change (driven by shareholder value, top-down, with emphasis on formal structures) and Theory O change (driven by organizational capabilities, participative, with emphasis on culture and learning). Offshoring processes within MNCs frequently combine both logics: the strategic relocation decision reflects Theory E imperatives (efficiency, cost optimization), while the execution of knowledge transfer and team coordination demands Theory O elements (participative learning, interpersonal trust). This tension between efficiency oriented and capability oriented change logics is central to understanding the leadership challenges faced in the RCC Pune transition.

2.3.3. Cross-Cultural Leadership Adjustment

Leadership in multinational offshoring contexts is further complicated by the need for cultural adaptation. Carr and colleagues (2020), drawing on Nicholson's (1984, as cited in Carr et al., 2020) work role transition theory, examined how leaders in MNCs adjust their behaviors when operating across culturally distinct environments. Their research identified four patterns of leadership behavior adjustment and showed that effective cross-cultural adaptation moderates the success of foreign investments. This framework is relevant for analyzing how the leadership transition from Buenos Aires based managers to Pune based managers required adjustment of leadership styles to fit the cultural expectations and professional norms of the Indian organizational context.

The GLOBE study (House et al., 2004) provides an empirical framework for understanding culturally endorsed implicit leadership theories (CLTs) that is, the shared expectations about what constitutes effective leadership within a given culture. Argentina and India represent distinct cultural clusters with differing expectations regarding uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and collectivism, all of which influence how leadership authority is exercised and

perceived. Leaders managing cross cultural offshoring transitions must navigate these differences while maintaining coherent organizational direction and performance standards (House et al., 2004).

2.3.4. Change Management in Shared Services and GBS Contexts

The change management literature specific to shared services and GBS environments highlights particular challenges associated with multi-site process transitions. PwC's GBS frameworks (2023) and Deloitte's operational models (2023) both emphasize that in captive offshoring environments, where the organization retains direct managerial control over both the originating and receiving centers, the effectiveness of the transition depends critically on the clarity of governance structures, the progressive delegation of supervisory responsibilities, and the maintenance of service-level performance during the transition window. These practitioner frameworks offer applied benchmarks that complement the theoretical models of Kotter and Lewin by addressing the operational specificity of GBS offshoring transitions.

Taken together, the literature on leadership and change management establishes that the success of offshoring processes such as the RCC transition depends not solely on structural or operational factors, but fundamentally on the quality of leadership exercised across the transition. Effective change leaders must simultaneously manage the destabilization of existing routines, sustain motivation among employees facing role loss or redefinition, transfer authority progressively across geographies, and adapt their leadership behaviors to culturally heterogeneous teams.

2.4. Knowledge transfer and organizational learning

2.4.1. Tacit and Explicit Knowledge

The foundational distinction for understanding knowledge transfer is the one between tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge, as Polanyi (1966, as cited in Liyanage et al., 2009)

originally conceptualized it, refers to knowledge that individuals possess but cannot easily articulate, as it is non-verbalised, intuitive, and deeply embedded in practice. Explicit knowledge, by contrast, can be codified, documented, and transmitted through formal channels. Liyanage et al. (2009) clarify that these two forms are not opposing categories but mutually reinforcing ones, since tacit knowledge constitutes the experiential background that gives explicit knowledge its meaning and applicability. This interdependence implies that the transfer of documented procedures alone is insufficient to fully replicate a process, because much of the operational competence held by experienced team members can only be conveyed through direct interaction and sustained practice over time. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) extended this framework to the organizational level through the SECI model, which proposes four modes of knowledge conversion: socialization (tacit to tacit), externalization (tacit to explicit), combination (explicit to explicit), and internalization (explicit to tacit). Socialization is the mode most difficult to replicate at geographic distance, as it depends on direct co-presence between individuals, which is particularly relevant for the RCC transition where analysts in Pune must absorb not only documented billing procedures but also the contextual judgment developed by Buenos Aires team members through years of exposure to specific client accounts and exception-handling routines.

2.4.2. Knowledge Transfer Models

Liyanage et al. (2009) propose a structured process model that conceptualizes knowledge transfer as a sequence of five stages: identification, sourcing, communication, translation, and application. The explicit inclusion of a translation stage is a significant contribution, as it recognizes that communicated knowledge does not become operational until it has been interpreted and adapted to the specific organizational context of the receiver. In cross-cultural offshoring settings, this stage is especially consequential, since differences in professional norms, system environments, and organizational expectations between the Buenos Aires and Pune teams introduce interpretive complexity that goes beyond language alone. The

model further identifies cultural background, organizational context, and personal characteristics as intrinsic influence factors that shape the efficiency and accuracy of each stage, directly connecting knowledge transfer theory to the intercultural dynamics examined in this study.

2.4.3. Knowledge Stickiness and Barriers to Transfer

Szulanski (1996) introduced the concept of knowledge stickiness to describe the difficulty of transferring best practices within organizations even when both units belong to the same firm. Szulanski found that the dominant sources of stickiness are knowledge-related rather than motivational: the recipient's lack of absorptive capacity, causal ambiguity surrounding the knowledge being transferred, and the arduousness of the relationship between source and recipient. Causal ambiguity is particularly challenging in operational finance contexts, where experienced analysts may execute procedures correctly while being unable to articulate the reasoning behind non-routine decisions, precisely because that reasoning has become automatic through repetition. Szulanski (1996) also models the transfer process as unfolding through four sequential stages, namely initiation, implementation, ramp-up, and integration, with the ramp-up stage representing the period of greatest difficulty as the receiving team struggles to achieve satisfactory and independent performance. In the RCC case, this ramp-up challenge is compounded by the fact that the Pune GBS center was newly established and its RCC team had no prior Ecolab experience, meaning the receiving team had to navigate organizational socialization, system familiarization, and process learning simultaneously, placing exceptional pressure on the ramp-up stage relative to transitions involving teams with existing institutional knowledge. Szulanski and Jensen (2006) further specified these mechanisms through a replication perspective, proposing that barriers cause difficulty by disrupting the accuracy of the replication process itself. From this standpoint, the key challenge in the RCC Buenos Aires–Pune transition is not whether

knowledge is shared but whether what is shared is replicated with sufficient accuracy for the Pune team to produce equivalent process outcomes.

2.4.4. Absorptive Capacity of the Receiving Team

Cohen and Levinthal (1990) introduced absorptive capacity as the ability of an organization to recognize the value of new external information, assimilate it, and apply it productively, arguing that this capacity is path-dependent and develops as a function of prior related knowledge. In the context of the RCC offshoring case, the Pune team faces a structural disadvantage in absorptive capacity that is independent of its members' general technical qualifications, since the Pune GBS center was newly established and the RCC team was composed entirely of newly hired employees with no prior experience within Ecolab's processes, systems, or organizational culture. This means the absorptive capacity gap extends beyond unfamiliarity with the RCC process specifically, encompassing the absence of organizational socialization, system familiarity, and institutional knowledge that employees with prior Ecolab experience would have brought to the transition. The absence of prior organizational history with the specific process, the client environment, and the U.S. regulatory context creates an absorptive gap that training alone cannot close instantaneously. Cohen and Levinthal (1990) further argue that organizational absorptive capacity depends not only on individual capacities but on the internal linkages between team members, including the shared language, cross-functional awareness, and relational infrastructure that enable knowledge to flow collectively. For a newly formed receiving team, these linkages must be deliberately built during the transition period, a consideration that has direct implications for how the Pune RCC team was structured and supported in the early phases of the transition.

Taken together, the literature on knowledge transfer and organizational learning establishes that the effective transfer of the RCC process from Buenos Aires to Pune depends not only on the quality of documentation and training provided, but on the translation of knowledge

into the receiving team's context, the accuracy of the replication of both explicit and tacit process components, and the deliberate development of absorptive capacity and internal linkages that enable the Pune team to independently sustain performance over time.

2.5. Cross-cultural collaboration and communication

2.5.1. Cultural Dimensions Frameworks

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) define culture as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others, and propose a model of national culture organized along six dimensions: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence versus Restraint. Each dimension positions countries relative to one another on the basis of empirically derived value differences, and together they constitute one of the most widely applied frameworks for comparative cross-cultural analysis in organizational research. In the context of the RCC offshoring case, Power Distance and Individualism versus Collectivism are particularly consequential. Power Distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede et al., 2010). Countries with high Power Distance scores tend to produce employees who are more accepting of hierarchical authority and less likely to openly challenge directives or signal knowledge gaps to superiors, a dynamic that can directly inhibit the candid communication of errors or process difficulties during the knowledge transfer phase. The Individualism versus Collectivism dimension, meanwhile, captures the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups; in collectivist cultures, in-group harmony and loyalty tend to take precedence over individual transparency, which in turn affects the willingness to report process deviations or request clarification in cross-national working relationships (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Hofstede et al. (2010) explicitly caution that dimensional scores represent national averages derived from aggregated survey data and should not be used to predict the behavior of specific individuals within a given society, as within-country variation can be substantial. The dimensions therefore function best as analytical starting points that generate contextually grounded hypotheses about potential areas of friction rather than as deterministic explanations of observed behavior. Applied to Argentina and India, which occupy distinct positions across multiple dimensions, this framework helps map the cultural terrain within which the RCC transition unfolds and identifies the axes along which misunderstandings between the Buenos Aires and Pune teams are most likely to arise.

2.5.2. High-Context Communication and Face-Negotiation

Hofstede et al. (2010) draw on the distinction between high-context and low-context communication cultures as a complementary lens for understanding how national culture shapes professional communication styles. In high-context cultures, meaning is embedded in tone, relationship, and implicit cues rather than in the explicit verbal content of a message, whereas in low-context cultures professional communication tends toward directness and explicitness. This contrast has concrete operational consequences in a finance process context where the accurate communication of procedures, exception criteria, and error-resolution protocols is essential to service quality. When team members from a high-context communication environment hesitate to flag ambiguities not because they lack understanding but because doing so might be perceived as an admission of incompetence or a challenge to the authority of the sender, the result is an accumulation of unverified assumptions that only surfaces when errors begin to appear in process outputs.

Ting-Toomey (1999) provides a theoretical explanation for this dynamic through face-negotiation theory, which holds that culturally conditioned concern for protecting one's own and others' public image shapes communicative behavior in professional settings, particularly when the interaction involves status differentials or the potential exposure of

knowledge gaps. In the RCC Buenos Aires–Pune context, face-saving pressures are likely to be heightened for Pune team members being evaluated against the performance standards of the sending team. The asymmetry of the transfer relationship, in which the sending team is positioned as the knowledge holder and the receiving team as the learner, creates conditions under which the suppression of candid feedback is both predictable and operationally consequential. Recognizing and deliberately counteracting this dynamic through structured communication mechanisms is therefore a critical managerial responsibility during the transition period.

2.5.3. Cultural Intelligence as an Organizational Competency

Earley and Mosakowski (2004) defined Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as the capability to function effectively in settings characterized by cultural diversity across three dimensions: cognitive understanding of cultural norms and differences, motivational confidence and persistence in intercultural situations, and behavioral adaptation of communication to fit the cultural context. Rockstuhl et al. (2011), in an empirical study with 126 military officers, demonstrated that cultural intelligence is a stronger predictor of leadership effectiveness in cross-border contexts than in domestic ones, and that CQ and emotional intelligence are complementary competencies, each predicting effectiveness in its respective context but not in the other. This finding directly informs the analysis of leadership in the RCC transition, as managers coordinating the Buenos Aires–Pune handover with high CQ are better equipped to anticipate and navigate the culturally specific communication patterns, face-saving behaviors, and authority expectations that shape team member responses on both sides of the transition.

Messner (2013), collecting data from 291 IT executives and managers in Pune and Bangalore, found that in-group collectivism and performance orientation exert the strongest positive influence on employee commitment among Indian IT services professionals, consistent with Hofstede et al.'s (2010) characterization of India as a high collectivism, high

performance orientation society. Messner (2013) also found that the relationship between affective and normative commitment is stronger in the Indian context than in comparable North American studies, suggesting that the motivational mechanisms sustaining employee engagement in Indian offshoring teams are structured differently from those assumed by Western-origin management frameworks. For the RCC Pune team, this implies that organizational practices designed to reinforce collective identity and recognize group performance are likely to produce stronger and more durable commitment than individually oriented incentive structures inherited from other organizational contexts.

Taken together, the literature on cross-cultural collaboration and communication establishes that the effectiveness of the Buenos Aires-Pune working relationship during the RCC transition depends not solely on the content of what is communicated, but on the cultural frame within which that communication occurs, the degree to which team members and leaders possess the cultural intelligence to recognize and bridge interpretive gaps, and the extent to which the organizational environment in Pune is managed in ways calibrated to the motivational and relational norms of its specific cultural context.

2.6. Operational coordination and performance outcomes

2.6.1. Coordination in Geographically Distributed Teams

Malone and Crowston (1994) define coordination as the management of dependencies between activities, identifying fundamental forms of interdependence, including producer-consumer relationships, shared resource dependencies, and prerequisite constraints, each of which requires progressively more structured coordination mechanisms to be effectively managed. In geographically distributed settings, coordinating these dependencies is complicated by the erosion of the informal communication channels that co-located teams rely on to spontaneously resolve ambiguities, calibrate expectations, and catch errors before they propagate. The absence of physical proximity reduces the speed

and bandwidth of problem-resolution interactions and increases the likelihood that ambiguous situations are handled unilaterally. This is directly applicable to the RCC offshoring case, where the process involves sequential interdependencies between data entry, validation, exception handling, and reporting that span two geographically and temporally separated teams. Wiener et al. (2010), in a comprehensive review of information systems offshoring research, confirm that time zone differences, cultural distance, and the lack of informal communication channels are among the most consistently identified impediments to coordination quality in distributed offshore operations, and that the social ties necessary for effective collaboration must be deliberately constructed rather than assumed to form naturally.

2.6.2. Performance Continuity and the Transition Risk Window

The period between the formal handover of operational responsibilities and the point at which the receiving team achieves independent operational proficiency represents the highest-risk phase in any offshoring transition (Wiener et al., 2010). During this window, the receiving team is disproportionately vulnerable to error accumulation, slower processing times, and continued dependency on the sending team for the resolution of non-standard cases. In a finance process such as the RCC, where error rates, processing times, and service level agreement compliance are directly observable against established baselines, this risk window is a measurable and managerially consequential reality. Wiener et al. (2010) further note that close oversight during the transition may be initially necessary to mitigate risks and build trust, but that it tends to increase transaction costs over time and cannot substitute for the development of independent performance capability in the receiving unit. For captive offshoring transitions within a GBS structure such as Ecolab's, this finding points to the importance of deliberate parallel running periods, calibrated performance benchmarking, and structured communication protocols as tools for managing the transition risk window effectively.

Taken together, the literature on operational coordination and performance outcomes establishes that the successful handover of the RCC process from Buenos Aires to Pune is not achieved through a single transfer event but through a sustained process of coordination management, performance monitoring, and deliberate relationship-building, in which both the mechanics of dependency management and the relational infrastructure of distributed collaboration must be actively constructed and maintained.

2.7. Strategic implications and transferability of the model

2.7.1. Conditions for Successful Internal Practice Replication

Szulanski (1996) demonstrated empirically that the replication of organizational practices within the same firm is far from automatic, even when the intention to transfer is clear, the source team is cooperative, and the receiving team is motivated. The conditions under which a practice succeeds in one organizational context, including the specific knowledge stock of its executing team, the social relationships that support its informal coordination, and the operating environment within which it functions, may not be straightforwardly reproducible in a different location with a different team. This insight is directly applicable to the transferability question at the heart of this study: whether the lessons and organizational routines developed during the RCC Buenos Aires–Pune transition were subsequently applied to strengthen the Buenos Aires center's capacity to receive the EDI process from Minnesota. Szulanski and Jensen (2006) further introduced the concept of presumptive adaptation, the tendency of managers to modify a transferred practice based on surface-level contextual differences without a rigorous understanding of which elements are causally responsible for its effectiveness. When organizations modify practices without understanding why they work, they risk eliminating the very elements that account for their success, a risk that applies directly to how the Buenos Aires GBS center adapted or preserved the methodological lessons of the RCC transition when approaching the reception of the EDI process.

2.7.2. Dynamic Capabilities and Organizational Learning Across Transitions

Zollo and Winter (2002) define dynamic capabilities as learned and stable patterns of collective activity through which an organization systematically generates and modifies its operating routines in pursuit of improved effectiveness. Their framework identifies three mechanisms through which these capabilities develop: experience accumulation through repeated task execution, knowledge articulation through deliberate reflection on accumulated experience, and knowledge codification through the formalization of lessons into tools, templates, and transferable procedures. The relative effectiveness of these mechanisms is contingent on the features of the task being learned. For infrequent or highly heterogeneous tasks such as offshoring transitions, Zollo and Winter (2002) argue that deliberate knowledge codification produces comparatively greater learning returns than passive experience accumulation, a finding that runs counter to the common managerial tendency to rely primarily on the tacit knowledge of individuals who participated in prior events. The comparison between the RCC Buenos Aires–Pune transition and the subsequent EDI Minnesota–Buenos Aires transition provides a natural empirical window for examining whether Ecolab's GBS structure developed dynamic capabilities through the RCC experience, meaning whether the lessons from that transition were articulated and codified in ways that informed the knowledge absorption methodology, coordination practices, and change management approach applied when the Buenos Aires center subsequently received the EDI process.

Taken together, the literature on strategic implications and transferability of the model establishes that the value of the RCC Buenos Aires–Pune experience as a reference point for the subsequent EDI transition is neither automatic nor guaranteed, but contingent on the degree to which the Buenos Aires GBS center invested deliberately in articulating and codifying the lessons accumulated during the RCC transition, and on the organizational

capacity to apply those lessons with appropriate fidelity and contextual judgment when receiving the EDI process.

2.8. Research Gap

The existing literature on offshoring within Global Business Services structures provides robust theoretical foundations across the five analytical pillars examined in this review. However, several gaps remain that this study seeks to address. First, while knowledge transfer models such as those proposed by Liyanage et al. (2009), Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), and Szulanski (1996) offer well-developed frameworks for understanding internal practice replication, their empirical application to captive offshoring transitions within GBS environments remains limited, particularly in contexts involving finance process relocation between Latin American and South Asian teams. Second, the cross-cultural collaboration literature, including Hofstede et al. (2010), Ting-Toomey (1999), and Messner (2013), addresses cultural dynamics in offshoring settings predominantly from a software development or IT services perspective, leaving the operational and communicative challenges specific to finance process transitions comparatively underexplored. Third, the literature on dynamic capabilities and organizational learning across successive offshoring transitions, as theorized by Zollo and Winter (2002) and Szulanski and Jensen (2006), remains largely conceptual, with limited empirical evidence on whether and how organizations systematically codify and apply lessons from prior transitions to subsequent ones within the same GBS structure. Finally, the leadership and change management literature, while offering well-established frameworks such as those of Kotter (1995, 2012) and Lewin (1947), has been applied primarily to large-scale organizational transformations rather than to the specific managerial challenges of coordinating geographically and culturally distributed teams during process-level offshoring transitions. This study addresses these gaps by examining the offshoring of the RCC process from Buenos Aires to Pune as a bounded empirical case, incorporating a comparative internal reference in the subsequent

EDI transition, and analyzing the interplay between leadership practices, knowledge transfer mechanisms, cross-cultural dynamics, and operational coordination outcomes within a single multinational organizational context.

Table 1: Conceptual and Variable Map - Self-developed

Analytical Pillars, Theoretical Framework, and Research Instruments

Analytical Pillar	Key Theories / Authors	Main Variables / Dimensions	Research Question	Instrument
Leadership and Change Management	Lewin (1947) Kotter (1995, 2012) Bass & Avolio (1995) Beer & Nohria (2000) House et al. (2004)	Leadership style; change strategy; cultural adjustment; employee engagement	RQ1, RQ2	Interviews
Knowledge Transfer and Organizational Learning	Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) Szulanski (1996) Liyanage et al. (2009) Cohen & Levinthal (1990)	Tacit vs. explicit knowledge; knowledge stickiness; absorptive capacity; transfer barriers and facilitators	RQ3	Interviews
Cross-Cultural Collaboration and Communication	Hofstede et al. (2010) Ting-Toomey (1999) Earley & Mosakowski (2004) Messner (2013)	Power distance; communication style; cultural intelligence; face-saving behavior	RQ4	Interviews; Survey
Operational Coordination and Performance Outcomes	Malone & Crowston (1994) Wiener et al. (2010)	Coordination mechanisms; time zone management; KPI continuity; transition risk	RQ5	Interviews; Survey; KPI data
Strategic Implications and Transferability	Zollo & Winter (2002) Szulanski & Jensen (2006)	Dynamic capabilities; organizational learning; practice replication; lessons codification	RQ6	Interviews

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Methodological design

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative instruments to analyze the offshoring of the RCC process within Ecolab's GBS structure. The qualitative component consists of semi-structured interviews designed to capture the experiences and perceptions of participants directly involved in the transition. The quantitative component includes structured survey items and process-level Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This combination allows the study to compare and cross-check findings across multiple data sources.

This study focuses on a single, bounded case: the completed relocation of the RCC process from Buenos Aires to Pune. It also incorporates a comparative internal case, the subsequent relocation of the EDI process from Minnesota to Buenos Aires, to examine whether the organizational experience accumulated during the RCC transition informed the Buenos Aires center's capacity to receive and absorb the EDI process.

Interviews will be used to obtain in-depth qualitative data from participants directly involved in the offshoring process. Interview data will be analyzed using thematic coding to identify recurring patterns related to leadership practices, knowledge transfer, communication, and coordination.

Surveys will complement the interviews by collecting broader perceptions from participants on cross-cultural communication, collaboration, and coordination. Survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and mean scores, to identify patterns across participant groups.

KPI data will be collected through participant recall and interview responses, capturing perceptions of performance levels before and after the transition. Given the confidential

nature of internal operational data, this study does not rely on official records or documents. Instead, KPI-related information will be gathered through participants' accounts of key indicators such as error rates, processing times, and service level agreement compliance, and will be analyzed descriptively to identify perceived changes in operational performance across both periods.

The combination of interviews, surveys, and KPI data across two cases allows for methodological triangulation, which strengthens the credibility of the findings.

3.2. Unit of Analysis

The primary unit of analysis is the RCC process offshoring between the Buenos Aires team and the Pune team, examined at the team level across the five analytical pillars. The study focuses on the operational, intercultural, and managerial dimensions of this transition. Decisions made above team level, such as the corporate strategic rationale for offshoring, are outside the scope of this study.

The secondary unit of analysis is the subsequent relocation of the EDI process from Minnesota to Buenos Aires. This case is not analyzed in the same depth as the primary case, but is used as a point of comparison to examine whether the organizational experience accumulated during the RCC transition contributed to a more effective reception of the EDI process by the Buenos Aires GBS center. Data from the EDI case is collected through interviews with participants who were directly involved in that process.

3.3. Sampling and participant selection

The study uses purposive sampling, selecting participants based on their direct involvement in the offshoring process. This sampling strategy is appropriate when the research objective requires access to participants with specific knowledge and experience relevant to the

phenomenon under study. A total of 10 interviews and 80 surveys are planned across all profiles and locations, as detailed in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

For the primary RCC case, participants include managers, supervisors, team leaders, and analysts from both the Buenos Aires and Pune teams, as shown in Table 2. This ensures that both the sending and receiving perspectives are captured across different levels of the organizational hierarchy. Support function participants from Human Resources and Information Technology in both locations are also included, given their direct role in enabling the transition in areas such as change management support, recruiting, and training coordination, as well as technical infrastructure.

For the comparative EDI case, participants include supervisors and analysts from the Minnesota and Buenos Aires teams. These participants are included exclusively through interviews, since the EDI case serves as a secondary unit of analysis used for comparison rather than in-depth analysis. A detailed description of the EDI team structure and role distribution is provided in [Annex 2](#). It should be noted that the EDI Minnesota participants originally planned for inclusion in the comparative case are no longer employed at Ecolab, and direct access to them was therefore not possible. As a result, no interviews were conducted with the ex Minnesota team. However, data sufficient for the purposes of the comparative analysis was obtained through interviews with the Supervisor, Manager and Analysts of the EDI team in Buenos Aires, both of whom were directly involved in the EDI transition and possess firsthand knowledge of the process as received from the Minnesota team.

Survey participants, detailed in Table 3, include professionals with cross-cultural work and collaboration experience in both Buenos Aires and Pune, with approximately 50 participants targeted per Argentina and 30 participants targeted per India. At the time of submission, the research team collected 87 responses, comprising 51 from Argentina and 36 from India.

Their inclusion allows for a wider understanding of Argentina-India collaboration dynamics within Ecolab's GBS environment beyond the RCC team specifically.

KPI-related data, summarized in Table 4, will be gathered through participant accounts during interviews, capturing perceived performance levels before and after the transition. Given the confidential nature of internal operational data, this study does not rely on official records or documents.

Table 2: Distribution of Interview Participants - Self-developed

Role	Location	Case	n
RCC primary case — Buenos Aires team			
Supervisor	Buenos Aires	RCC	1
Team leader	Buenos Aires	RCC	1
RCC primary case — Pune team			
Supervisor	Pune	RCC	1
Analyst	Pune	RCC	1
Support functions			
HR representative	Buenos Aires	RCC support	1
HR representative	Pune	RCC support	1
IT representative	Buenos Aires	RCC support	1
IT representative	Pune	RCC support	1
EDI comparative case — Buenos Aires team			
Manager	Buenos Aires	EDI (comparative)	*
Supervisor	Buenos Aires	EDI (comparative)	*
Team Leader	Buenos Aires	EDI (comparative)	1
Analyst	Buenos Aires	EDI (comparative)	1
Total interviews			10

Note: The symbol (*) indicates that the corresponding participant profile was represented through individuals who also participated in the RCC case and whose insights were incorporated into the analysis. Consequently, these profiles were not counted as separate

interviews in the EDI comparative case. The value $n = 1$ indicates one interview conducted for that participant profile.

Table 3: Distribution of Survey Participants - Self-developed

Group	Location	Focus	n
Argentine professionals collaborating with Indian colleagues	Argentina	Cross-cultural perceptions, coordination, adaptation	50
Indian professionals collaborating with Argentine colleagues	India	Cross-cultural perceptions, coordination, adaptation	30
Total surveys			80

Note: As of final submission, the survey collected 87 valid responses (51 from Argentina and 36 from India), exceeding the original target of 80.

Table 4: Process-Level KPI Data Collection- Self-developed

Data type	Source	Period	Purpose
Process-level KPIs	Participant accounts interviews (Buenos Aires team)	During the transition	RQ5: Performance continuity
Process-level KPIs	Participant accounts interviews (Pune team)	During the transition	RQ5: Performance continuity

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

3.4.1. Instrument 1: Interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted individually in a one-on-one format. All interview guides, regardless of modality, are organized into five thematic blocks aligned with the study's research questions: context and role, leadership and change management, knowledge transfer and organizational learning, cross-cultural collaboration and communication, and operational outcomes and strategic reflection. Each block contains open-ended questions designed to elicit narrative responses, complemented by anchored rating scales from 1 to 5 to allow for structured comparative analysis across participants. While the thematic structure remains consistent across all guides, the specific questions

asked vary according to the role and location of each participant, ensuring that each guide captures the perspectives most relevant to that participant's position within the transition. The number of substantive questions per guide ranges from approximately 12 to 50 items depending on the participant profile. Interview data will be analyzed using thematic coding, following the six-phase thematic analysis process described by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Themes will be organized under the five analytical pillars of the study.

3.4.1.1. Synchronous interviews

2 interviews were conducted via videoconference, both with Buenos Aires participants: the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager and the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor. These interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes each and were conducted in Spanish to ensure participants could express themselves fully and precisely in their native language. With the explicit consent of each participant, synchronous interviews were audio-recorded solely for transcription and analysis purposes. Recordings are stored securely and will not be shared beyond the research team.

3.4.1.2. Asynchronous written interviews

The remaining 8 interviews will be conducted in written asynchronous format, with questions sent to participants via email. This modality covers all remaining profiles across the three locations: team leaders and analysts from Buenos Aires, all Pune participants across all roles and support functions, and the Minnesota participants from the EDI comparative case. This approach was selected to accommodate the geographical distance between locations, the scheduling constraints of participants operating across different time zones, and the practical limitations of coordinating synchronous sessions across Argentina and India. As Meho (2006) establishes, email interviewing is a recognized and methodologically rigorous

qualitative data collection method; it offers the additional advantage of allowing participants more time to reflect before responding, which can yield more considered and detailed answers than spontaneous oral exchange. Since responses are produced directly in written form, no transcription is required, eliminating a potential source of error. The research team reserved the right to send brief follow-up clarification questions where responses required elaboration. Written interviews will be conducted in the working language most appropriate to each participant's location. Interviews with participants based in Buenos Aires will be conducted in Spanish to ensure full and precise expression in their native language, and subsequently translated into English by the research team for analysis purposes. Interviews with participants based in Pune will be conducted in English, as it serves as the common working language across those sites.

3.4.2. Instrument 2: Surveys

Surveys will be administered to Argentine professionals with cross-cultural collaboration and work experience with Indian colleagues, and to Indian professionals with cross-cultural collaboration and work experience with Argentine colleagues. The survey is not restricted to Ecolab or to the RCC process specifically; it targets any professional from either country who has worked with counterparts from the other culture in a multinational or cross-border context, thereby broadening the analytical scope beyond a single organization and allowing for more generalizable findings on Argentina-India collaboration dynamics. To ensure the validity of the sample, the survey includes an explicit eligibility notice informing respondents that participation is intended only for individuals from Argentina or India who have directly collaborated with colleagues from the other country in a professional context, and requesting that those who do not meet these criteria refrain from completing it. In addition, the demographic section restricts the country-of-origin response to Argentina and India as the only available options. The research team considers that these measures constitute sufficient and reasonable safeguards to protect the integrity of the sample; any misrepresentation of

eligibility on the part of a respondent falls outside the control of the investigators and cannot be attributed to a failure of the data collection design.

The survey instrument, administered via Google Forms, is structured in six thematic sections and contains 24 items. Section A collects demographic and contextual background variables including country of origin, age range, gender, industry, duration and type of cross-cultural collaboration, and English proficiency, which will serve as grouping factors for comparative analysis. Sections B through F capture perceptions across five substantive dimensions: (B) communication style and working dynamics, using six Likert-scale items on a 1-5 scale and a multiple-select question on sources of communication difficulty; (C) cultural dynamics, including hierarchy and power distance, trust and interpersonal relationships, and working style differences, measured through 16 Likert-scale items; (D) operational coordination and team performance, with ten Likert-scale items addressing time zone management, digital tools, and perceived outcomes; (E) intercultural learning and adaptation, using six Likert-scale items on training, style adjustment, and cultural intelligence development, complemented by a multiple-select question on working style modifications; and (F) overall perception, combining five Likert-scale items with three open-ended questions inviting participants to reflect on their most significant cultural challenge, a positive cross-cultural surprise, and a practical recommendation for future collaborators. Two global rating items on overall communication quality (B3) and coordination effectiveness (D3) use a 1-10 scale to allow for finer-grained measurement of overall satisfaction.

Survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, mean scores, and response distribution profiles per item, to identify patterns in communication, collaboration, and adaptation. Where relevant, responses will be compared across the two participant groups, Argentine and Indian, to examine whether perceptions of the same collaboration dynamics differ by cultural standpoint.

3.4.3. KPI Data

KPI-related data will be gathered through participant accounts during interviews, capturing perceived performance levels during the transition. Given the confidential nature of internal operational data, this study does not rely on official records or documents. Comparison will focus on indicators such as error rates, processing times, and service level agreement compliance, analyzed descriptively to identify perceived changes in operational performance.

3.5. Validity and Reliability

This study addresses validity and reliability through three mechanisms:

First, triangulation is applied by combining three distinct data sources, interviews, surveys, and KPI-related accounts, as well as two cases, the RCC primary case and the EDI comparative case. Convergence of findings across these sources strengthens the credibility of conclusions.

Second, the interview guides were reviewed and refined prior to fieldwork to ensure alignment between questions and research objectives. Where possible, interview questions were piloted with a participant not included in the final sample to identify ambiguities in wording or sequencing.

Third, internal consistency of survey scales is supported by the use of anchored rating items that measure the same construct from multiple angles within each thematic block, allowing for cross-checking of responses within and across participants.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with standard principles of research ethics. All participants were informed of the study's purpose, scope, and intended use of the data before agreeing to participate. Participation was voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw at any point without consequence.

All interview recordings and transcripts are stored securely and will not be shared beyond the research team. Participant identities are protected through anonymization in all written outputs. Where participants hold identifiable roles within a small organizational unit, responses are reported at the aggregate or thematic level to prevent identification.

Given that some participants are current employees of Ecolab, the study does not request any confidential commercial information, internal financial data, or proprietary documentation that participants are not authorized to share. KPI-related information is gathered exclusively through participant recall and is treated as perceptual data rather than verified operational records.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the findings of the research previously performed. The results are divided into two main sections to provide a clear and structured analysis.

4.1. Instrument 1 - Interviews

This section presents the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with ten participants directly involved in the offshoring of the RCC process from Buenos Aires to Pune, and, for comparative purposes, in the prior relocation of the EDI process from Minnesota to Buenos Aires. The results are organized by Specific Objective to ensure alignment between the data collected and the analytical pillars of the study.

4.1.1. Interview Participant Profile

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in one or both offshoring transitions under study. A total of ten interviews were conducted, comprising two synchronous videoconference interviews with Buenos Aires-based participants and eight asynchronous written interviews with participants across Buenos Aires and Pune. All participants are identified exclusively by their role and location to protect confidentiality.

Table 5: Distribution of Interview Participants- Self-developed

n°	Role	Location	Case	Modality
1	Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager	Buenos Aires	RCC (primary) / EDI (comparative)	Synchronous
2	Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor	Buenos Aires	RCC (primary) / EDI (comparative)	Synchronous
3	RCC Supervisor	Pune	RCC (primary)	Asynchronous written
4	RCC Analyst	Pune	RCC (primary)	Asynchronous written
5	HR Analyst	Pune	RCC (support)	Asynchronous written
6	HR Partner	Buenos Aires	RCC (support)	Asynchronous written
7	IT Analyst	Pune	RCC (support)	Asynchronous written
8	IT Specialist	Buenos Aires	RCC (support)	Asynchronous written
9	EDI Team Leader	Buenos Aires	EDI (comparative)	Asynchronous written
10	EDI Senior Analyst	Buenos Aires	EDI (comparative)	Asynchronous written

Note: Participants 1 and 2 contributed data relevant to both the RCC primary case and the EDI comparative case given their direct involvement in both transitions. The EDI Minnesota participants originally planned for inclusion were not available as they are no longer employed at Ecolab; the comparative case was therefore covered through the Buenos Aires EDI team members (participants 9 and 10), complemented by the broader EDI knowledge of participants 1 and 2.

4.1.2. Results by Specific Objective

The following sub-sections present the interview findings organized by Specific Objective. Each sub-section draws on the responses of the participants whose roles are most directly relevant to that objective, with supporting evidence from additional participants where applicable. Direct quotes are attributed to participant roles to preserve confidentiality.

Specific Objective 1

- Analyze the leadership practices implemented by leaders within Ecolab's GBS structure and their influence on the offshoring of the RCC process from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune.

Specific Objective 2

- Examine the change management strategies implemented by leaders within Ecolab's GBS structure during the offshoring of the RCC process from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune.

Pillar: Leadership Practices and Change Management Strategies

Specific Objectives 1 and 2 examine, respectively, the leadership practices implemented by leaders within Ecolab's GBS structure and the change management strategies they applied during the RCC transition. The primary sources for these objectives are the two synchronous interviews with the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager and the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor, complemented by the perspectives of the HR Partner in Buenos Aires and the HR Analyst in Pune, who contributed a people-management dimension to the leadership and communication findings.

The interview data reveal that leadership during the RCC transition was exercised simultaneously at multiple hierarchical levels and required significant behavioral adaptation from those in senior roles. Both Buenos Aires participants described holding dual responsibilities throughout the transition: managing the knowledge transfer process in Pune while maintaining remote oversight of the team that remained in Argentina. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager held the additional role of the only supervisor to travel physically with the team, which placed her at the center of both the operational and relational demands of the transition:

"I played a dual role: on one hand, I traveled as a Subject Matter Expert for my own process; on the other, I acted as a leader at the time." - **Ex RCC**

Supervisor / EDI Manager

The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor described a shift toward a more empathetic and pedagogical leadership approach in response to the cultural dynamics observed in Pune, noting that the Indian team required a different kind of guidance than what was typical in the Buenos Aires environment:

"In Argentina, if you do not understand something, your first instinct is often to ask a teammate for help, and that did not happen as much in India. Fostering that sense of companionship helped them." - **Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI**

Supervisor

Regarding authority distribution, both participants described a progressive delegation model in which decision-making authority was initially concentrated in the Buenos Aires leadership team and gradually transferred to Pune leaders as the transition advanced. The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor noted that by the later stages, the Buenos Aires role had shifted from direct control to support and guidance, with local Indian leaders increasingly assuming supervisory responsibility for their own teams.

"As we trained the new analysts and shared knowledge with the future leaders in Pune, authority was gradually delegated to them over time. ... Our role then shifted more toward providing support and guidance rather than exercising direct authority."

- **Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor**

On the change management dimension, both participants converged on a common critique: the communication timeline to the broader Buenos Aires team was too compressed. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager noted that the full Buenos Aires team was informed on a Thursday while the first group of travelers departed on Sunday or Monday, leaving less than

a week for employees to process the announcement. The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor described a range of reactions across the team, from resignation to cautious cooperation, driven primarily by uncertainty about future roles:

"Reactions were diverse; not everyone received it the same way. It generated resignations because the uncertainty of not knowing what would happen to your job drives a need for security." - **Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI**

Supervisor

"What I would have done differently is communicate to the full team a bit earlier, not as last-minute as it was. The broader team found out on a Thursday, and the first group was already traveling on Sunday or Monday." - **Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI**

Manager

The HR Partner in Buenos Aires confirmed this pattern from a people-management perspective, noting that HR became involved during the planning stages to support employees through internal mobility processes and communication. She stated that communication regarding future career paths could have been provided earlier to reduce uncertainty, and that the internal mobility process that followed the transition worked well, with many affected employees successfully transitioning into more analytical roles.

The HR Analyst in Pune provided a complementary perspective, reporting that the onboarding and preparation process for the newly hired Pune team was adequate but noted that recruitment did not always attract candidates with the qualifications required for the RCC operation, rating this item at 2 out of 5 in the Likert table. She rated greater involvement of operational specialists in recruitment at 5 out of 5, indicating a clear recommendation that emerged directly from the transition experience.

"I would increase communication regarding future career paths earlier in the process to reduce uncertainty among employees." - **HR Partner, Buenos Aires**

"The internal mobility process worked well and allowed employees to continue their careers within the organization." - **HR Partner, Buenos Aires**

Specific Objective 3

- Examine the key barriers and facilitators influencing knowledge transfer during the offshoring of the RCC process from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune.

Pillar: Barriers and Facilitators of Knowledge Transfer

Specific Objective 3 examines the key barriers and facilitators influencing knowledge transfer during the offshoring of the RCC process. The primary sources are the two Buenos Aires synchronous interviews, supported by the written responses of the RCC Supervisor and RCC Analyst in Pune, whose accounts capture the receiving team's experience of the transfer process.

The principal vehicle for knowledge transfer was the set of Desktop Procedures (DTPs), which documented the standard operating procedures of the RCC process across all sub-processes. Both Buenos Aires participants described the DTPs as the foundational layer of the transfer, reviewed and validated by supervisors before training began. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager and the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor rated 'The DTPs and documentation effectively captured the information necessary for the transition' at 5 out of 5, indicating strong agreement that the explicit knowledge dimension of the transfer was well supported.

"The main method used was the DTPs. Those documents described the team's processes and tasks and served as the main source of documentation for the transition." - **Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor**

However, both participants identified a critical and unexpected barrier from the beginning: the Pune team's actual knowledge level was substantially below what had been communicated during recruitment. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager described arriving with a training schedule designed for a team with baseline SAP and billing system knowledge, only to find that the majority of analysts lacked even foundational tool familiarity:

"We had been told the team had experience in billing and SAP, but the majority did not. So we had to lower the level at the beginning and start more from scratch, which meant reworking the training schedule we had already built." - **Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager**

The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor attributed this gap directly to a failure in the recruitment process, noting that interviewers had not adequately verified the technical skills claimed by candidates. He estimated that three to four days of training were lost to basic tool familiarization that had not been planned for. The RCC Analyst in Pune partially confirmed this account, acknowledging that only very limited information was provided before training began and that most details were learned during the sessions themselves.

"There was a failure in the recruitment process because the interviewers didn't double-check basic technical questions, meaning much of the staff wasn't initially qualified for the position, though they achieved the capacity through training." - **Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor**

A second significant barrier identified by both Buenos Aires participants was the presence of tacit knowledge that could not be captured in DTPs. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager

specifically identified the supervisory role's judgment-based criteria as the element most resistant to documentation:

"The one thing that was not captured in any DTP was the transfer of the supervisor role that is judgment-based and exists in criteria, not in documentation." - Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager

On the facilitator side, both participants identified in-person training as by far the most effective format. The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor developed a structured classroom approach in which Pune analysts were organized into pairs to work through live cases under observation, which proved sufficiently effective that other training teams within the GBS structure adopted it. Both participants also confirmed that a practice-based verification method, asking participants to demonstrate their understanding through live screen-sharing or case walk-throughs rather than verbal confirmation, was essential for detecting comprehension gaps before they became operational errors.

The RCC Supervisor in Pune confirmed the effectiveness of in-person training from the receiving side, and the RCC Analyst in Pune identified live demonstrations, Q&A sessions, and error feedback as the most useful learning formats. Both Pune participants noted that practice and feedback from trainers were the factors that most contributed to building confidence in performing the process independently. Both also indicated that more time for training and practice before the Buenos Aires team's departure would have been the single most impactful improvement to the transition design.

"Practice, feedback from trainers, and handling real cases helped with the confidence." - **RCC Analyst, Pune**

Both Buenos Aires participants estimated that the Pune team required approximately four to five months to reach genuine operational autonomy, significantly exceeding the planned

timeline. The primary quality KPI, a 90% accuracy rate on the daily quality check, was not consistently met during the first month of training.

Specific Objective 4

- Analyze how cultural and linguistic differences shape communication and collaboration dynamics between Argentine and Indian professionals with cross-cultural work experience.

Pillar: Cultural and Linguistic Differences in Communication and Collaboration

Specific Objective 4 analyzes how cultural and linguistic differences shaped communication and collaboration between Argentine and Indian professionals during the transition. The primary sources are the two Buenos Aires synchronous interviews, with the RCC Analyst in Pune providing the receiving team's perspective on the same dynamics.

Both Buenos Aires participants independently identified the Pune team's relationship with authority as the most consequential cultural dynamic during the training period. The pattern they described involved Pune analysts consistently confirming comprehension verbally while failing to apply the corresponding knowledge in practice. Both participants attributed this primarily to culturally conditioned behavior linked to the avoidance of appearing incompetent in front of trainers and supervisors, rather than to genuine language comprehension difficulties:

"For me, it was more cultural. We noticed a strong fear of negative consequences like being seen as incompetent or while making mistakes. That was very different from what we were used to." - **Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager**

"They seemed more accustomed to a leadership style that was more rigid and directive, where people expect to receive instructions and follow them closely

because they are concerned about making mistakes or facing negative consequences." - **Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor**

The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager further disclosed that this dynamic had an internal institutional dimension beyond the training interaction itself. She described discovering that performance-related messages were being communicated to Pune analysts by their own supervisors in a more authoritarian manner than the Buenos Aires team's supportive approach, which amplified the fear of error:

"We later found out the message was being communicated to them internally in a harsher way, which created fear. We had to address this directly with their supervisors and managers." - **Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager**

Both participants noted that this dynamic diminished substantially as the transition progressed and interpersonal trust was built. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager observed that repeated insistence by the training team that questions were necessary and welcomed produced measurable improvement within the first weeks, and that the pattern was significantly less pronounced during subsequent trips.

On the linguistic dimension, the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager identified the use of live transcription during videoconference sessions as the most effective adaptation strategy, allowing each participant to follow spoken content visually on their own screen. The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor emphasized the use of visual materials, paired exercises, and structured repetition as his primary compensatory strategies. Both noted that familiarity with the Indian English accent improved significantly across trips.

"One technique that proved very helpful was using live transcription, during sessions we recorded the sessions and the transcription appeared on screen, so each participant could follow along on their own computer." - **Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager**

The RCC Analyst in Pune confirmed many of these observations from the receiving side. He described the Argentine trainers' communication style as clear and direct with a good level of detail, and noted that the trainers felt less strict and more approachable than what the Pune team was accustomed to with higher positions, which he experienced as a positive cultural difference. He also acknowledged that there were moments of confusion due to the volume of new information, but that clarification was eventually sought and provided.

“I think our trainers from Argentina were less strict and felt more friendly. I think we are used to different dynamics with higher positions.” - RCC Analyst, Pune

Both Buenos Aires participants also described informal relationship-building that developed alongside the formal training process. Shared meals, tea breaks, and cultural exchanges, including an occasion where the Pune team dressed the Buenos Aires visitors in traditional Indian clothing, were cited as moments that created genuine interpersonal connections beyond the transactional layer of the work.

Specific Objective 5

- Assess the impact of the offshoring of the RCC process on operational coordination and KPI performance continuity between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune.

Pillar: Operational Coordination and KPI Performance Continuity

Specific Objective 5 assesses the impact of the RCC offshoring on operational coordination and KPI performance. The primary sources are the two Buenos Aires synchronous interviews, supplemented by the IT Analyst in Pune and the IT Specialist in Buenos Aires, who provided the technical infrastructure perspective on coordination support during the transition.

The operational coordination dimension of the transition was shaped by three structural constraints that both Buenos Aires participants described consistently: the time zone differential of approximately 8.5 to 9 hours between Buenos Aires and Pune, the extended period of dependency on Buenos Aires for complex case resolution beyond the planned timeline, and the performance disruption caused by the January month-end close coinciding with peak training intensity.

The time zone difference created a daily coordination gap during which neither team had full concurrent coverage of the process. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager described how the Buenos Aires team adapted its working hours substantially, with many analysts beginning shifts at 4 or 5 in the morning to maximize overlap time with Pune. She noted that this arrangement initially worked but began affecting performance when it extended beyond the expected duration:

"Buenos Aires adapted significantly. Many people started their shifts at 4 or 5 in the morning. Others changed to a 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. schedule. Initially it worked, but when it extended beyond the expected period, it started to affect performance." - **Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager**

The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor confirmed this pattern and highlighted its medium-term morale consequences. He also noted that the time zone difference between Argentina and India continued to affect various Ecolab teams beyond the RCC transition itself, as India operates outside of US operational hours, making real-time meetings with American clients structurally difficult.

The primary coordination tool was Microsoft Teams, supplemented by email and SharePoint. Both participants assessed the digital tools as adequate for their function but insufficient to replace in-person interaction during the active training period. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager identified the buddy system, in which each Pune analyst was paired with a

dedicated Buenos Aires contact through small Teams groups, as the most effective coordination mechanism of the transition, significantly reducing the friction of question escalation. She also described a test period in February without any Buenos Aires traveler physically in Pune, which confirmed that the team was still too dependent on on-site presence at that stage.

“What worked particularly well was assigning a dedicated buddy in Buenos Aires to each person in Pune ... That individual pairing made communication much more effective.” - **Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager**

On the KPI dimension, the primary performance metric was a daily quality check requiring a minimum 90% accuracy rate, with a secondary SLA metric of five days maximum backlog. Neither target was consistently met during the first month of training. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager identified the January month-end close as the most critical performance drop of the entire transition, when peak transaction volumes coincided with full training mode and required heavy support from Buenos Aires.

Regarding external stakeholder impact, the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager noted that US-based clients continued contacting the Buenos Aires team directly for months, and in some cases years, after the transition, because they were unaware the process had moved. The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor added that US stakeholders were informed in advance that delays and a higher margin of error were expected during the learning period, with the intention of managing expectations during the adjustment phase.

“Some US stakeholders continued contacting the Buenos Aires team directly for months and even years later in some cases because they did not know the process had moved.” - **Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager**

From the IT perspective, the IT Analyst in Pune described the technical setup as structured and well planned, noting that equipment preparation and system access provisioning were

handled in advance and that initial setup issues were resolved quickly on-site. The IT Specialist in Buenos Aires confirmed an increase in access and permissions requests during the transition period and noted that the two IT teams did not coordinate directly with each other, with each center managing technical issues independently. He rated the IT team's advance visibility into the transition at 2 out of 5, indicating that earlier and more complete information would have improved technical readiness.

Specific Objective 6

- Analyze the subsequent offshoring of the EDI process from the United States to Buenos Aires and whether the organizational experience accumulated during the RCC transition contributed to a more effective reception of the EDI process by the Buenos Aires team.

Pillar: EDI Comparative Case and Organizational Learning Across Transitions

Specific Objective 6 analyzes the subsequent offshoring of the EDI process from the United States to Buenos Aires and examines whether the organizational experience accumulated during the RCC transition contributed to a more effective reception of the EDI process by the Buenos Aires GBS center. The primary sources for this objective are the EDI Team Leader and EDI Senior Analyst in Buenos Aires, complemented by the assessments of the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager and the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor, both of whom had direct involvement in the RCC transition and subsequently participated in the EDI transition in Buenos Aires.

The EDI Team Leader provided the richest first-hand account of the receiving experience from the Minnesota-to-Buenos Aires transition. He described the overall process as something that had to be built along the way, noting that while the upfront communication was clear, with formal transition dates, process lists, and client information provided

approximately one month in advance, the training period was shorter than ideal and many scenarios could only be learned when they actually occurred in daily operations:

"The preparation covered the framework; the real learning happened in the field." -

EDI Team Leader, Buenos Aires

He identified constant bilateral communication as the most critical facilitator of the EDI transition, noting that both teams remained in contact multiple times per day through Teams and that the US team remained accessible and responsive well beyond the formal three-month structured support period. This sustained informal availability was, in his assessment, what made the remote-only training format work effectively despite the absence of in-person sessions:

"Both teams were in contact multiple times per day, with fast response times on both sides. The willingness to engage on short notice made the remote format work better than it might have otherwise." - **EDI Team Leader, Buenos Aires**

The EDI Senior Analyst joined the Buenos Aires team after the formal transition had concluded and therefore could not provide first-hand accounts of the initial stages. His perspective reflects the experience of a team member absorbing an already-transferred process, and he identified insufficient or outdated documentation as the primary barrier he encountered upon joining: knowledge was largely held by individuals rather than embedded in accessible written procedures, creating dependency on specific people and making onboarding harder than necessary. He estimated that the team reached genuine operational autonomy approximately nine months after the transition, and rated the overall learning and consolidation process at 3 out of 5:

"When I came on board, many of the procedures were not fully captured in written form, which meant that knowledge was largely held by individuals rather than

embedded in accessible materials. That created dependency on specific people." -

EDI Senior Analyst, Buenos Aires

The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager offered the clearest comparative assessment between the two transitions. Having first managed the RCC transition as a sending-side leader and subsequently participated in the EDI transition as a receiving-side leader, her perspective bridges both cases directly. She described the RCC transition as significantly more structured than what the Buenos Aires team encountered when receiving the EDI process, attributing this difference to the organizational maturity accumulated through prior offshoring experience rather than to deliberate codification of lessons:

"The RCC transition from Buenos Aires to Pune was significantly more organized by comparison. I believe learnings from earlier experiences were incorporated, even if informally, through organizational maturity over time." - **Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI**

Manager

The phrase "even if informally" is analytically significant, as it suggests that any transfer of organizational learning between the RCC and EDI transitions was experiential and cumulative rather than deliberately structured, which places limits on the degree to which the Buenos Aires team's RCC experience can be said to have systematically informed the EDI reception.

The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor offered a more cautious assessment, noting that the two transitions were structurally different enough that he did not believe the RCC experience was directly applied to the EDI case in any formal sense. He identified three key structural differences: the Buenos Aires EDI team was composed mainly of existing Ecolab employees rather than newly hired external staff; cultural compatibility between Argentina and the United States was considerably greater than between Argentina and India; and the linguistic barrier was lower because at least one party in the EDI case was working in its

native language. These differences suggest that the transferability of lessons from the RCC transition to the EDI context was inherently constrained by the distinct structural conditions of each case.

"I would not say that the RCC model was used as inspiration for the EDI transition.

Perhaps some best practices related to training, collaboration, and encouraging questions were applied, but I think those were already things that the Buenos Aires team had internalized." - **Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor**

Table 6: Interview Codebook- Self-developed

Theme	Pillar	Definition	Key content	Quote	Participant
Compressed communication timeline	P1	Insufficient advance notice given to BA team before transition announcement	Team informed Thursday, first travelers departed Sunday	"What I would have done differently is communicate to the full team a bit earlier"	Ex RCC Supervisor
Progressive authority delegation	P1	Gradual transfer of decision-making from BA to Pune leaders over time	Role shifted from control to support as Pune gained confidence	"Authority was gradually delegated to them over time"	Ex RCC Team Leader
Recruitment knowledge gap	P2	Pune team hired without adequate verification of technical baseline	SAP and billing knowledge assumed but absent	"There was a failure in the recruitment process"	Ex RCC Team Leader
Tacit knowledge resistance	P2	Judgment-based supervisory criteria could not be documented in DTPs	Supervisory role transfer not capturable in writing	"The one thing not captured in any DTP was... judgment-based criteria"	Ex RCC Supervisor
In-person training superiority	P2	Face-to-face format significantly outperformed remote alternatives	Remote test period in February revealed continued dependency	"Without someone there, gaps appeared"	Ex RCC Supervisor
Face-saving behavior	P3	Cultural norm of avoiding visible incompetence suppressed candid communication	Pune analysts confirmed understanding without actual comprehension	"A strong fear of negative consequences"	Ex RCC Supervisor
Authority dynamic divergence	P3	Argentine and Indian teams had structurally different relationships with hierarchy	Pune internal communication harsher than BA approach	"The message was communicated to them internally in a harsher way"	Ex RCC Supervisor

Trust trajectory	P3	Cross-cultural barriers diminished progressively as interpersonal trust developed	Pattern improved significantly across trips	"By the following weeks it was much less of an issue"	Ex RCC Team Leader
Time zone burden	P4	8.5–9 hour differential created daily coverage gaps and schedule disruption	BA team shifted to 4–5am starts, affecting morale over time	"When it extended beyond the expected period, it started to affect performance"	Ex RCC Supervisor
Buddy system effectiveness	P4	Individual pairing of Pune and BA contacts via Teams significantly reduced coordination friction	One of the most effective mechanisms of the transition	"That individual pairing made communication much more effective"	Ex RCC Supervisor
KPI ramp-up delay	P4	90% quality threshold not met during first month; autonomy reached after ~4-5 months	January month-end close produced the critical performance drop	"The most critical moment was during the January month-end close"	Ex RCC Supervisor
Informal learning dominance (EDI)	P5	EDI transition relied on reactive, experience-based learning rather than structured upfront training	Real learning happened in the field when cases arose	"The preparation covered the framework; the real learning happened in the field"	EDI TL
Organizational maturity (informal)	P5	RCC transition more organized than EDI, attributed to accumulated experience rather than codified lessons	Learning transferred informally through practitioners	"Even if informally, through organizational maturity over time"	Ex RCC Supervisor
Structural non-comparability	P5	Key differences between RCC and EDI cases constrained transferability of lessons	Existing Ecolab staff, cultural proximity, linguistic compatibility	"The two cases were very different"	Ex RCC TL

4.1.3. Summary of Likert Ratings Across Participants

Each interview guide included an anchored rating table in which participants assessed key statements related to the RCC transition across the five analytical pillars of the study, using a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table below consolidates the pillar averages reported by each participant, allowing for a comparative reading of assessments across roles and locations. Pillar averages for the EDI comparative case participants (participants 9 and 10) reflect statements specifically designed for the EDI context and are therefore not directly comparable to RCC pillar averages; they are included for reference.

Table 7: Summary of Likert Pillar Averages by Participant Role - Self-developed

Participant (Role)	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Overall Avg.
Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager (BA)	4.0	4.3	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.9
Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor (BA)	4.0	4.3	4.0	2.6	4.3	3.8
RCC Supervisor (Pune)	4.0	4.3	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.9
RCC Analyst (Pune)	4.5	4.0	4.5	4.0	3.0	4.0
HR Analyst (Pune)	4.0	4.0	3.5	2.5	4.5	3.7
HR Partner (Buenos Aires)	4.0	3.5	3.5	5.0	4.5	4.1
IT Analyst (Pune)	4.0	4.5	4.0	5.0	4.5	4.4
IT Specialist (Buenos Aires)	2.5	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.6
EDI Team Leader (Buenos Aires)	4.5	4.0	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.3
EDI Senior Analyst (Buenos Aires)	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.4

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements within each analytical pillar. P1 = Leadership and Change Management; P2 = Knowledge Transfer and Organizational Learning; P3 = Cross-Cultural Collaboration and Communication; P4 = Operational Coordination and Team Performance; P5 = Strategic Implications and Transferability.

Several patterns emerge from the consolidated ratings. Across the four RCC primary case participants, Pillar 2 (Knowledge Transfer) consistently received moderate-to-high scores, ranging from 4.0 to 4.3, suggesting broad agreement that the knowledge transfer mechanisms were adequately structured even if execution encountered unexpected barriers. Pillar 4 (Operational Coordination) shows the widest variation across all participants: the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor rated it at 2.6, the lowest single pillar score in the entire table, reflecting his critical assessment of time zone management and stakeholder transparency, while the HR Partner in Buenos Aires rated it at 5.0, reflecting the effectiveness of internal workforce reassignment processes which fall within her specific operational domain. The IT Analyst in Pune also rated Pillar 4 at 5.0, likely reflecting a technically smooth coordination experience from an infrastructure perspective that contrasts with the operational coordination difficulties reported by the process-level participants.

Pillar 5 (Strategic Implications) shows notable variation among RCC participants. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager and the RCC Supervisor in Pune both rated it at 3.3, the lowest Pillar 5 score among RCC participants, reflecting residual concerns about the communication of strategic rationale to operational teams. The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor rated it at 4.3, reflecting a more optimistic assessment of the transition's replicability and overall strategic outcome. The RCC Analyst in Pune rated Pillar 5 at 3.0, the lowest score among Pune participants, which may reflect limited visibility into the broader strategic framing of the transition from the analyst level.

Pillar 1 (Leadership and Change Management) shows the most consistent spread across RCC participants, with three of the four rating it at 4.0 and the RCC Analyst in Pune rating it at 4.5, suggesting general agreement that leadership was adequate, with the Pune analyst perceiving it slightly more positively than the Buenos Aires participants. The notable exception is the IT Specialist in Buenos Aires, who rated Pillar 1 at 2.5, the second lowest score in the table, reflecting his assessment that the IT team received insufficient advance visibility and communication regarding the transition.

The EDI comparative case participants show generally lower scores across pillars 1 and 2 than the RCC primary case participants, consistent with both participants' accounts of a less formally structured transition. The EDI Senior Analyst's ratings are particularly notable, with pillar averages of 3.0 across pillars 1, 2, and 4, reflecting a critical assessment of organizational readiness, knowledge transfer quality, and operational continuity during the EDI transition. The EDI Team Leader's ratings are more positive overall, with no pillar falling below 4.0, likely reflecting his direct and constructive experience of the bilateral communication with the US team and the extended post-transition support period.

4.2. Instrument 2 - Survey

This section presents the findings obtained from the structured survey administered to eighty-seven professionals: fifty-one based in Argentina and thirty-six based in India, who had taken part in intercultural work experiences involving the other culture. The aim is to provide a comprehensive interpretation of all the data collected, examined through a battery of statistical methods: descriptive analysis, chi-square, t-tests, ANOVA and Pearson correlations, logistic and linear regressions, K-Means clustering, propensity score matching, bootstrap resampling, sensitivity analysis and decision trees.

- **Survey Respondent Profile**

The questionnaire combined three response formats: four global items measured on a 1 to 10 scale (communication quality, operational coordination, cultural intelligence at the outset, and overall experience), a battery of Likert items measured on a 1 to 5 agreement scale, and three open-ended questions. Demographic information covering country, age range, gender, industry, collaboration duration, and type of working relationship was also collected (see Annex 4, Figure 4.1).

- **Survey Respondent Profile**

The questionnaire combined three response formats: four global items measured on a 1 to 10 scale (communication quality, operational coordination, cultural intelligence at the outset, and overall experience), a battery of Likert items measured on a 1 to 5 agreement scale, and three open-ended questions. Demographic information covering country, age range, gender, industry, collaboration duration, and type of working relationship was also collected (see Annex 4, Figure 4.1).

- **Results by Statistical Method**

The following sub-sections present the survey findings organized by analytical method. Each sub-section reports the principal result of the corresponding analysis and clarifies its relevance to the investigation, building from the descriptive layer toward the multivariate and robustness analyses that test the stability of the earlier findings.

- **Descriptive analysis**

The most consistent pattern in the descriptive data is a systematic perceptual asymmetry: across all four global items, the Indian group scored higher than the Argentine group. The means were 8.64 against 7.39 for overall experience, 8.00 against 6.76 for communication quality, 8.25 against 7.29 for operational coordination, and 7.56 against 7.04 for cultural intelligence at the outset (see Annex 4, Table 4.4). The same direction appeared in the Likert items, where the largest gaps concerned clear and direct communication and the development of genuine trust, both rated higher by the Indian group, while the perception of more hierarchical decision-making ran in the opposite direction, with Argentina scoring higher. This result is relevant because it establishes the central empirical observation around which the remaining analyses are built: the team that received the process and the team that handed it over did not evaluate the same collaboration in the same way. The descriptive layer documents that the experience was lived differently on each side, which is precisely the phenomenon the inferential tests are designed to scrutinize.

- **Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests**

The categorical analyses tested associations between respondent characteristics and outcomes. The strongest association in the entire dataset linked country to overall experience, highly significant and with a large effect size ($\chi^2=19.44$, $df=2$, $p=0.00006$; Cramér's $V=0.450$): of the thirty-six Indian respondents, twenty rated the experience in the highest band and none rated it poorly, while Argentine responses concentrated in the

mid-range (see Annex 4, Table 4.5 and Figure 4.6). A second significant association connected country to willingness to work again ($\chi^2=12.68$, $p=0.0018$), with thirty-four of thirty-six Indian respondents agreeing compared to thirty-one of fifty-one Argentines, and a third connected country to English level, reflecting Argentina's higher concentration of native or near-native speakers ($\chi^2=11.59$, $p=0.003$). Most remaining combinations, including age range against collaboration duration and country against relationship type, were not significant. The relevance of these tests is that they isolate, among many possible categorical relationships, the dominant signals in the data while ruling out a series of plausible but unsupported alternatives, so the non-significant results are as informative as the significant ones in narrowing the field of explanation.

- **Independent-samples t-tests**

The t-tests quantified the magnitude of the group differences on the continuous variables. Three of the four global items showed significant differences with large effect sizes: communication quality ($d=0.93$, $p=0.00005$), operational coordination ($d=0.82$, $p=0.0003$), and overall experience ($d=0.98$, $p=0.00002$); cultural intelligence at the outset showed a small, non-significant difference ($d=0.33$, $p=0.139$), consistent with its nature as a retrospective self-assessment made before the collaboration dynamics took effect (see Annex 4, Table 4.6 and Figure 4.8). With the larger sample, sixteen of the forty-three Likert items now show significant differences, compared to five at the earlier cut, with the largest single effect concerning the perception of hierarchical decision-making ($d=1.11$), the only item on which Argentina scored higher (see Annex 4, Figure 4.10). These results are relevant because they convert the descriptive gaps into measured effect sizes, distinguishing differences that are large and statistically reliable from those that are not, and the consistent size of the communication and overall-experience effects across the larger sample reinforces their standing as the findings warranting the additional scrutiny applied later.

- **ANOVA and Pearson correlations**

The analysis of variance examined whether respondent characteristics moderated the outcomes. Three relationships were significant: age moderated communication quality ($F(1,85)=10.81$, $p=0.0015$) and overall experience ($F(1,85)=8.85$, $p=0.0038$), with senior respondents reporting more favourable evaluations on both, and English level moderated cultural intelligence at the outset ($F(2,84)=4.35$, $p=0.016$) (see Annex 4, Figure 4.11). The correlation analysis identified fifty significant relationships, the strongest being between communication quality and overall experience ($r=0.757$), followed closely by the relationship between trust and coordination ($r=0.703$) (see Annex 4, Figure 4.13). The relevance of the variance analysis is that it identifies which respondent attributes are associated with a more positive perception, with age emerging as the clearest moderator, while the correlation analysis maps the internal structure of the measured variables and shows communication quality occupying the central position in that structure, which justifies the prominence it receives in the modelling that follows.

- **Multiple linear regression**

A model predicting overall experience from eight variables explained 65.5% of the variance ($R^2=0.655$, adjusted $R^2=0.619$, $F(8,78)=18.48$, $p<0.001$), a solid fit for perceptual data of this kind (see Annex 4, Table 4.8). Communication quality was the dominant predictor (standardized $\beta=0.475$, $p<0.001$), and operational coordination, which was only marginally significant at the earlier cut, is now also clearly significant (standardized $\beta=0.306$, $p=0.0017$), while the remaining predictors are non-significant (see Annex 4, Table 4.9). The analysis flagged severe multicollinearity among several correlated predictors, and a forward-stepwise procedure identified a parsimonious three-predictor model, communication quality, coordination, and cultural intelligence, as the most efficient specification (see Annex 4, Table 4.10). This result is relevant because it establishes, while controlling for the other measured variables, which dimensions most strongly account for the overall evaluation, and because

the simultaneous reporting of the full and the parsimonious models signals that conclusions about individual predictors are drawn cautiously rather than read directly from a single saturated model.

- **Logistic regression**

Two logistic models examined binary outcomes: willingness to work again with the other culture and the perception of cultural differences as enriching. In both, interpersonal trust was the only robust predictor, multiplying the odds of wanting to repeat the collaboration by approximately 8.3 ($p=0.004$) and the odds of perceiving differences as enriching by approximately 5.0 ($p=0.0011$) (see Annex 4, Tables 4.11 and 4.12). Communication quality, which dominated the linear model, lost significance in both, while power distance emerged as a significant negative predictor of willingness to work again ($OR=0.145$, $p=0.023$). The relevance of this analysis is that it distinguishes between two different questions, namely what determines how positively the experience is rated and what determines whether a respondent would willingly repeat it, and the finding that trust rather than communication governs the behavioural outcomes points to a relational rather than purely informational basis for sustaining the collaboration.

- **K-means clustering**

An unsupervised clustering of respondents on the composite scores of the four behavioural sections produced an optimal two-cluster solution, confirmed by both the elbow method and the silhouette coefficient, with the silhouette score improving to 0.340 from the earlier 0.283, indicating more clearly separated clusters with the larger sample (see Annex 4, Figure 4.21). A high-adaptation cluster ($n=48$, 55%) scored consistently above a low-adaptation cluster ($n=39$, 45%) across all four behavioural sections, with the largest gap appearing on the coordination dimension (see Annex 4, Tables 4.14 and 4.15). Demographically, country composition is now balanced across the two clusters, fifty-six per cent Argentine in the

high-adaptation cluster and sixty-two per cent in the low-adaptation cluster, indicating that cluster membership is driven by the cultural-dynamics, coordination, and communication dimensions rather than by nationality itself (see Annex 4, Figure 4.16). This result is relevant because it shows the sample separates into two interpretable profiles rather than forming a homogeneous block, and because the balanced national composition of the clusters rules out a simple country-driven explanation of adaptation, directing attention instead toward the specific behavioural dimensions that distinguish the two profiles.

- **Propensity score matching**

To separate genuine national differences from differences attributable to respondent profile, Argentine and Indian respondents were matched on age, industry, English level, and collaboration duration, retaining nineteen of the thirty-six Indian units within the matching caliper (see Annex 4, Figure 4.22). After matching, the gap in communication quality persisted and widened (post-match $p=0.0027$), and the gap in overall experience also persisted ($p=0.009$) (see Annex 4, Tables 4.17 and 4.19). Critically, and in contrast to the earlier cut of the data, the operational-coordination gap also persists after matching (post-match $p=0.0033$), indicating that coordination is, like communication and overall experience, a genuine country effect rather than an artefact of the sectoral composition of the two groups (see Annex 4, Table 4.18). This is among the most consequential analyses in the study, because it distinguishes a real difference between the national groups from an artefact of who happened to be in each group, and the larger sample reverses the earlier reading of coordination: rather than a sectoral phenomenon, all three outcome variables, communication, coordination, and overall experience, now stand as genuine effects of national origin once respondent profile is controlled for.

- **Bootstrap resampling**

Bias-corrected and accelerated bootstrap intervals were generated for the four global variables, separately for each group and for the full sample, to test the stability of the parametric estimates (see Annex 4, Table 4.20 and Figure 4.23). The bias was negligible in every case, and the bootstrap and parametric intervals were closely aligned across all variables and groups. The relevance of this check is that it tests whether the earlier inferences depend on the assumptions of the parametric tests; the convergence of the two methods retroactively supports the t-tests and regressions reported above.

- **Sensitivity analysis**

The regression models were re-estimated under three specification changes: excluding respondents with only occasional contact, running the models separately within each country, and varying the binary cut-off in the logistic models (see Annex 4, Tables 4.21 to 4.24 and Figures 4.25 and 4.26). Across all specifications, communication quality remained a significant predictor with consistent direction and magnitude in both country subgroups, and interpersonal trust remained significant across cut-offs, while operational coordination, now classified as robust rather than marginal, also held up well under re-specification. A duration effect remains present within the Indian subgroup specifically, absent in the Argentine subgroup, though it is classified as a partial, group-moderated effect rather than a robust one. Notably, the regression model for the Indian subgroup no longer shows signs of overfitting at the larger sample size, resolving a limitation present in the earlier cut of the data. The relevance of this analysis is that it functions as the credibility filter for the entire statistical battery, separating the findings that survive repeated re-specification from those that do not, and thereby defining which quantitative results carry the most evidential weight in the investigation.

- **Decision trees**

A decision tree predicting the adaptation cluster achieved strong cross-validated discrimination, the highest of any specification tested (AUC=0.908), and identified cultural dynamics, rather than intercultural-learning orientation, as the primary splitting variable, with operational coordination acting as a secondary driver (see Annex 4, Figure 4.27). This represents a shift from the earlier cut of the data, in which learning orientation was the dominant feature; with the larger sample, cultural dynamics and coordination together account for the substantial majority of the model's predictive importance, while communication and trust play only minor roles. This result is relevant because it translates the statistical associations into explicit, readable rules, and because the revised feature ranking refines the earlier reading of what most distinguishes high- and low-adaptation profiles, pointing toward cultural and coordination dynamics rather than learning orientation as the more central discriminating factors.

- **Open-ended responses**

The three open-ended questions were analysed through sentiment scoring and topic modelling (see Annex 4, Figures 4.28 and 4.29). The question on the greatest cultural challenge produced the only neutral-to-slightly-negative sentiment in the instrument, and the only one where Argentina's tone fell below neutral while India's remained positive, with topics centred on communication styles, language, and accent. The question on advice produced three topics that mapped closely onto the motivational, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions of established cultural-intelligence theory. The relevance of this analysis is that it provides convergent validity for the quantitative findings, reproducing in the free-text data the same sending-versus-receiving sentiment asymmetry detected in the numerical scales for a third consecutive cut of the data, and supplying the reasoning behind the measured differences that the closed items alone cannot capture.

4.2.1. Summary of Statistical Findings

Read together, the analyses converge on a small number of cross-cutting observations that orient the interpretation developed elsewhere. The clearest is the systematic perceptual asymmetry between the two national groups, which appears in the descriptive data, is confirmed as the strongest categorical association, is measured as a large effect in the t-tests, and now survives the matching procedure for all three outcome variables, communication, coordination, and overall experience alike. The second is the central position of communication quality, the strongest correlate and the dominant predictor of overall experience across specifications. The third is the distinct role of interpersonal trust, which governs the behavioural outcomes more than communication does. The fourth is the revised prominence of cultural dynamics and coordination, rather than learning orientation, as the variables that best separate the adaptation profiles. The fifth is the reclassification of the coordination difference as a genuine national effect, reversing the earlier reading in which it had appeared to be sectoral rather than national once respondent profile was controlled for.

5. DISCUSSIONS

After presenting the data obtained from interviews and surveys, the aim of this chapter is to answer each of the Research Questions presented at the beginning of this investigation. At the same time, this shall address the hypotheses and confirm if they were validated, partially validated or invalidated after the investigation.

5.1. Answers to Research Questions and Assessment of Hypotheses

Research Question 1

- How did leadership practices implemented by leaders within Ecolab's GBS structure influence the coordination and execution of the RCC process between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune during the offshoring of the RCC process?

The research shows that the leadership response during the offshoring transition was not merely administrative but required deep behavioral adaptation and active, hands-on coordination. Leaders managing the transition had to navigate a complex environment characterized by structural difficulties such as a severe 8.5 to 9-hour time-zone gap and culturally distinct working styles.

Rather than imposing a rigid corporate structure, leaders from Buenos Aires had to shift their approach to address the operational and cultural needs of the receiving team. Survey analysis reveals that leadership influenced coordination not by eliminating cultural differences, but by generating shared frameworks that contained them. Furthermore, the interview data highlights that leaders actively engineered companionship, such as grouping analysts into pairs to overcome individualistic working style and made independent operational judgment calls to sustain operations when the sending team was asleep. This adaptability demonstrated that success was heavily dependent on the direct, empathetic

interventions of local leaders to keep the process running and bridge the cultural gap between the two locations.

Hypothesis 1

- Adaptive and empathetic leadership practices were the primary determinant of how effectively operational responsibilities were transferred and sustained between the Buenos Aires and Pune RCC teams.

The mentioned results fully validate H1 of this thesis. While structural and cultural differences initially posed a challenge, the direct intervention of leadership successfully generated operational convergence. Viewed through Beer and Nohria's (2000) framework, local leaders successfully bridged a critical organizational tension: while the corporate offshoring decision was strictly driven by top-down efficiency (Theory E), the ground-level execution and knowledge transfer demanded participative learning and relationship-building (Theory O). Survey data demonstrates that both groups successfully achieved effective operational coordination over time, reaching a strong average of 7.29 for Argentina and 8.25 for India on a 10-point scale. Furthermore, the consolidation of these shared working norms was underpinned by the development of genuine trust between the cross-cultural teams; on a 5-point Likert scale, the Indian team reported a high average of 4.17, while the Argentine team averaged 3.31. Ultimately, Pearson correlation analysis confirms that this effective coordination (D3) was a strong predictor of a positive overall experience ($r = 0.702$), demonstrating that initial operational barriers were progressively and successfully overcome.

Interviews also strengthen this conclusion by demonstrating that leaders engaged in active cross-cultural leadership adjustment (Carr et al., 2020) to navigate differing implicit leadership expectations and power distance dynamics (House et al., 2004). In this sense, the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor noted that his leadership focus "shifted toward an empathetic approach to understanding what they were struggling with," explaining that in Argentina *"Your first instinct is often to ask a teammate for help, and that did not happen as*

much in India. Fostering that sense of companionship helped them". Additionally, both the Team Leader and the Supervisor rated the statement "Team commitment and performance were sustained throughout the transition" with a perfect 5 out of 5 score. This proves that leadership practices were the primary driver that sustained coordination and the correct execution of tasks throughout the transition, confirming that, as anticipated by transformational leadership theory (Bass & Avolio, 1995), the adaptive and empathetic intervention of local leaders, rather than administrative coordination, was the decisive mechanism for the success and continuity of the process. Furthermore, drawing on Peng et al. (2021) and Kutzner and Jöns (2019), this shift toward transformational leadership was theoretically essential to foster the psychological motivation and work engagement required to overcome resistance within the Eastern cultural context of the receiving team.

Research Question 2

- How did the change management strategies implemented by leaders within Ecolab's GBS structure shape the coordination and execution of the RCC process during the offshoring from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune?

The investigation reveals a marked contrast between the execution of corporate change management and the local leadership interventions that were key to handle the transition. The top-down change management strategy implemented at the corporate level was heavily criticised due to its compressed timeline. The late communication generated deep uncertainty, anxiety and distress among the sending team in Buenos Aires, leading to resignations and a volatile organizational climate.

However, the research also highlights that change management strategies implemented by local leaders counteracted this initial failure. To manage the operational risk, local leaders worked on bottom-up motivation by guaranteeing job security, illustrating future career paths and letting the employees know the possibility to be reassigned to new areas within the company for the Buenos Aires team, while simultaneously addressing the fears and

frustrations of the newly hired Pune team. Thus, change management profoundly shaped the execution of the process, but its success relied almost entirely on the containment strategies and empathy sense from the local managers in response to inadequate corporate planning.

Hypothesis 2

- Effective change management during the RCC offshoring process relied on a combination of formal corporate strategies and ad-hoc containment practices implemented by local leaders.

Throughout the investigation on RQ2, the second hypothesis of this thesis has been partially validated as both Buenos Aires leaders heavily criticized the communication timeline from the corporate level as too compressed, generating initial anxiety and role-loss panic among the Argentine team while they within their role tried to support and contain employees with the few information available, pointing out a divergence between corporate and local strategies. Interviews confirm that this dissatisfaction was directly linked to the top-down communication timeline. As the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager explicitly noted: *"The broader team found out on a Thursday, and the first group was already traveling on Sunday or Monday. That was very little time", which led to a reaction where "people feared they were all going to be fired"*. Furthermore, the survey data clearly reflects the emotional friction caused by the corporate change management strategy. There is a massive gap in how both teams experienced cross-cultural collaboration. Looking at the numbers, the Indian receiving team reported a highly positive overall experience with an average score of 8.64 out of 10, while the Argentine sending team rated it much lower with an average of 7.39. This difference is large and statistically reliable (Cohen's $d = 0.98$) and when we group the responses ($\chi^2 = 19.44$, $p = .00006$), the contrast becomes even more obvious: 20 out of the 36 Indian respondents gave the experience the highest possible scores (9 or 10), and absolutely none of them rated it poorly. In contrast, the Argentine team's scores were mostly concentrated in the middle range. All these numbers mathematically prove the unequal

burden of the transition, showing that the distress and uncertainty generated by the compressed corporate timeline were absorbed almost entirely by the sending team in Argentina.

Despite all of the above, the transition survived because local leaders applied ad-hoc change management strategies rather than rigid, long-term frameworks to contain the crisis. The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor validated this localized success, stating: *"I worked on the motivation of the people both here and there... giving them the certainty that there were positions for them in Buenos Aires to keep them calm"*. Ultimately, these findings partially validate H2 by demonstrating a profound structural divergence between corporate planning and local execution. While the hypothesis anticipated that both levels of management would effectively mitigate friction, the empirical evidence proves otherwise. The formal corporate change management strategies actually hindered early coordination and caused severe emotional friction due to a compressed communication timeline. Consequently, organizational stability was not a product of corporate planning, but was sustained exclusively through the targeted, bottom-up containment strategies applied ad-hoc by local leaders to manage the crisis, confirming that, as anticipated by Lewin's (1947) and Kotter's (1995) change management models, the most significant mechanism of change management during the RCC transition was local, ad-hoc containment developed by local leaders rather than the formal corporate strategy.

Research Question 3

- Which were the main barriers and facilitators influencing knowledge transfer during the offshoring of the RCC process from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune?

The most significant barrier was the absorptive capacity gap created by limitations in the recruitment process. Both Buenos Aires participants described arriving in Pune with a training plan designed for a team with baseline knowledge of software tools and billing

systems, only to discover that the majority of analysts lacked even foundational tool familiarity. This forced an immediate and unplanned redesign of the training schedule from the first days of the transition. As the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager described: *"We had been told the team had experience in billing and SAP, but the majority did not. So we had to lower the level at the beginning and start more from scratch, which meant reworking the training schedule we had already built."* The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor estimated that three to four days of planned process training were lost to basic tool familiarization and attributed the gap to how technical skills were verified during recruitment: *"There was a failure in the recruitment process because the interviewers didn't double-check basic technical questions, meaning much of the staff wasn't initially qualified for the position, though they achieved the capacity through training."*

This finding complicates a straightforward application of Cohen and Levinthal's (1990) absorptive capacity framework to the case. Cohen and Levinthal argue that absorptive capacity is path-dependent, developing as a function of an organization's prior related knowledge, which implies that a gap in absorptive capacity is a structural feature of organizational or geographic distance that training can narrow only gradually. The evidence here suggests a different mechanism. The Pune team's absorptive capacity gap was not primarily a function of distance from Ecolab's specific operational context; it was substantially the product of a preventable failure in the recruitment process, in which claimed SAP and billing system knowledge was not verified before hiring. The HR Analyst in Pune corroborated this account independently, rating the recruitment process's success in attracting candidates with the required qualifications at 2 out of 5, while rating the need for greater involvement of operational specialists in recruitment at 5 out of 5. This raises a more critical question than the literature alone would prompt: rather than treating the absorptive capacity gap as an inherent cost of offshoring to a newly established, culturally distant center, it may be more accurate to treat it as a self-inflicted gap created by an avoidable selection error, one that absorptive capacity theory does not distinguish from genuinely structural

distance. The theory therefore offers a partial explanation at best; it accounts for why the gap was difficult to close quickly once it existed, but it does not explain why the gap existed at the scale it did, which appears to be a recruitment and HR process failure rather than a function of organizational or cultural distance per se.

A second barrier was the resistance of certain knowledge to documentation, which operated at two distinct levels. At the supervisory level, the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager identified judgment-based criteria as the element most resistant to transfer through DTPs:

"The one thing that was not captured in any DTP was the transfer of the supervisor role that is judgment-based and exists in criteria, not in documentation." This affected the newly appointed Pune Supervisor and team leaders specifically, who required direct operational exposure over time to develop the independent judgment the role demands. At the analyst level, the RCC Supervisor in Pune noted that certain activities could not be adequately covered within the available time: *"There were few activities which were kept to transfer at end, but due to less time there was not adequate clarity."* Both Buenos Aires participants also described how the Pune team remained dependent on Buenos Aires for complex and non-standard transactions beyond the planned go-live date, confirming that some operational knowledge could only be developed through live exposure to real cases.

The third barrier was the compressed timeline. The 90% quality threshold was not consistently met during the first month of training, and the January month-end close produced the most critical performance drop of the entire transition. As the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager noted: *"That is when we receive the highest volume of work, and we were in full training mode at the same time. That overlap caused a significant drop in performance and required heavy support from Buenos Aires."* The Pune Supervisor summarized the team's experience in one sentence: *"More time, that's all."* The RCC Analyst in Pune expressed the same view: *"More time for training and practice before the Argentina team leaving Pune and delegating all the process to us."*

Read together, these three barriers map closely onto the four-stage transfer process described by Szulanski (1996): initiation, implementation, ramp-up, and integration. The DTP review and validation work completed before travel corresponds to the initiation stage, in which the knowledge to be transferred is identified and prepared. The first one to two weeks of in-person training, during which tool-leveling absorbed three to four unplanned days, mark the implementation stage. The period from January through March, in which the 90% quality threshold was not consistently met and the January month-end close produced the most severe performance drop of the entire transition, corresponds precisely to what Szulanski identifies as the ramp-up stage, the point of greatest difficulty as the receiving unit struggles to close the gap between initial and satisfactory performance. Genuine integration, in the sense of the Pune team operating without structural dependency on Buenos Aires, was only reached four to five months after go-live. This staged reading clarifies that the difficulties documented in this case were not a single transfer failure but a predictable unfolding of the ramp-up dynamic that Szulanski's model anticipates, and it suggests that the planned timeline underestimated specifically the ramp-up stage rather than the transfer process as a whole.

Despite these barriers, the investigation also identifies three facilitators that ultimately enabled the Pune team to reach operational autonomy.

The most effective was in-person training, which all four RCC participants identified as significantly superior to remote alternatives. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager described a test period in February without any Buenos Aires traveler physically present in Pune, which immediately revealed a clear operational dependency that digital tools could not compensate for: *"Without someone there, gaps appeared: you could not see in real time whether someone had started a task, whether something was getting stuck."* The RCC Supervisor in Pune confirmed that *"live demonstration and practice session along with error*

feedback worked well," and the RCC Analyst in Pune identified these same formats as the ones that most contributed to building operational confidence.

The second facilitator was the practice-based verification methodology developed by the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor, which involved organizing analysts into pairs to work through live cases while being observed, and asking participants to explain their reasoning rather than simply confirm comprehension. As he described: *"One of the main strategies we used was asking them to explain the cases back to us. We wanted them to tell us what they were doing, how they were doing it, and why they were doing it."* This approach proved sufficiently effective that other GBS training teams adopted it. The RCC Analyst in Pune confirmed its direct impact: *"Practice, feedback from trainers, and handling real cases helped with the confidence."*

The third facilitator was the DTP documentation, which despite its limitations at the tacit knowledge level provided the foundational explicit knowledge layer that structured the entire training process. Both Buenos Aires participants rated the adequacy of DTPs at 5 out of 5. As the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor described: *"The main method used was the DTPs. Those documents described the team's processes and tasks and served as the main source of documentation for the transition."*

Building on this staged reading, it is worth noting that Buenos Aires and Pune participants attributed the difficulty of the ramp-up stage to different root causes. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager and Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor located the primary barrier in the recruitment process and the resulting knowledge gap, while the RCC Supervisor in Pune attributed the same outcome to insufficient time, noting that *"there were few activities which were kept to transfer at end, but due to less time there was not adequate clarity."* This divergence does not necessarily indicate disagreement about what happened, but rather a difference in where each side locates responsibility: the sending team points to an upstream selection failure, while the receiving team points to the compressed schedule that followed

from it. Both explanations are consistent with the data and are arguably two stages of the same causal chain, but the fact that neither side's account fully incorporates the other's framing suggests that the two teams did not converge on a shared diagnosis of the transition's central difficulty, even after the fact. This is consistent with the survey finding that the effect of collaboration duration on overall experience was significant for Indian respondents specifically, a pattern that held up across multiple model specifications and was not observed among Argentine respondents (see Annex 4, Table 4.24). Read alongside the interview evidence, this suggests that the Pune team's evaluation of the transition continued to improve well beyond the formal go-live date, consistent with the gradual rather than discrete character of ramp-up already noted above, and implying that the consequences of the initial knowledge gap, however it originated, were felt by the Pune team over a longer horizon than the Buenos Aires account alone would suggest.

Hypothesis 3

- Structured and effective knowledge transfer mechanisms facilitated effective knowledge transfer between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune during the offshoring of the RCC process.

The results of the investigation partially validate H3. The data confirms that structured mechanisms were in place and that they ultimately enabled the Pune team to achieve operational autonomy. Both Buenos Aires participants rated DTP adequacy at 5 out of 5, and all four RCC participants consistently identified in-person training and practice-based verification as effective formats. The Likert data across all four RCC primary participants shows Pillar 2 averages ranging from 4.0 to 4.3, the most consistent pillar across the entire table, suggesting broad agreement that the knowledge transfer mechanisms were adequately structured overall. Read against Szulanski's (1996) four-stage model, the evidence indicates that these mechanisms performed their intended function at the initiation and implementation stages, where the DTPs and structured training sessions provided an

adequate explicit-knowledge foundation; the breakdown occurred specifically at the ramp-up stage, where the gap between documented procedure and independent judgment proved resistant to the same mechanisms, and where the consequences of the initial knowledge gap continued to be felt over a longer horizon for the Pune team than the Buenos Aires account alone suggested.

However, the hypothesis cannot be fully validated, for two distinct reasons that should not be conflated. First, the tacit knowledge dimensions that no DTP could capture, particularly the judgment-based criteria associated with the supervisory role, represent a genuine limit of what structured transfer mechanisms can achieve regardless of the receiving team's starting point, consistent with Szulanski and Jensen's (2006) emphasis on the difficulty of replicating practices with sufficient fidelity. Second, the absorptive capacity gap created by limitations in the recruitment process is a less clean test of the hypothesis, since it originated upstream of the transfer process itself rather than from any weakness in the mechanisms used to deliver it. As the HR data independently confirmed, the gap was substantially self-inflicted rather than structural; a team with the assumed baseline knowledge might have reached autonomy within the four to five month window without exposing any limitation in the transfer mechanisms at all. This distinction matters for the interpretation of the hypothesis: the case offers strong evidence that structured mechanisms function well at the stages they are designed for, but it offers a confounded rather than clean test of their limits, since one of the two main reasons autonomy took longer than planned was not a property of the mechanisms but of an avoidable error upstream of them. The extended learning and consolidation period therefore reflects two compounded but analytically separable problems: a structural limit on what explicit transfer tools can capture, and a contingent, preventable gap in the receiving team's starting capability, both of which extended the ramp-up stage well beyond what was planned, and whose combined effects were felt unevenly across the two teams.

Research Question 4

- How do cultural and linguistic differences influence communication and collaboration between Argentine and Indian professionals with direct mutual work experience?

Cultural and linguistic differences influence communication and collaboration through two principal channels. First, a cultural channel centred on power distance: the Pune team's deference to authority and its concern with not appearing incompetent produced verbal confirmation without behavioural follow-through, an effect amplified by harsher internal messaging on the receiving side. Second, a linguistic channel centred on English accent and information volume, which generated comprehension friction during synchronous sessions. The influence of both channels was initially obstructive but progressively attenuating, reduced by targeted adaptations such as live transcription, visual aids, paired exercises and growing accent familiarity, and most decisively by the trust accumulated through repeated interaction and informal relationship-building. Critically, the influence was experienced asymmetrically by the two sides: the sending team in Buenos Aires registered the frictions more acutely and named them more concretely, while the receiving team in Pune evaluated the same dynamics more positively. This divergence proved to be a genuine country-of-origin effect rather than a difference in professional profile, and it is theoretically anchored in Hofstede's power-distance gap between the two countries and in Hall's distinction between low- and high-context cultures.

Hypothesis 4

The results validate H4: both clauses are confirmed by the convergence of interview and survey evidence. Cultural and linguistic differences did generate initial barriers, and those barriers diminished progressively as cross-cultural experience accumulated. The two Buenos Aires interviews converged independently on the Pune team's relationship with authority as the most consequential cultural dynamic of the training period. Both participants described a recurring pattern in which Pune analysts confirmed comprehension verbally yet did not

translate that confirmation into practice, attributing it to culturally conditioned behaviour, the avoidance of appearing incompetent before trainers, rather than to genuine language difficulty: "For me, it was more cultural. We noticed a strong fear of negative consequences like being seen as incompetent." Both reported that the pattern diminished substantially as interpersonal trust accumulated, visible within the first weeks and markedly less pronounced on later trips, while informal relationship-building, shared meals, tea breaks, and an occasion on which the Pune team dressed the Buenos Aires visitors in traditional Indian clothing, converted a transactional exchange into a genuine connection. The survey quantifies this: on communication quality India scored 8.00 against Argentina's 6.76, a large, significant gap ($d = 0.93$, $p < 0.001$) that held even after controlling for industry, English level, age and duration through matching (post-match $p = 0.0027$), confirming a genuine country effect rather than a difference in professional profile (Annex 4, Tables 4.6 and 4.17). The hierarchy item provides the cleanest confirmation of the cultural mechanism: Argentines rated the Pune team's decision-making as more hierarchical than the Indians rated themselves, the strongest divergence in the instrument, reproducing the deference-to-authority pattern and aligning with Hofstede's Power Distance scores of 49 for Argentina and 77 for India (Annex 4, Figure 4.10).

This alignment with Hofstede should not, however, be read as a simple confirmation of the framework. Hofstede's static, country-level indices predict the direction of the asymmetry, but they cannot account for what the interviews and the age effect jointly reveal: that the gap was not fixed but attenuated with exposure, with older professionals (34+) perceiving both communication and the overall experience significantly more favourably than younger ones (Annex 4, Figure 4.11). Power Distance theory describes a stable cultural trait; this case suggests that its behavioural expression in a working relationship is elastic and erodes through accumulated contact, which is closer to the contextual, learning-based view of cultural intelligence advanced by Earley and Ang (2003) than to Hofstede's dimensional

model. The case therefore contributes a temporal qualification that neither framework fully anticipates on its own.

A second point of critical reflection concerns the hypothesis's own framing. H4 treats cultural difference as a barrier to be overcome, yet the decision-tree analysis indicates that cultural dynamics (C) were the single strongest predictor of the adaptation profile (importance 0.746; CV AUC = 0.908), with operational coordination (D) second (0.234), rather than a friction that adaptation simply dissolved (Annex 4, Figure 4.27). This invites an alternative reading: culture functioned less as an obstacle and more as the structuring axis of the entire collaboration outcome, the variable around which high and low adaptation organized themselves. The open-ended responses support this convergent-validity argument, with Argentine respondents naming frictions concretely and with negative affect while Indian respondents softened and abstracted them, precisely the contrast Hall's high- versus low-context framework predicts (Annex 4, Figures 4.28 and 4.29). Taken together, the persistence of the initial gap, its progressive resolution through experience and trust, and its reframing as a structuring rather than merely obstructive force confirm both clauses while refining the conceptual status of "cultural difference" the hypothesis assumed.

Research Question 5

- How did the offshoring of the RCC process affect operational coordination and KPI performance continuity between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune?

The offshoring affected operational coordination and KPI continuity as a temporary, recoverable disruption rather than a permanent degradation. On coordination, the transition imposed three concrete burdens: the 8.5-to-9-hour time-zone gap, prolonged dependency on Buenos Aires for complex cases, and the January month-end close colliding with peak training, which forced shift changes and adaptations, with confirmed continued reliance on

on-site presence well into the test phase. These were substantially mitigated but not eliminated by standardized workflows and especially the buddy system, which supplied the mutual adjustment that tooling alone could not. On KPI continuity, the effect followed a measurable dip-and-recovery pattern: the $\geq 90\%$ daily accuracy and five-day backlog targets were missed during the first month and dropped most sharply at the January close, then recovered and consolidated as the receiving team accumulated exposure, a trajectory corroborated by the wave-on-wave improvement reported in the interviews and consistent with the post-handover risk period described by Walsh et al. (2008). A final and important clarification of the data: contrary to what a purely operational reading might suggest, the gap in perceived coordination between the two teams is not a sectoral artefact but a genuine country-level difference, as it remained statistically significant even after industry, English level, age and duration were controlled through matching (post-match $p = 0.0033$). Standardized workflows and the buddy system reduced coordination friction and enabled recovery, but did not equalize how the two teams experienced coordination, pointing to a structural-positional component that process design alone did not resolve.

Hypothesis 5

- Standardized workflows mitigated operational coordination disruptions during the offshoring of the RCC process, supporting KPI performance continuity between the RCC team in Buenos Aires and the RCC team in Pune.

The results partially validate H5. The mitigation half of the claim holds, but the continuity half requires qualification, and a third finding complicates the workflow-centred logic of the hypothesis in a way that merits critical attention. The interviews identified three structural constraints on coordination: the 8.5-to-9-hour time-zone differential, an extended dependency on Buenos Aires for complex-case resolution beyond the planned timeline, and the coincidence of the January month-end close with peak training intensity. Buenos Aires absorbed much of the time-zone burden by shifting working hours, but this proved

unsustainable once it ran past the expected period: "Many people started their shifts at 4 or 5 in the morning ... Initially it worked, but when it extended beyond the expected period, it started to affect performance." Microsoft Teams, email and SharePoint were judged functionally adequate but insufficient to replace in-person presence during active training. The mechanism most credited with mitigating friction was the buddy system, which paired each Pune analyst with a dedicated Buenos Aires contact: "Assigning a dedicated buddy in Buenos Aires to each person in Pune ... made communication much more effective." On the performance side, the binding metrics, a daily quality check requiring ninety per cent accuracy and a five-day maximum backlog, were not consistently met during the first month, with January close to the single most critical drop of the transition. The continuity clause is therefore supported only in a dip-and-recovery sense: performance fell during the high-intensity window and then consolidated as exposure accumulated, a path reinforced by the wave-on-wave improvement described in the interviews, consistent with the post-handover risk period in which performance dips before consolidating, as described by Walsh et al. (2008).

The survey, however, produces an unexpected result that the original framing of the hypothesis does not accommodate. The gap in perceived coordination between the two teams remained significant even after controlling for industry, English level, age and duration through matching (post-match $p = 0.0033$), indicating a genuine country-level difference in how each team experienced operational coordination rather than an artefact of sectoral composition (Annex 4, Table 4.18 and Figure 4.22). This raises a question the hypothesis cannot answer on its own: if standardized workflows and the buddy system mitigated friction, why did the two teams continue to experience coordination so differently even when equivalent profiles are compared? Three interpretations are plausible. The first is positional: the receiving team (Pune), structurally positioned to gain capability, may experience the same coordination more favourably than the team ceding the process (Buenos Aires), independently of the tooling, an asymmetry consistent with the systematic perceptual gap

visible across the whole instrument. The second is methodological: with nineteen matched pairs, propensity-score matching balances observable covariates but cannot rule out unobserved confounders, so a residual difference cannot be attributed to nationality with full confidence. The third is substantive: standardization may simply not reach the dimension of coordination that the two teams perceive differently. The evidence does not allow a definitive adjudication between these readings.

This result also places the case in productive tension with coordination theory. Malone and Crowston (1994) hold that standardization lowers coordination cost without removing the mutual-adjustment requirement, which the buddy system supplied during the most uncertain phase, and to that extent the case confirms their model. Yet their framework treats coordination as a design problem solvable through mechanism choice; the persistence of a country-level perceptual gap after standardization and matching suggests that, in cross-border offshoring, coordination carries a cultural-positional component that a purely mechanism-centred theory underweights. The case thus contributes to a boundary condition: standardized workflows reduced friction and enabled recovery, but did not equalize the coordination experience across teams, because part of that experience was rooted in each team's structural position rather than in process design. The hypothesis is therefore supported in its mitigation-and-recovery sense, standardized workflows and the buddy system did reduce friction and performance did recover, but not in a strict continuity sense, since both targets were temporarily missed and continuity was rebuilt rather than preserved.

Research Question 6

- How was the subsequent offshoring of the EDI process from the United States to Buenos Aires influenced by the offshoring of the RCC process from the RCC team in Buenos Aires to the RCC team in Pune?

The investigation reveals a partially inconclusive picture of the relationship between the RCC and EDI transitions. The evidence establishes that the two transitions occurred sequentially, with the RCC transition first and the EDI transition following, and that several participants had direct involvement in both cases, particularly the Ex RCC Supervisor who became EDI Manager and the Ex RCC Team Leader who became EDI Supervisor.

The most direct comparative assessment comes from the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager, who described the RCC transition as significantly more organized and formally structured than the EDI reception. She attributed this difference to organizational maturity accumulated over time rather than to the deliberate codification of lessons, noting: *"The RCC transition from Buenos Aires to Pune was significantly more organized by comparison. I believe learnings from earlier experiences were incorporated, even if informally, through organizational maturity over time."* The phrase "even if informally" is analytically significant on its own terms, but it also invites a more critical reading through Zollo and Winter's (2002) typology of learning mechanisms, which distinguishes experience accumulation, knowledge articulation, and knowledge codification as progressively more deliberate and, for infrequent and heterogeneous tasks such as offshoring transitions, progressively more effective. The Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager's account describes, at most, experience accumulation: practitioners who lived through the RCC transition carried internalized habits and instincts into the EDI reception, without any indication that those lessons were ever deliberately articulated in conversation or codified into guidance for the receiving team. By Zollo and Winter's own framework, this is the least effective of the three mechanisms for a task of this kind, precisely because it depends on the same individuals being present to apply what they learned, rather than on transferable knowledge that could inform the EDI transition independently of who staffed it. The case therefore illustrates not merely an absence of organizational learning, but a concrete instance of the specific failure mode that Zollo and Winter's theory predicts when codification is skipped.

The EDI Team Leader provided the most positive account of the receiving experience from the Minnesota-Buenos Aires transition. He described clear upfront communication, constant bilateral contact with the US team, and an extended informal support period beyond the formal three-month structured window. He identified sustained bilateral communication as the most critical facilitator, noting: *"Both teams were in contact multiple times per day, with fast response times on both sides. The willingness to engage on short notice made the remote format work better than it might have otherwise."* He estimated that the Buenos Aires team resolved the vast majority of open questions in approximately three months, though edge cases continued to require occasional contact with the US team beyond that point.

The EDI Team Leader's account, while positive, also contains a structural signal worth examining more closely. He attributes the success of the remote-only format primarily to the sustained availability of the US team well beyond the formal three-month support window, rather than to any documentation or codified procedure that could function independently of that ongoing contact. This pattern is consistent with Wiener et al.'s (2010) observation that close oversight during a transition period may be necessary to mitigate early risk and build trust, but that it tends to increase transaction costs over time and cannot substitute for the development of independent operational capability in the receiving unit. Read this way, the EDI transition's apparent early success was substantially a function of informal and more direct support that delayed rather than resolved the underlying documentation gap, a possibility that becomes difficult to ignore once the EDI Senior Analyst's account is taken into consideration.

The EDI Senior Analyst offered a more critical perspective, having joined the team after the formal transition had concluded. He identified insufficient documentation as the primary barrier he encountered: *"When I came on board, many of the procedures were not fully captured in written form, which meant that knowledge was largely held by individuals rather than embedded in accessible materials. That created dependency on specific people."* He

estimated that the team reached genuine operational autonomy approximately nine months after the transition. The divergence between these two estimates reflects their different entry points into the EDI team rather than a factual inconsistency.

The EDI Senior Analyst's account deserves more weight in this discussion than a difference in entry point alone would suggest. His description of insufficient or outdated documentation, in which "knowledge was largely held by individuals rather than embedded in accessible materials," is not a new or distinct problem from the one identified in the RCC case; it is the same specific failure mode recurring in a second, independent transition. If the organizational maturity the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager described had genuinely informed the EDI reception, the most direct and falsifiable prediction would be that EDI documentation should not have repeated the RCC transition's central weakness, given that this was a known and named problem from the prior case. The fact that it did repeat is evidence against, rather than for, meaningful learning transfer between the two transitions, and it should be weighed accordingly rather than absorbed into a general statement that learning occurred "informally."

The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor offered the most skeptical comparative assessment, arguing that the structural differences between the two transitions were substantial enough to limit meaningful lesson transfer. He identified three specific structural differences: the Buenos Aires EDI team already had previous finance knowledge unlike the newly hired Pune team; the cultural compatibility between Argentina and the United States was considerably greater than between Argentina and India; and the linguistic barrier was lower because at least one party was working in its native language. As he concluded: *"I would not say that the RCC model was used as inspiration for the EDI transition. Perhaps some best practices related to training, collaboration, and encouraging questions were applied, but I think those were already things that the Buenos Aires team had internalized."*

The three structural differences the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor identifies, namely existing Ecolab employees rather than new hires, cultural proximity to the United States, and

reduced linguistic distance, are also worth examining through Szulanski and Jensen's (2006) concept of presumptive adaptation, the tendency to modify or withhold a transferred practice based on surface-level contextual differences without a rigorous understanding of which elements were actually responsible for the original practice's effectiveness. All three of the structural differences he cites are about the receiving team's starting characteristics or its relationship with the sending team, not about the specific mechanisms that made the RCC transition's knowledge transfer effective. The buddy system, the live-case practice-based verification methodology, and the preference for in-person over remote training were facilitators tied to how knowledge was transferred, independent of whether the receiving team was newly hired or already experienced, or whether the cultural distance was large or small. None of these mechanisms required cultural or linguistic proximity to function; they addressed a different problem, namely the gap between stated and actual comprehension, which is not specific to any one cultural pairing. Their absence from the EDI transition, which relied on remote sessions and informal Teams-based exchange rather than structured practice-based verification, is therefore not adequately explained by the structural differences the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor cites. This suggests that the decision not to apply these specific facilitators may reflect presumptive adaptation: a reasonable-sounding judgment that the EDI case was different enough to have a different approach, made without examining whether the actual causal mechanisms behind the RCC facilitators were tied to the dimensions of difference being used.

Hypothesis 6

- The organizational experience accumulated during the RCC offshoring process contributed to a more effective reception of the EDI process subsequently transferred from the United States to Buenos Aires, through the application of lessons learned.

The results of the investigation partially validate H6, though the balance of evidence leans toward the lower end of that range. The hypothesis cannot be confirmed in its full form, which implies the deliberate application of codified lessons from the RCC transition to the EDI reception. Both primary participants who experienced both transitions describe the transfer of learning as informal and experiential rather than structured or institutionalized. Read against Zollo and Winter's (2002) typology of learning mechanisms, the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager's account of organizational maturity accumulated "even if informally" describes, at most, experience accumulation, the least effective of the three mechanisms their framework identifies for tasks as infrequent and heterogeneous as offshoring transitions. Neither participant who experienced both cases described any instance of articulation, in the sense of practitioners deliberately discussing what had worked in the RCC transition, nor of codification into guidance the EDI receiving team could draw on independently of who happened to be present. The clearest evidence against full validation is the EDI Senior Analyst's account of insufficient documentation, in which "knowledge was largely held by individuals rather than embedded in accessible materials." This is not a distinct weakness specific to the EDI case; it is the same failure mode already identified as a central barrier in the RCC transition. Its recurrence in a second, independent transition is direct evidence against meaningful learning transfer having occurred, since genuine organizational learning would be expected to prevent a known and previously named problem from repeating rather than simply produce a different outcome.

The Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor's skepticism, while informative, requires a more critical reading than a straightforward endorsement of low validation. His account attributes the limited transfer of lessons to structural differences between the two cases, namely the EDI team's prior finance experience, greater cultural proximity to the United States, and reduced linguistic distance. However, these differences concern the receiving team's starting characteristics rather than the specific mechanisms, such as the buddy system, practice-based verification, and a preference for in-person training, that made the RCC

transition's knowledge transfer effective. None of these mechanisms were inherently dependent on cultural or linguistic proximity, which suggests that their absence from the EDI transition reflects presumptive adaptation, in Szulanski and Jensen's (2006) sense, rather than a reasoned judgment that they would not have applied. Under this reading, the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor's account does not merely describe why lessons were not transferred; it is itself an instance of the mechanism by which they were not transferred, since the surface-level differences he cites appear to have substituted for an examination of which RCC facilitators were actually transferable.

The hypothesis can still be partially supported, but only in a limited way. The EDI reception was operationally successful, and the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager's account suggests that a general sense of structure and training discipline did carry over from the RCC transition, even if only informally. However, this connection relies on what individual employees remembered and carried with them, not on any company-wide system that would make these lessons available even if those specific people were no longer involved. Furthermore, the same documentation weakness seen in the RCC case also appeared in the EDI case, largely unchanged. This points to a narrow, rather than generous, reading of partial validation: some experience may have built up over time, but it was never written down or formally discussed. The case illustrates exactly what Zollo and Winter warn against: relying only on individual experience, without articulation or codification, is not enough to sustain organizational learning across repeated, non-routine transitions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to understand the effects of the offshoring of the Rebills and Credits (RCC) finance process within Ecolab's Global Business Services (GBS) structure, examining the transfer of operational and supervisory responsibilities from the RCC team in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to the newly established RCC team in Pune, India. The evidence points to one central conclusion: the offshoring was effective, but not because of the corporate transition design. It succeeded due to the adaptive intervention of the local leaders who compensated for the gaps left by a designed process that did not fully account for operational realities, and it was sustained through a more difficult and prolonged trajectory than originally anticipated.

Leadership was the clearest determinant of this outcome (H1, fully validated). The practices that made the difference were behavioral and empathetic rather than purely administrative.

Local leaders absorbed a time-zone gap of 8.5 to 9 hours, built interpersonal bonds to counter individualistic working styles, exercised independent operational judgment when the Buenos Aires team was unavailable, and progressively delegated authority as the Pune team matured.

Change management reveals a contrasting picture (H2, partially validated). The corporate strategy was defined by a compressed communication timeline that generated uncertainty and a volatile climate within the Buenos Aires team, a pattern consistently reflected across interview accounts. Despite this, the transition was stabilized by bottom-up containment strategies applied by local leaders and supported by HR, including guarantees of job security and articulated career paths that worked to reduce uncertainty among the affected employees.

Knowledge transfer was effective but insufficient on its own (H3, partially validated).

Structured mechanisms, including Desktop Procedures, in-person training, a buddy system, and a practice-based verification methodology, by a recruitment process that failed to verify

the assumed technical baseline forced an inexperienced Pune team to operational autonomy. However, an absorptive capacity gap caused immediate redesign of the training plan, and genuine autonomy was reached approximately four to five months beyond the planned go-live date.

Cultural and linguistic barriers were real but diminished progressively as interpersonal trust accumulated (H4, fully validated). The survey confirmed this as a genuine country effect, consistent with the Power Distance Index scores of 49 for Argentina and 77 for India. Interpersonal trust multiplied the odds of willingness to repeat the collaboration almost eightfold, locating the foundation of cross-cultural collaboration in the relational domain rather than the merely informational one. These relational dynamics did not exist in isolation, however, they directly shaped the operational coordination between both teams during the transition.

Operational KPI targets were temporarily missed before being recovered, describing a disruption and recovery trajectory rather than seamless continuity (H5, partially validated). The transition imposed concrete coordination burdens: an extended dependency on Buenos Aires for complex cases and the convergence of the January month-end close with peak training, which produced the most critical performance drop of the entire transition. Standardized workflows and the buddy system reduced coordination costs but did not eliminate the need for human adjustment, and continuity was rebuilt rather than preserved without interruption.

The EDI comparative case confirmed that organizational learning does not transfer between successive transitions unless it is deliberately codified (H6, partially validated). Both participants who experienced both cases described the carry-over of learning as informal and individual rather than structured or institutionalized. The EDI transition reproduced the same weakness that the RCC experience might have corrected: tacit and judgment-based knowledge remained held by individuals rather than captured in accessible form, as the

formal procedures documented in DTPs could not account for the operational judgment developed through experience. The EDI reception was ultimately successful, but the connection between RCC experience and EDI effectiveness remained at the level of individual practitioners rather than organizational capability.

Beyond its contribution to the academic literature on offshoring and organizational learning, this study offers a set of concrete, evidence-based recommendations for managers undertaking similar finance process transitions, particularly within captive GBS structures.

First, recruitment for a receiving team should never be treated as a pass-through step delegated entirely to HR. As both the recruitment-gap barrier in H3 and the HR Analyst's independent rating demonstrate, technical skills claimed at interview stage went substantially unverified, and the single most consequential recommendation that emerged from this case, echoed independently by both the Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager and the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor, was to involve operational specialists directly in candidate screening rather than relying on HR judgment alone.

Second, training timelines for offshoring transitions should be built with deliberately conservative barriers rather than calendar-driven deadlines. The Pune team's extended four-to-five-month path to autonomy, well beyond the planned go-live date, was a direct consequence of an assumed baseline of process and tool knowledge that did not exist. Both Buenos Aires leaders independently recommended building in substantially more time than initial planning assumed, and the Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor's explicit advice to "give them more time" rather than "hitting a calendar date" should be read as a direct managerial takeaway from this case.

Third, in-person training and structured practice-based verification, rather than verbal confirmation of understanding, were the facilitators most consistently credited with closing the gap between documented procedure and applied competence. Organizations planning

similar transitions should treat the cost of physical travel as a justified investment rather than a discretionary expense, particularly in the early stages of a transition involving a newly formed receiving team.

Fourth, communication to the sending team's broader workforce should occur substantially earlier than operational planning alone would suggest. The compressed timeline that informed the wider Buenos Aires team only days before the first travelers departed generated measurable distress and contributed to voluntary attrition; both primary participants identified earlier, more transparent communication as the single change that would have had the greatest positive impact on the transition overall.

Finally, where an organization undertakes successive offshoring transitions, as Ecolab did with the RCC and EDI cases, lessons from earlier transitions should be deliberately articulated and codified rather than left to accumulate informally in the experience of individual practitioners. The recurrence of the same documentation weakness in the EDI case that had already been identified and named during the RCC transition is the clearest evidence in this study that informal organizational memory is an insufficient substitute for structured knowledge management across transitions.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the research design centers on a single bounded case within one multinational organization; while the EDI comparative case strengthens the analytical depth of the study, both cases originate from the same corporate environment, and the findings should not be generalized to offshoring transitions in other industries, organizational structures, or country pairings without further empirical testing. Second, the EDI comparative case could not include interviews with the original Minnesota-based sending team, as those employees were no longer employed at Ecolab at the time of data collection; the EDI findings therefore rest entirely on the receiving team's account of a process it did not originate, which may understate the structure or rigor of the original Minnesota-side training design. Third,

KPI-related findings are based exclusively on participant recall rather than verified operational records, given the confidential nature of Ecolab's internal performance data; while this is a defensible methodological choice given the constraints of the research context, it introduces the possibility of retrospective bias in how participants characterized performance trends during the transition. Fourth, while the survey instrument reached a substantial and balanced sample of eighty-seven respondents across both countries, response collection relied on convenience and snowball sampling rather than random probability sampling, which limits the statistical generalizability of the survey findings beyond the population from which respondents were drawn.

Future research could address these limitations in several ways. A multi-case comparative study examining offshoring transitions across different industries or organizational models would help establish whether the leadership, knowledge transfer, and coordination dynamics identified here are specific to GBS finance functions or generalize more broadly. A longitudinal design following a transition from initiation through several years of post-handover operation would allow researchers to test directly whether the temporal attenuation of cultural and linguistic friction observed in this study, and the broader question of whether organizational learning from one transition genuinely informs subsequent ones, persist or strengthen over a longer time horizon than this study's data collection window allowed. Finally, future studies could incorporate access to verified KPI records, where confidentiality constraints permit, to test whether participant-recalled performance trends align with documented operational data, thereby strengthening the empirical foundation for claims about performance continuity during offshoring transitions.

Taken together, the findings of this study offer a concrete account of what it takes for a finance process offshoring transition to succeed within a GBS structure. Effective corporate planning matters, but it is local leadership, interpersonal trust, and the deliberate management of knowledge that determine whether a transition works in practice.

Organizations undertaking similar processes would benefit from investing in these dimensions from the start, rather than relying on individuals to compensate for institutional gaps after the fact.

GLOSSARY

Absorptive Capacity: The ability of an organization to recognize the value of new external information, assimilate it, and apply it productively. This capacity is path-dependent and develops as a function of prior related knowledge. (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990).

Change Management: A structured approach to transitioning individuals, teams, and organizations from a current operational state to a desired future state. It encompasses the planning, communication, leadership, and support mechanisms required to manage organizational disruption while maintaining performance continuity and team engagement. (Lewin, 1947 & Kotter, 1995, 2012).

Cultural Intelligence (CQ): The capability to function effectively in settings characterized by cultural diversity. It operates across three dimensions: cognitive understanding of cultural norms, motivational confidence in intercultural situations, and behavioral adaptation of communication. (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004).

Desktop Procedure (DTP): A standardized operational document that describes, step by step, how a specific process or task should be executed within an organization. In the context of the RCC offshoring, DTPs were the primary vehicle for codifying explicit process knowledge and making it transferable to the Pune team.

Dynamic Capabilities: Learned and stable patterns of collective activity through which an organization systematically generates and modifies its operating routines in pursuit of improved effectiveness. (Zollo & Winter, 2002).

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI): A standardized method for the electronic exchange of business documents between organizations, such as invoices, purchase orders, and shipping notices, in a structured digital format. In this study, it refers to the finance process that was relocated from the EDI team in Minnesota, United States, to the EDI team in

Buenos Aires, Argentina, serving as a comparative internal case for the RCC offshoring analysis.

Explicit Knowledge: Knowledge that can be easily codified, documented and transmitted through formal channels, such as standard operating procedures or Desktop Procedures (DTPs). (Liyanage et al., 2009).

Global Business Services (GBS): An organizational model that integrates multiple support functions under a unified global corporate governance. It operates across multi-function, multi-region, multi-localization, multi-sourcing, and multi-business dimensions to drive strategic value creation rather than mere transactional efficiency. (Deloitte, 2023 cited in Morgado, 2025).

High-Context Communication: A communication style in which meaning is primarily conveyed through implicit cues, tone, relationship context, and non-verbal signals rather than through the explicit verbal content of a message. Cultures characterized by high-context communication tend to rely on shared background knowledge and relational trust, which can create interpretive gaps when interacting with low-context communicators who expect directness and explicitness. (Hall, 1976, as cited in Hofstede et al., 2010).

Hyper-Care Phase: A structured post-transition support period during which the sending team continues to provide active operational assistance, error correction, and process coaching to the receiving team after the formal handover of responsibilities has occurred. It is designed to bridge the gap between the formal go-live date and the point at which the receiving team achieves full operational autonomy.

Knowledge Stickiness: The difficulty of transferring best practices within organizations, even when both units belong to the same firm. This friction is primarily driven by the recipient's lack of absorptive capacity, causal ambiguity, and the arduousness of the relationship. (Szulanski, 1996).

Knowledge Transfer: The process of identifying, acquiring, and applying accessible knowledge to develop new ideas or enhance existing ones, ultimately fostering improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and safety within organizational operations. (Liyanage et al., 2009).

Local Leaders: Within the context of the Ecolab offshoring transition, local leaders refer to the direct, ground-level management personnel, specifically Supervisors, Team Leaders, and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in both Buenos Aires and Pune, who were responsible for the practical execution of the process transfer. Also, they were the primary agents who mitigated the emotional distress of the transition through bottom-up containment strategies.

Offshoring: The total or partial transfer of an industrial activity (manufacturing or services) abroad, either to an existing or new affiliate, or through subcontracting to non-affiliated companies. (Broecke, 2024).

Power Distance: The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010).

Presumptive Adaptation: The tendency of managers to modify a transferred practice based on surface-level contextual differences without a rigorous understanding of which specific elements are causally responsible for the practice's original effectiveness. (Szulanski & Jensen, 2006).

Rebills and Credits (RCC): The finance process that constitutes the primary unit of analysis in this study. It involves issuing corrected invoices (rebills), processing customer credits, and resolving billing discrepancies for clients located in the United States, and was relocated from the RCC team in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to the newly established RCC team in Pune, India.

Service Level Agreement (SLA): A formal commitment between a service provider and its clients or stakeholders that defines the expected standards of performance for a given process, including metrics such as response times, error rates, and processing volume targets. In the RCC offshoring context, SLA compliance was used as a benchmark for evaluating whether the Pune team had achieved operational performance equivalent to that of the Buenos Aires team.

Shared Service Centers (SSC): An operational model that centralizes administrative functions, operating with a predominantly regional reach and focusing heavily on the efficiency of transactional processes. (Silva, 2023 and Walsh et al., 2008).

Subject Matter Expert (SME): An individual with deep functional knowledge and operational expertise in a specific process or domain, who serves as a primary knowledge source and trainer during an offshoring transition. In the RCC case, SMEs from the Buenos Aires team traveled to Pune to deliver in-person training and provide process-level guidance to the receiving team.

Standardized workflows: Documented operational procedures, performance targets, and coordination mechanisms that governed the execution of the RCC process across both locations.

Tacit Knowledge: Knowledge that individuals possess but cannot easily articulate, as it is non-verbalized, intuitive, and deeply embedded in daily operational practice and judgment. (Polanyi, 1966, cited in Liyanage et al., 2009).

Train the Trainer: A knowledge transfer methodology in which selected individuals are first trained to a high level of competency in a specific process, and then tasked with delivering that training to the receiving team. In the RCC offshoring, Buenos Aires team members acting as Subject Matter Experts were prepared through structured Train the Trainer sessions before traveling to Pune to deliver in-person operational training.

Transformational Leadership: A leadership style in which leaders motivate followers by articulating a compelling vision, fostering intellectual stimulation, and providing individualized consideration, as opposed to transactional leadership, which operates through contingent reward mechanisms. Transformational leadership has been shown to be particularly effective in changing contexts, with stronger effects in Eastern cultural settings than in Western ones. (Bass & Avolio, 1995 & Peng et al., 2021).

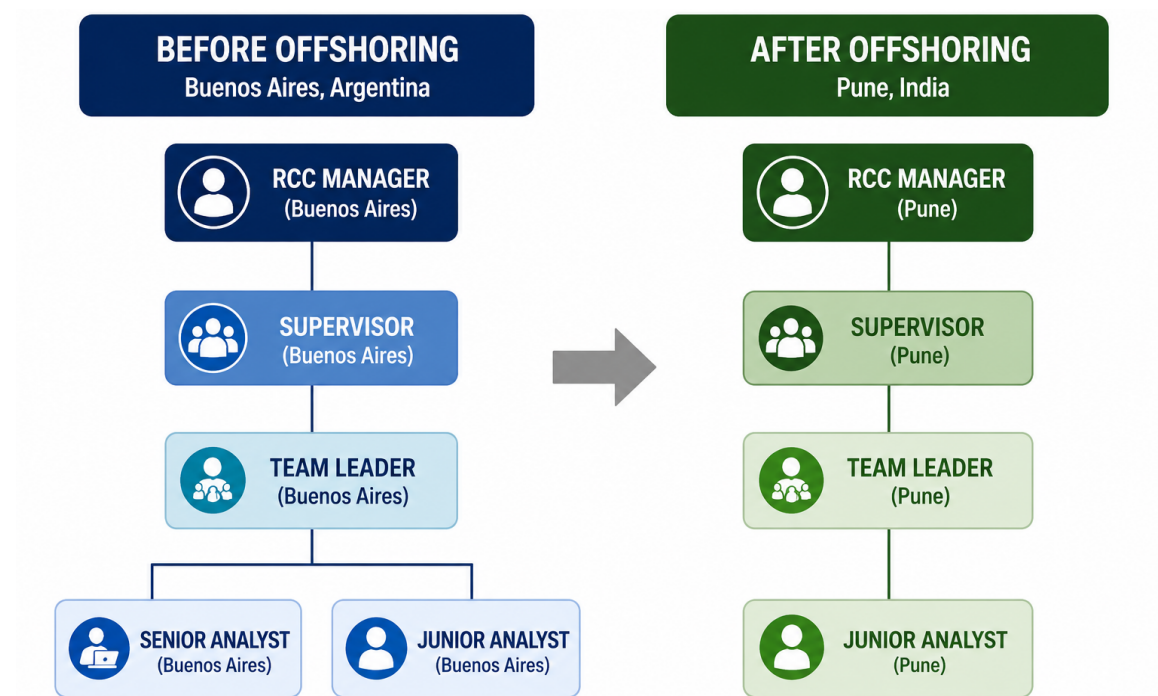
ANNEXES

1. Annex 1 - RCC Organizational Structure, Process Description and Role Distribution.

This annex presents the organizational structure of the Rebills and Credits (RCC) teams involved in the offshoring process within Ecolab's Global Business Services (GBS) structure. It describes the hierarchical distribution of roles and responsibilities across the RCC team in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the RCC team in Pune, India. The Pune GBS center was newly established at the time of the transition, and all members of the RCC team in Pune were newly hired employees with no prior experience within Ecolab's processes, systems, or organizational culture.

The structure reflects the different levels of responsibility involved in the execution, coordination, and management of the RCC process, as well as the redistribution of these responsibilities during the offshoring transition. The analysis distinguishes between four hierarchical levels: Manager, Supervisors, Team Leaders, and Analysts (Senior and Junior).

Figure 1: RCC Organizational Structure



Note: Self-developed by the authors. Based on participants' answers involved in the RCC transition. The figure illustrates reporting lines and role hierarchy before and after the relocation of finance activities from Buenos Aires to Pune; it does not represent the number of employees in each position.

1. Description of the RCC Process

The RCC process involves the management of billing corrections and customer credit transactions on behalf of Ecolab's stakeholders in the United States. Core operational activities include identifying billing discrepancies that require correction, issuing rebills to replace inaccurate invoices, processing customer credits to reverse or adjust charges, and resolving exceptions that arise when standard billing transactions cannot be completed as originally submitted. These activities require analysts to combine working knowledge of Ecolab's billing systems with operational judgment to ensure that corrections are processed accurately, applied to the appropriate accounts, and completed within the timeframes established by service level agreements.

2. Description of Roles and Responsibilities

2.1. RCC Manager:

The RCC manager is responsible for the overall supervision and performance of the RCC process. Before the offshoring process, the RCC Manager in Buenos Aires oversaw the execution of the RCC process, monitored performance indicators, and reported to the GBS Finance Manager responsible for multiple finance functions (Rebills and Credits, Billing, Collections, etc). During and after the transition, the RCC Manager in Pune assumed responsibility for managing the process, ensuring continuity, and aligning operations with organizational objectives.

Key responsibilities include:

- Monitoring overall process performance and KPI achievement
- Making operational and process-related decisions
- Reporting to the GBS Finance Manager performance results and operational issues
- Ensuring process stability and continuous improvement

2.2. RCC Supervisor:

The supervisor acts as the primary coordination layer between managerial oversight and operational execution.

The supervisor in Buenos Aires initially coordinated RCC operations, monitored team performance, and supported the transition process by organizing the transfer of responsibilities. After the offshoring process, the supervisor in Pune assumed responsibility for coordinating daily operations and ensuring alignment with managerial expectations.

Key responsibilities include:

- Defining task prioritization
- Allocating workload among team leaders and analysts
- Monitoring team-level KPIs and performance indicators
- Leading weekly and monthly performance meetings
- Acting as a communication bridge between team leaders and the RCC Manager
- Managing escalations and complex operational issues
- Ensuring accountability for team-level performance

2.3. RCC Team Leader:

The team leader operates as an intermediate layer between Supervisors and Analysts, combining operational execution with coordination responsibilities.

During the transition, the team leader in Buenos Aires played a key role in supporting knowledge transfer by guiding analysts in Pune. After the transition, the team leader in Pune became responsible for coordinating day-to-day activities and supporting operational execution.

Key responsibilities include:

- Supporting analysts in problem-solving and case resolution
- Monitoring short-term KPIs and daily performance
- Coordinating and prioritizing daily and weekly workload distribution
- Providing feedback and guidance to analysts

A key distinction between the team leader and the supervisor is that Team Leaders remain involved in operational execution, whereas the supervisor focuses primarily on coordination, control, and performance management.

2.4. Analysts: Analysts are responsible for executing core RCC process activities.

2.4.1. Senior Analysts

Senior Analysts handle higher-complexity cases and accounts, requiring advanced analysis and interaction with internal stakeholders.

Key responsibilities include:

- Resolving complex or non-standard cases
- Performing advanced problem-solving
- Communicating with internal stakeholders associated with complex accounts
- Supporting junior analysts and contributing to knowledge sharing

2.4.2. Junior Analysts

Junior Analysts focus on standardized tasks and lower-complexity cases, operating under closer supervision.

Key responsibilities include:

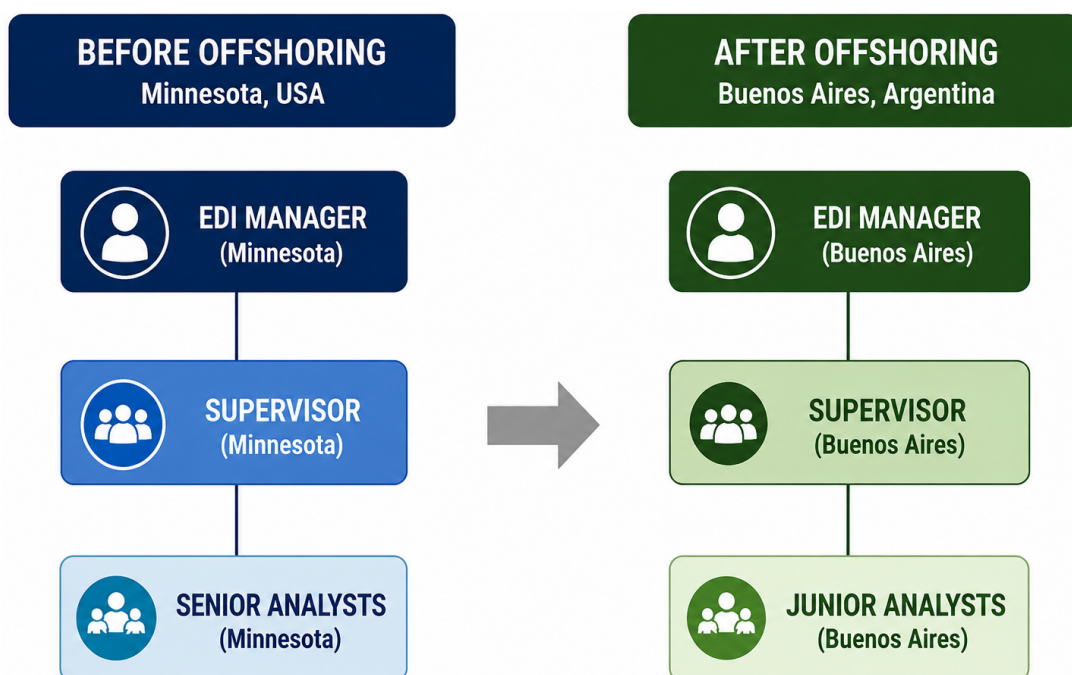
- Executing routine RCC tasks following established procedures
- Handling lower-complexity cases and limited interaction with internal stakeholders
- Receiving guidance from senior analysts and team leader.

2. Annex 2 - EDI Organizational Structure, Process Description and Role Distribution.

This annex presents the organizational structure of the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) teams involved in the comparative offshoring case examined in this study. It describes the hierarchical distribution of roles and responsibilities across the EDI team in Minnesota, United States, and the EDI team in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Unlike the Pune RCC team, the Buenos Aires EDI team was composed primarily of employees who were already working within Ecolab's GBS structure in other teams and were subsequently assigned to the newly formed EDI team.

The structure reflects the different levels of responsibility involved in the execution, coordination, and management of the EDI process, as well as the redistribution of these responsibilities during the offshoring transition. The analysis distinguishes between four hierarchical levels: Manager, Supervisor, Team Leader, and Analysts (Senior and Junior).

Figure 2: EDI Organizational Structure



Note: Self-developed by the authors based on participants's answers involved in the EDI transition. The figure illustrates reporting lines and role hierarchy before and after the

relocation of finance activities from Minnesota to Buenos Aires; it does not represent the number of employees in each position.

1. Description of the EDI Process

The EDI process involves the management of electronic invoicing submissions between Ecolab and its clients. Core operational activities include handling invoices rejected by client systems, identifying and correcting the errors that caused the rejection, resubmitting the corrected invoices through the appropriate channels, and managing bulk submission files for clients whose invoices cannot be processed automatically due to system configuration constraints. These activities require analysts to combine technical system knowledge with operational judgment to ensure that billing transactions are completed accurately and within established timeframes.

2. Description of Roles and Responsibilities

2.1. EDI Manager:

The EDI Manager was responsible for the overall supervision and performance of the EDI process. In the Minnesota structure, the Manager oversaw the EDI team alongside other teams simultaneously, meaning the EDI team did not have a dedicated manager exclusively assigned to it. When the process was transferred to Buenos Aires, this shared managerial arrangement was maintained, with the Manager responsible for multiple teams within the GBS structure.

Key responsibilities include:

- Monitoring overall process performance and KPI achievement
- Making operational and process-related decisions
- Reporting performance results and operational issues to GBS leadership
- Ensuring process stability and continuity across the transition

2.2. Supervisor:

The Supervisor acted as the primary coordination layer between managerial oversight and operational execution.

In Minnesota, the Supervisor oversaw the EDI team's daily operations. During the transition, the Minnesota Supervisor traveled to Buenos Aires as part of the three-person training team, alongside two Senior Analysts, to train the newly formed Buenos Aires EDI team. After the transition was completed, supervisory responsibility passed to a Buenos Aires-based employee. Notably, this individual had previously held a Team Leader position in the RCC team before being promoted to Supervisor for the EDI team in Buenos Aires, representing an upward role transition that occurred as a direct result of the offshoring event.

Key responsibilities include:

- Coordinating daily EDI operations
- Allocating workload among analysts
- Monitoring team-level performance indicators
- Leading performance meetings
- Managing escalations and complex operational issues
- Acting as communication bridge between analysts and the Manager

2.3. Team Leader:

The Team Leader role did not exist in the original EDI team structure when the process was first transferred to Buenos Aires. Initially, the Buenos Aires team operated with only a Supervisor and analysts. Over time, as analysts developed experience and seniority within the team, one analyst was promoted to a combined Senior Analyst and Team Leader role, effectively occupying both positions simultaneously. This organic emergence of the Team

Leader role reflects the gradual consolidation of the Buenos Aires EDI team as it matured following the initial transition.

Key responsibilities include:

- Supporting analysts in problem-solving and case resolution
- Monitoring short-term KPIs and daily performance
- Coordinating and prioritizing daily workload distribution
- Providing feedback and guidance to analysts
- Continuing to participate in operational execution alongside coordination responsibilities

2.4. Analysts: Analysts are responsible for executing core EDI process activities

2.4.1. Senior Analysts:

In the Minnesota team, Senior Analysts held the highest analyst-level position. Two Senior Analysts from Minnesota traveled to Buenos Aires to train the newly formed local team, serving as the primary knowledge transmitters during the transition period. Their presence in Buenos Aires was essential given the technical and procedural complexity of the EDI process.

Key responsibilities include:

- Resolving complex or non-standard invoice cases
- Performing advanced problem-solving on rejected submissions
- Communicating with internal stakeholders on complex accounts
- Supporting junior analysts and contributing to knowledge sharing

2.4.2. Junior Analysts:

When the Buenos Aires EDI team was first established, all local analysts held Junior Analyst positions. The team was composed of four analysts, the majority of whom were already employed within Ecolab's GBS structure in other teams prior to joining the EDI team. Over time, analysts progressed through the seniority ladder, with at least one eventually reaching a combined Senior Analyst and Team Leader role.

Key responsibilities include:

- Handling standardized invoice rejection and resubmission cases to vendor portals
- Receiving guidance from senior analysts and the supervisor

3. Annex 3 - Instrument 1: Interviews

3.1. Synchronous interviews

3.1.1. Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager, Buenos Aires - Ecolab GBS

Question N° 1: Could you briefly describe your role within the organization and your participation in the offshoring/transition process from Buenos Aires to Pune?

***Interviewed:** I played a dual role: on one hand, I traveled as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for my own process; on the other, I acted as a leader at the time. I was the only supervisor who traveled with the team. So I had my team and other people under my charge, in a sense. My role was divided between being an SME and supporting the training sessions.*

Question N° 2: Before the first wave began, how was the offshoring decision communicated to your team in Buenos Aires? What information was shared, and at what stage of the process?

***Interviewed:** The communication happened in several stages. There were internal communications that took place before I was informed. For the team directly involved in the training and travel, we were notified one month before departing. It was a face-to-face meeting at the office where we were called to a different floor without prior notice. About two months before, the leadership team (supervisors) was informed. Then, one month before the departure, the rest of the team were told. And approximately one week before our departure, a broader town hall was held for the rest of the teams, with all leaders present.*

Question N° 3: How was the relocation decision formally communicated to the affected teams? Was there a structured communication plan, and how did employees receive and react to the news?

***Interviewed:** It was a staged process. It began many months earlier at higher hierarchical levels and cascaded down progressively. I understand there was a structured plan behind it,*

although I did not participate in designing it. We were required to sign a confidentiality agreement. As for how employees received the news: there was a wide range of reactions. Those of us who were informed earlier had more time to process it and ask questions, though many answers could not be given yet due to confidentiality constraints, particularly because another team was about to lose those tasks without yet knowing that new work would be coming. When the broader team received the news, there was a lot of concern and distress. We held follow-up meetings with each sub-team to address questions and concerns.

Question N° 4: Do you think the timing and framing of the communication were adequate, or would you have done it differently? Did it feel like a well-prepared organizational process, or something that teams had to figure out as they went?

***Interviewed:** It is difficult to say. What I would have done differently is communicate to the full team a bit earlier, not as last-minute as it was. The broader team found out on a Thursday, and the first group was already traveling on Sunday or Monday. That was very little time. I would have given them a couple more weeks to process the news.*

Question N° 5: Did you participate in defining the scope of the transition? Which processes to migrate, in what order, and with what timelines or did those decisions arrive from higher levels?

***Interviewed:** Those decisions were taken by a dedicated project team. They were already defined when communicated to us. I did not participate in scoping those decisions.*

Question N° 6: How did the team react to the transition decision? What was the range of responses, from the most resistant to the most cooperative?

***Interviewed:** The first reaction was that people feared they were all going to be fired. There was a generalized sense of anxiety, partly because no clear answers could be given yet, a new process was coming but could not be announced either due to another confidentiality*

agreement. The most recurring reaction was worry and distress. Calming the team was very difficult. In the first meeting, which was larger, no one was willing to ask a question. As we broke into smaller groups with more direct managers, people started to open up. The team was mostly anxious, with only a minority remaining calm.

Question N° 7: Did you take any specific action as a leader to maintain motivation and performance, knowing that employees were training their own replacements?

***Interviewed:** Yes, but it was very difficult because I traveled early on and had limited physical presence with the team that stayed in Buenos Aires. I spoke with them remotely every day and tried to adjust my schedule, but I could not provide full support from a distance, especially given the time difference and workload in Pune. We coordinated with whoever remained in Buenos Aires, including my own manager, to give the team some coverage. The support I could offer was not at 100%, at least during the first weeks of the trip.*

Question N° 8: Between the first and second wave, what leadership adjustments did you make based on what you had learned? Did you have to significantly change your leadership style?

***Interviewed:** First, a clarification: in our case there was only one wave, but it was divided into multiple trips within that wave. Regarding leadership adjustments: both the team in Buenos Aires and the team in Pune required adaptation. Someone else had to step in and lead the Buenos Aires team in my absence. I tried to hold daily check-ins at whatever overlapping hours we could find. With the Pune team, I also had to adapt by reading how they were performing and adjusting accordingly. There were many changes compared to what I would normally do.*

Question N° 9: Who made the most important operational decisions during the transition? You, a joint team, or a superior? How was authority distributed between the Buenos Aires and Pune teams?

Interviewed: It was a joint effort. Each team had authority over certain decisions. Including the Buenos Aires leadership team, of which I was a part. So it was collaborative overall.

Question N° 10: Were there moments when you had to make quick decisions without clear direction from above? How did you handle those?

Interviewed: Yes, especially during the time difference gap when Buenos Aires was asleep and we were already working in Pune. In those moments I made decisions based on my own judgment. They were not highly critical decisions that could not wait, but yes, I handled them independently when necessary.

Question N° 11: DTPs document standard operating procedures. Were there aspects of the operation that could not be written down, for example: judgment calls made individually or as a group, or decisions in specific contexts? How did you try to transfer that type of knowledge?

Interviewed: Most of the operational content was documented. The project team ensured everything was covered. The one thing that was not captured in any DTP was the transfer of the supervisor role that is judgment-based and exists in criteria, not in documentation.

Question N° 12: Which processes or sub-processes were most difficult to transfer? What made them difficult: complexity, need for judgment, or something else?

Interviewed: Everything was challenging, partly because we arrived prepared to train a group that we expected to have a certain baseline of knowledge, and when we got there we realized they did not. We had been told the team had experience in billing and SAP, but the

majority did not. So we had to lower the level at the beginning and start more from scratch, which meant reworking the training schedule we had already built.

Question N° 13: What were the most significant barriers you encountered when trying to transfer operational knowledge to the Pune team? Were they primarily technical, relational (distrust), cultural, or organizational in nature?

***Interviewed:** For me, the main barrier was the unexpected knowledge gap, having to explain things we had not planned to explain, sometimes dedicating an entire day to leveling up basic knowledge. Beyond that, there were cultural barriers, which were more visible in the first trip and somewhat smoother in the second. For example, we scheduled breaks of 30 minutes and they would come back after an hour. The tea break was deeply ingrained. We had an aggressive training schedule and needed to keep to it, but that took repeated conversations.*

Question N° 14: How did you identify which knowledge should be transferred first? Was there a prioritization framework, or was it a more organic process?

***Interviewed:** The training schedule was fully structured before the trip, that was part of the project team's work. When we arrived and saw the actual knowledge level, we made adjustments on the spot. Instead of starting with higher-complexity parts of the process, we went back to basics and the tools first. We adapted as we went.*

Question N° 15: What methods were used to capture and document knowledge before the transfer? Who was responsible for that process?

***Interviewed:** The project team was responsible for the documentation, including the DTPs. Our role as SMEs was to review that documentation and build the actual training content with presentations for each day, organized by topic, beyond what was already in the DTPs.*

Question N° 16: During the training and communication phase, which formats worked best, and which ones failed?

Interviewed: In-person communication and training worked best. There was a brief period between trips where no one was physically in Pune, and the remote phase did not work well at all. On the Buenos Aires side, the full team also helped by working in rotating early-morning shifts, some starting at 4 or 5 a.m., to provide remote support. Many found it convenient because they had afternoon classes, but when it extended over time it started affecting performance.

Question N° 17: How long did it take before the Pune team could operate autonomously? And what criteria did you use to evaluate when they were ready?

Interviewed: We started in January, the go-live was set for March, and they were still not fully ready by then. It took approximately four months for them to reach real autonomy. The quality check was the main metric and a daily audit where they needed to reach a minimum of 90% quality in processed transactions. In the early weeks, that threshold was not being met. We held daily meetings to review results and make adjustments. A hard cut-off had to be made in April when the Buenos Aires team took on new processes and could no longer provide support.

Question N° 18: How many people from the Buenos Aires team were directly involved in the transition as trainers or SMEs, and how were they selected?

Interviewed: Nine people traveled in total, across different trips but not all at the same time. Two of the nine were supervisors, including myself. We were selected first, and then the project team asked for our input on the rest of the list. The criteria prioritized seniority (senior level minimum), technical knowledge of the process, and English proficiency. Availability to travel was also required.

Question N° 19: Once in India, how was a typical training day structured? How many hours of formal training, supervised practice, and Q&A?

Interviewed: The structure evolved over time. The first days were fully theoretical. From the second week, we began incorporating practice. The target was roughly 40% theory and 60% practice, shifting further toward full practice as the weeks progressed. There were many questions throughout, participants were active and engaged during sessions, even if the transition into independent practice was not always immediate.

Question N° 20: The Pune team sometimes underestimated tasks and struggled to resolve problems independently. In your evaluation, was that a knowledge gap, a confidence issue, or a structural problem such as understaffing?

Interviewed: I would not frame it primarily as a knowledge gap. The Pune team was actually larger than the Buenos Aires team, seven people in Pune versus four in Buenos Aires. For me, it was more of a cultural dynamic: they were accustomed to a different relationship with authority, and there was a visible fear of making mistakes or appearing incompetent. That led to a pattern of saying they understood when they sometimes did not.

Question N° 21: When Pune received this knowledge, how did they translate it into their operational context? Were there adjustments or adaptations required for them?

Interviewed: No formal adaptation was made to the training content for their context. The training was delivered as-is, without redesigning it for a local audience.

Question N° 22: Were the defined quality thresholds specific to this transition or applied globally? What happened operationally when the target was not consistently met?

Interviewed: The quality threshold, which was a minimum of 90% in the daily quality check I cannot confirm whether this is a global standard, as I did not participate in other transitions of

this scale. When the target was not reached, we held daily meetings in the morning to review results from the previous day, identify errors, and adjust plans, considering both quality and daily volume targets, which were approximately 20 transactions per person. Individual conversations were also held when needed. Sometimes the Pune team discussed the metric of that 90%, so we had constant meetings with them showing the progress and adjustments, all the time with transparency and the possibility to express their opinion.

Question N° 23: What were the main KPIs or metrics monitored during the transition to evaluate the Pune team's performance?

Interviewed: The primary KPI was the daily quality check, with a target of 90% or above. A secondary metric was the SLA on pending items, with the target being a five-day maximum backlog. There was also a daily posting volume per person, around 20 transactions, which was used as an operational benchmark.

Question N° 24: At what approximate percentage were those KPIs at the end of the two weeks of in-person training during the first wave? Was the Pune team close to the target, far from it, or exceeding it?

Interviewed: We did not reach the targets within the first three weeks of the first trip, actually, the first trip lasted three weeks and we finished it without meeting the quality threshold. The team that came after us continued the training. They started reaching the targets approximately in the second month.

Question N° 25: Were there specific processes where SLA dropped critically during the transition? Can you identify which ones, and roughly how far performance fell?

Interviewed: Yes, the most critical moment was during the January month-end close. That is when we receive the highest volume of work, and we were in full training mode at the same time. That overlap caused a significant drop in performance and required heavy support from Buenos Aires.

Question N° 26: How did you detect when a Pune analyst said they understood something but had not actually grasped it? Were there specific mechanisms to identify that gap, or did it only become evident when errors occurred?

Interviewed: We used a practice-based approach to verify understanding. After explaining or reviewing something, we would ask individuals to share their screen and walk through a real case. That allowed us to see directly how each person was applying the knowledge, rather than relying on verbal confirmation alone.

Question N° 27: Most Indian employees said they understood, but there were discrepancies between that claim and their actual practice. From your perspective, was this primarily a cultural behavior related to not wanting to appear incompetent, or genuinely a language comprehension barrier?

Interviewed: For me, it was more cultural. We noticed a strong fear of negative consequences like being seen as incompetent or while making mistakes. That was very different from what we were used to. There were team members who did not have a problem asking when they did not fully understand.

Question N° 28: Did this pattern change over time as the teams interacted more, or did it persist throughout both waves?

Interviewed: It was more pronounced at the beginning. Over time it improved significantly, because we insisted repeatedly that asking questions was the only way not to make mistakes. By the following weeks, it was much less of an issue.

Question N° 29: What strategies did you or the training team develop to verify real comprehension, beyond simply asking 'Did you understand?'

Interviewed: We used live screen-sharing practice: after explaining a topic or reviewing something specific, we would ask someone to volunteer to do a live case. Seeing each

person work through a real transaction told us far more than a verbal confirmation. Over time, everyone did it and we could assess their actual understanding.

Question N° 30: For the India team, English was their third language. How did the Buenos Aires trainers adapt their communication to improve effective comprehension: simplification, visual examples, structured repetition?

***Interviewed:** It varied a lot depending on who was doing the training and whether they had had prior contact with Indian English, which has a very distinct accent. Overall, we adapted reasonably well. One technique that proved very helpful was using live transcription, during sessions we recorded the sessions and the transcription appeared on screen, so each participant could follow along on their own computer. Repetition was also used, always respectfully. Each trainer found their own method, but real-time transcription was particularly effective.*

Question N° 31: Did you notice differences in how the Pune team related to authority compared to your Buenos Aires team, for example, in terms of asking questions, expressing concerns, escalating problems, or questioning decisions?

***Interviewed:** Totally. They had a very different relationship with authority. On their side, it was clear that their own managers communicated in a more authoritarian way than what we were used to. So they brought that dynamic into how they related to us as well. For example, when they did not reach the 90% quality target, we would approach it very warmly, supportively. But behind the scenes, we later found out the message was being communicated to them internally in a harsher way, which created fear. We had to address this directly with their supervisors and managers. There were specific situations we had to formally report.*

Question N° 32: How did those differences affect the training dynamics and the day-to-day operational relationship?

Interviewed: *For me it did not significantly impact the operation itself, but it did affect the atmosphere. The team seemed tense under pressure from their own side, which we were not always immediately aware of. Once we understood the dynamic, we tried to engage more directly with the Pune leadership to manage the emotional environment on their side.*

Question N° 33: Did Ecolab provide any formal intercultural training, either for the Argentine travelers before going to Pune, or for the Pune team before receiving the transition? If not, do you think it would have made a significant difference?

Interviewed: *Yes, we did receive formal training, and it was very necessary. We went through sessions on cultural awareness and on how to train effectively. There were also workshops where we had to demonstrate training competency, almost like an exam, run by a team from the United States that specialized in transition implementation. Part of the group was from Buenos Aires, part from the US. As for the Pune team, they received a general onboarding, including a company overview, during their first two days. I am not certain whether they received cultural preparation at our level.*

Question N° 34: Beyond formal training, were there moments of informal relationship-building between the teams, for example, social interactions, shared meals, informal conversations? Or was the interaction mainly transactional?

Interviewed: *We had many informal interactions. We shared meals regularly. They invited us to take breaks together and shared cultural moments, also at one point they brought in their traditional clothing and dressed us in it. There was genuine warmth beyond the transactional layer of the work.*

Question N° 35: Given the time difference, were there moments during the day when neither team had full coverage of the process? How were exceptions or urgent issues handled during those gaps?

Interviewed: *Yes, this happened frequently, especially during the first hours of our working day in Pune. When we arrived at the office, Buenos Aires was still asleep. We would address leftover questions or issues from the previous day while waiting for the Buenos Aires team to come online.*

Question N° 36: Did either team have to adapt their working hours due to the transition? How did this affect morale and productivity in the medium term?

Interviewed: *Buenos Aires adapted significantly. Many people started their shifts at 4 or 5 in the morning. Others changed to a 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. schedule. Initially it worked, but when it extended beyond the expected period, it started to affect performance. It was supposed to be a short-term arrangement, but the extension wore people down. The team in Buenos Aires worked fully remote during this period, with complete flexibility and no expectation to come into the office.*

Question N° 37: What digital tools were used to coordinate between Buenos Aires and Pune? Which worked better than expected, and which created friction?

Interviewed: *Microsoft Teams was the primary tool for meetings and calls. What worked particularly well was assigning a dedicated buddy in Buenos Aires to each person in Pune that was about small Teams groups of around three people giving everyone a direct contact for questions. That individual pairing made communication much more effective. SharePoint was used by the leadership team for sharing metrics and reports, but it was not heavily used by the analysts. The combination of Teams calls, email and tracking tools covered most coordination needs.*

Question N° 38: Was there a point when digital coordination tools were sufficient to replace in-person interaction, or did you feel that some dependency on face-to-face contact persisted?

Interviewed: *No, the tools were not sufficient to replace in-person presence. In February, there was a period of one to two weeks with no traveler in Pune, a kind of test run. It became clear that the team was still very dependent on physical presence. Without someone there, gaps appeared: you could not see in real time whether someone had started a task, whether something was getting stuck. The ideal would have been an intermediate group of travelers, but there was no time to organize that. The remote period confirmed that the in-person component was still necessary at that stage.*

Question N° 39: Was there a point during the transition where the Pune team's operational dependency on Buenos Aires extended significantly beyond what was planned? What caused it and how was it resolved?

Interviewed: *Yes. Even at go-live and shortly after, the Pune team was autonomous on simpler transactions but still needed support for more complex ones. That dependency extended beyond the planned timeline. The resolution was partly structured and partly forced, since Buenos Aires had to stop providing support when new processes arrived in April.*

Question N° 40: Did internal stakeholders in the United States notice the transition in terms of delays, quality changes, or communication differences? Or was the handover effectively transparent to them?

Interviewed: *They noticed. It was very noticeable. Some US stakeholders continued contacting the Buenos Aires team directly for months and even years later in some cases because they did not know the process had moved. Initially there were delays and errors that generated questions and escalations. The noise started to calm down during the hyper-care phase, but full stabilization took until around mid-year. A key issue was that the communication about the transition did not reach all US stakeholders adequately, some simply never knew it happened.*

Question N° 41: How many people traveled in the first wave, and how many in the second? What do you attribute the change to, and how was replacement found for those who did not want to travel again?

Interviewed: There were a total of five trips within our wave. The first trip had four people plus a manager. The second trip also had four people. The third had three people plus a manager, though that manager's presence was brief. Subsequent trips had progressively fewer travelers. Of the original nine, three decided not to travel again and that decision was always respected. One person was brought in from outside the original group to fill the gap in the final trips, as there were simply not enough volunteers. The main reasons people declined to travel again were the cultural shock, the demanding work schedule (working from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. or sometimes until midnight) and the food, which many found very difficult to manage. Some experienced genuine psychological distress and did not want to return.

Question N° 42: The offshoring decision was framed as strategic: proximity to Asian markets and competitive positioning. Was that rationale communicated to the operational team, or did the decision arrive from above without much explanation of the 'why'?

Interviewed: There was some communication around the reasoning, but the framing for Buenos Aires was also that what was leaving was more routine operational work, and what would come in return would be more complex and higher-value work like a broader range of operations. That was the framing for those who were losing the process. For those of us absorbing new work, the communication was simply: from a certain date, new work is coming. Without much further explanation.

Question N° 43: Do you have knowledge of the EDI process that was relocated from the United States to Buenos Aires? Were the learnings from that experience formally incorporated into the design of the RCC transition, or did the two processes develop independently?

Interviewed: *They were very different. The EDI migration and the earlier waves that brought billing work to Buenos Aires were much more informal, the training was less structured, the oversight was minimal. The RCC transition from Buenos Aires to Pune was significantly more organized by comparison. I believe learnings from earlier experiences were incorporated, even if informally, through organizational maturity over time.*

Question N° 44: **If Ecolab were to replicate this transition process with another financial function, what would you change? What surprised you most, positively and negatively?**

Interviewed: *I would revisit the timelines. Once you are in it, you realize the teams and processes need more time than planned, pretending that a team coming in from outside, with no prior knowledge of the company's culture or tools, can be fully functional in a matter of weeks is unrealistic. That is precisely why timelines kept extending. On the positive side, the training materials and the daily structure were very well organized we had detailed schedules, clear guides, and strong human support from the US implementation team. The Pune team also received us very warmly, which made a real difference.*

Question N° 45: **In your evaluation, is the RCC transition replicable as it was designed, or would it require significant structural and intercultural adjustments to work in another context?**

Interviewed: *I believe it is replicable. The framework was robust enough to be applied again. In fact, subsequent transitions at Ecolab used similar structures. The RCC transition was particularly challenging given the India context, which represents a significant cultural and operational distance and applying it to a closer context, such as another Latin American country or a US-to-Argentina transfer, would be considerably easier.*

Question N° 46: **What is the one thing that, if it had been different from the beginning, would have had the greatest positive impact on the transition overall?**

Interviewed: *Earlier communication. Giving the team more time to process the news and prepare (both emotionally and operationally) would have had the greatest impact. We also did not fully know what kind of training we were getting into until we were there. More preparation time would have helped on both fronts.*

Question N° 47: If you had to give the transition process an overall score from 1 to 10, what would it be, and what are the two or three factors that most influenced that score?

Interviewed: *I would give it a 7. The main factors that influenced the score were: first, the initial communication particularly the timing, which was too compressed. Second, the knowledge gaps we encountered at the start, which forced us to rework our training plan and extend the timeline. Third, the cultural differences, which added complexity throughout, especially around the authority dynamic and fear of making mistakes.*

Question N° 48: What resources, tools, or mechanisms that did not exist during this transition would you have wanted to have available? What was missing that would have made a real difference?

Interviewed: *I cannot think of many missing tools in terms of technology or resources I think we had what we needed. The one gap was a set of basic training materials for the foundational tools. We had assumed a baseline of SAP and billing knowledge that was not there, and we did not have pre-built resources to cover those basics quickly. Having something ready for 'start from zero on the tools' would have made the adjustment much smoother.*

Question N° 49: Based on your full experience, what three concrete recommendations would you give to a manager in another area of Ecolab who is about to start a similar offshoring process toward India?

Interviewed: *First: communicate early and transparently with your team. Share what can be shared, and focus on transmitting calmness and stability. Second: study the culture seriously before traveling. Understanding even the basics as appropriate dress, greetings, expectations around time and hierarchy that makes a significant difference for building rapport and managing dynamics in the field. Those are my two strongest recommendations. I would add as a third: be realistic about timelines and build in more buffers than you think you need.*

Table 8: Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars - Self-developed

Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars Ex RCC Supervisor / EDI Manager, Buenos Aires - Ecolab GBS			
Pillar	Statement	Points	Pillar Average
1	Leadership and communication were conveyed adequately during the transition.	3	4.0
	Team commitment and performance were sustained throughout the transition.	5	
	Decision-making was distributed correctly between Buenos Aires and Pune.	4	
2	The DTPs and documentation effectively captured the information necessary for the transition.	5	4.3
	The Pune team demonstrated adequate absorptive capacity to internalize the knowledge received.	3	
	Quality control mechanisms were effective for identifying and correcting process gaps.	5	
3	Cultural differences were anticipated and managed adequately during the transition.	5	4.0
	Language barriers significantly impacted the effectiveness of knowledge transfer sessions.	2	
	The teams developed genuine working relationships beyond transactional interaction.	5	
4	Time zone differences were managed effectively without significant operational disruption.	4	3.7
	Digital coordination tools adequately compensated for the lack of physical proximity.	4	
	The handover was effectively transparent to stakeholders in other regions.	3	
5	Learnings from prior offshoring experiences were incorporated into the design of the RCC transition.	4	3.3
	The RCC transition, exactly as executed, is replicable to future Ecolab offshoring projects.	4	
	The strategic rationale behind the offshoring decision was communicated correctly to the team.	2	

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table summarizes the participant's assessment of key aspects of the transition process across the analytical

pillars of this study. Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements associated with each analytical pillar.

**3.1.2. Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor, Buenos Aires - Ecolab
GBS**

Question N° 1: Could you briefly describe your role within the organization and your participation in the offshoring/transition process from Buenos Aires to Pune?

***Interviewed:** My role in the organization was Team Leader of the Credit and Restructuring team, specifically reviewing the team for the Nalco division, as the company is divided into two entities: Ecolab and Nalco. My role in the transition was what is called a "train the trainer", meaning someone who already knows the process goes to train the person hired for this new process. So, my role as Team Leader was to train and coach them in this new task and provide support during a period of 2 to 3 months. This process was done from Buenos Aires to India, lasting from January until mid-May in what was called "hyper-care," which represents 15 extra days of a highly monitored process.*

Question N° 2: Before the first wave started, how was the offshoring decision communicated to your team in Buenos Aires? What information was shared and at what point in the process?

***Interviewed:** For those of us in intermediate leadership positions, the decision was communicated approximately three to four weeks before the first trip to India. This happened a few weeks before the transition process formally started. The information shared with us was that the RCC finance activities would be transferred from Buenos Aires to Pune and that our role would be to prepare and train the new team that would eventually take over those responsibilities. At the beginning, there was still some uncertainty regarding what would happen to the positions in Buenos Aires, so we had to remain patient and wait for further clarification as the process progressed.*

Question N° 3: How was the relocation decision formally communicated to the affected teams? Was there a structured communication plan, and how did employees receive and react to the news?

Interviewed: Speaking of Buenos Aires, there was first a general communication to the entire company on January 6th, and then a specific communication with the leaders of their sector for the affected teams, which involved about 150 to 200 people. In this case, the managers and supervisors. Obviously, reactions were diverse; not everyone received it the same way. It generated resignations because the uncertainty of not knowing what would happen to your job drives a need for security, so people resigned because of this. Other people took advantage of the opportunity and grew into different teams. For the people who stayed, the tasks that came to Buenos Aires from the United States had a much more analytical profile compared to the mechanical tasks that left, leading to a lot of growth. I would say that more than 60% of the people who stayed grew within their role or into another role.

Question N° 4: Do you think the timing and framing of the communication were appropriate, or would you have done it differently? Did you feel it was a well-prepared organizational process, or rather something that the teams had to figure out as they went along?

Interviewed: I think the communication could have been provided further in advance, giving employees more time to prepare for the transition. At the same time, I believe it would have been important to provide greater certainty regarding what would happen to the employees affected by the relocation, since one of the main concerns was the uncertainty surrounding their future roles within Ecolab. If I could have done something differently, I would have extended the communication timeline by a few additional weeks and been clearer about both the transition plan for moving the RCC process to Pune and the plan for the employees in Buenos Aires after the transition. Regarding the transition to Pune, I believe the process was

generally well prepared. At least for those of us acting as trainers, we received adequate preparation before the transition began, and the DTPs helped centralize and document knowledge so it could later be transferred in a structured way. However, once we arrived in Pune, we realized that the new team was not as prepared as we had initially expected, so we had to adjust several training sessions and the predefined schedule as the process progressed. At the same time, the employees who remained in Buenos Aires also had to deal with uncertainty regarding their future roles, but they continued participating in virtual training sessions, providing operational support, and helping ensure continuity while responsibilities were gradually transferred to Pune, so they remained actively engaged throughout the process.

Question N° 5: How far in advance did you receive official information about the decision to relocate functions to Pune and through which channel did that communication arrive (formal meeting, email, internal announcement)?

***Interviewed:** As I mentioned, those of us in intermediate management received official information approximately three to four weeks before the migration process began. The decision was communicated through a formal management meeting and functioned as an internal announcement directed specifically to managers and supervisors rather than to the entire Buenos Aires organization. At that stage, only selected leadership personnel who would later play a role in the transition process were informed. There was also a confidentiality component attached to the communication, meaning that we were not allowed to share the information with analysts or other employees until the company formally communicated the decision to the broader organization.*

Question N° 6: Did you participate in defining the scope of the transition (which processes to migrate, in what order, and with what timelines) or did those decisions come already made from higher levels?

Interviewed: *No, I did not participate in defining the scope of the transition itself. Decisions regarding which processes would be migrated, the order of the migration, and the overall timelines had already been established before my involvement. My role was focused on executing the transition and training the new team rather than participating in the strategic planning phase. From my perspective, those decisions were made at higher management levels, likely involving senior leadership in Buenos Aires, leaders from other shared service centers, and global management as well.*

Question N° 7: How did the team react to the transition decision? What was the range of responses from the most resistant to the most cooperative?

Interviewed: *There was a lot of uncertainty and nervousness. Many people were worried because they did not know what would happen to their positions within the company or whether they could eventually lose their jobs. Those weeks were marked by uncertainty, and many people were afraid to openly express how they felt about the situation. Regarding the range of responses, some employees decided to leave the company because they preferred to secure another opportunity rather than wait and see what would happen with their position. Those were generally the people who were more resistant to the uncertainty created by the transition. The employees who stayed often had the same concerns and level of uncertainty, but for different personal reasons they decided to remain and wait for more information. Overall, the dominant feeling was nervousness and not knowing what was going to happen next.*

Question N° 8: Did you take any specific action as a leader to maintain motivation and performance, knowing that employees were training their own replacements?

Interviewed: *Yes, I worked on the motivation of the people both here and there. We work with a workload measured in SLAs set at 5 days. Learning a process always takes between 1 and 3 months, and performance during the first months was naturally not good, which is expected. I worked on motivating the team in Buenos Aires so they knew they were training*

people well and that the flaws were not due to their explanations, giving them the certainty that there were positions for them in Buenos Aires to keep them calm. I also had to work with the team abroad who felt they were doing everything wrong. Since we work with clients, and clients are always right, we had to manage those errors, understand them, and maintain motivation, knowing it is a process that takes time. In the end, both teams rose to the occasion; the Buenos Aires team relocated successfully into different teams and grew, and the India team did as well.

Question N° 9: Between the first and second voyage to India to provide support and training, based on what you learned, did you have to significantly change your leadership style?

***Interviewed:** I traveled twice, spending a total of a month and a half across both trips. The first trip was very new, so you do not know what you are going to encounter. What we did on that first trip was more about getting to know the people we would work with and providing basic training, not so much on the process itself but on the tools we use in the company. In fact, during the first week and a half, time was lost configuring computers and understanding how to work with Outlook and other tools. I do not think my leadership focus changed as much as it shifted toward an empathetic approach to understanding what they were struggling with. In Argentina, if you do not understand something, your first instinct is often to ask a teammate for help, and that did not happen as much in India. Fostering that sense of companionship helped them because otherwise several people would come with the exact same question individually. We had to adapt, show them ways to solve problems together, and lead through empathy and openness to new experiences.*

Question N° 10: Did you have to change your leadership style a lot?

***Interviewed:** I think my leadership style remained fairly similar overall. The main thing I had to adapt was taking on more of a teacher role. In Buenos Aires, when I trained new joiners, there were always other analysts or team members who could help provide support, and we*

also had the advantage of sharing the same language, having more time, and working with less pressure. During the transition, when training the team in India, I had to further develop those teaching skills and pay much closer attention to whether people had truly understood the material or not. I was also training a larger group of people, with fewer people available to help support the training process, so I had to be more involved and attentive throughout the learning process.

Question N° 11: Who made the most important operational decisions during the transition? You, a joint team, or a superior? How was authority distributed between the Buenos Aires and Pune teams?

***Interviewed:** The most important operational decisions were mainly made as a team. There was usually a superior involved, but the decisions were not made solely by them. We worked together and discussed the different situations as they came up. Regarding authority, it remained largely the same on the Buenos Aires side, as my supervisor and I continued providing support to the team that remained there. The main difference was that we were now in Pune training the new team while also working closely with the people who would become the new supervisors and team leaders for that process. As we trained the new analysts and shared knowledge with the future leaders in Pune, authority was gradually delegated to them over time. At the beginning, we were closely involved in monitoring KPIs, reviewing performance, and correcting issues during the first stages of the transition. As both teams gained confidence and became more comfortable with the process, we increasingly delegated authority to the local Indian leaders so they could supervise their own teams. Our role then shifted more toward providing support and guidance rather than exercising direct authority.*

Question N° 12: Were there moments when you had to make quick decisions without clear direction from above? How did you handle those?

Interviewed: *No, I didn't have to make improvised operational decisions, though I did make leadership decisions. I was always fully supported, as the team in Buenos Aires was functioning well and management fully trusted my judgment. Obviously, if something exceeded my scope, like a code of conduct issue, I had to report it to a superior because it was beyond my authority. During the second trip, they also hired a local leader in India, so I had a peer to work with and lean on for decisions. Everything was handled openly without major issues.*

Question N° 13: DTPs document standard operating procedures. Were there extraordinary aspects of the operation that could not be written down? For example, judgment-based decisions (individual or group) and decisions in specific contexts. How did you try to transfer that kind of knowledge?

Interviewed: *Yes, there were some decisions that had to be made in the moment. The DTPs mainly documented the operational side of the process and how to perform the tasks. I believe most error scenarios were documented, from the common ones to more specific situations that did not happen very often but were known and had a defined resolution. On the other hand, there were extraordinary situations that were not documented beforehand because they were more related to decisions made during the transition itself. For example, as I mentioned before, at the beginning we realized that the team needed additional training on technical topics that we had not considered in advance. We did not have documentation for that because it was something unexpected. Instead, we trained them as those needs arose, and those training sessions were later recorded, so the documentation was created during the process rather than beforehand.*

Question N° 14: Which processes or sub-processes were most difficult to transfer? What made them difficult: complexity, need for judgment, or something else?

Interviewed: *We faced two main difficulties. The first isn't a process but the time zone difference. Between Argentina and India, there is a difference of 8.5 to 9 hours, and India is*

12 hours ahead of the US. Argentina provided major support in terms of calls, meetings, and aligning with clients, directors, and large executives. Due to the time difference, India operates outside of those US operational hours, making real-time meetings very difficult, which is an issue that continues to affect various teams in Ecolab today. Secondly, regarding sub-processes, we work with a lot of tools. In the hiring interviews, knowledge of these tools was listed as an exclusive requirement, and candidates claimed they knew them. However, when we arrived, we found they didn't even know what SAP was. While it isn't hard to learn, we lost 3 to 4 days of training just leveling up basic tool knowledge instead of starting directly with the operational tasks. There was a failure in the recruitment process because the interviewers didn't double-check basic technical questions, meaning much of the staff wasn't initially qualified for the position, though they achieved the capacity through training.

Question N° 15: What were the most significant barriers you encountered when trying to transfer operational knowledge to the Pune team? Were they mainly technical, relational (distrust), cultural, or organizational in nature?

Interviewed: *I think the two main barriers at the beginning were technical and relational. First, there were some technical skills and knowledge that the team did not have, which were important for making the knowledge transfer process faster and more effective. There were gaps related to the systems we used and certain finance and billing processes, and we had originally expected the team to already have that baseline knowledge. On the other hand, there was also a relational aspect because we were two groups that did not know each other beforehand. They were also new to the company, so everything was still very new for them, not only in terms of the process, but also the organization, the company, and the team itself. That made it more difficult at the beginning to build confidence and establish a working relationship.*

Question N° 16: How did you identify which knowledge should be transferred first? Is there a prioritization framework or was it an organic process?

Interviewed: *We prioritized the knowledge transfer based on the learning curve. We started with the simplest tasks and processes and then progressed incrementally toward more complex activities. As the team became more comfortable with the basics, we introduced processes that required more steps, greater attention to detail, or a higher level of analysis. That was the main approach we used to prioritize the transfer of knowledge, moving from the easiest topics to the most difficult ones.*

Question N° 17: What methods were used to obtain and document that knowledge before the transfer? Who was responsible for that process?

Interviewed: *As mentioned before, the main method used was the DTPs. Those documents described the team's processes and tasks and served as the main source of documentation for the transition. Responsibility for this work was shared between a project team and the finance leadership team. A group of managers and supervisors from Finance was selected to work on the project because they already had the technical knowledge and context needed to understand what had to be documented. After that, we reviewed and validated the DTPs to make sure the information was accurate before it was used during the transition process.*

Question N° 18: During the communication and training phase, which formats worked best and which ones failed?

Interviewed: *During the training phase, the in-person training sessions worked much better because you can be there face-to-face with people, answer questions immediately, read their body language, and understand whether they are following the training, feeling tired, or need a break. For that reason, the online training format was less effective in comparison. One of the challenges was the lack of body language and direct interaction between the people in Buenos Aires connecting remotely and the team in India. We also recorded many of the training sessions with the intention that people could review them later if needed, but this rarely happened. We noticed this because when we reviewed previous topics or clarified*

doubts, many people still had the same questions or had forgotten things that had already been covered in earlier sessions.

Question N° 19: How long did it take before Pune could apply the knowledge autonomously? And what criteria did you use to evaluate how ready they were?

***Interviewed:** If by autonomous we mean that they no longer required operational assistance from us and only occasionally reached out with questions, then it took approximately four to five months for the team to become autonomous. To evaluate their readiness, we monitored their performance daily during the transition and training period in India using KPIs. We measured the number of errors committed and the number of successfully completed cases to assess both execution and quality. For these finance processes, the company has quality controls based on human-error metrics, so we applied those same KPIs during the transition. The target was for the team to achieve at least 90% accuracy before being considered fully ready to operate independently.*

Question N° 20: How many people from the Buenos Aires team were directly involved in the transition as trainers or SMEs and how were they selected?

***Interviewed:** Approximately 10 people traveled from Buenos Aires as trainers. They were selected based on their English proficiency, their position within the company, their level of seniority and responsibility, and their availability to travel. More importantly, they also had to be willing to travel, because there were some people who did not have much interest in going to India.*

Question N° 21: Once in India, how was a typical training day structured? How many hours of formal training, how much supervised practice, and how much time for Q&A or resolving doubts?

***Interviewed:** During the first days, the training schedule was quite intensive. We divided the day into blocks of theory and blocks of practice so that we could first explain the DTPs and*

then immediately start applying them through practical cases. Throughout the training, we always made space for questions and encouraged the team to raise any doubts they had. This happened especially during the practical exercises, where we wanted people to ask questions whenever they did not understand something or if any part of the process was unclear from our explanation. We were expected to be there for around nine hours per day. Out of those nine hours, approximately one hour was for lunch, one hour was for tea breaks, and there was about another hour of general breaks throughout the day. As a result, we typically had between six and seven hours of actual training sessions each day.

Question N° 22: It was mentioned that the Pune team sometimes underestimated tasks and suffered difficulties solving problems independently. In your evaluation, was that a knowledge gap, a confidence issue, or a structural problem, for example, lack of staff?

***Interviewed:** I think it was more related to the relationship between employees and their supervisors. From what I observed during those weeks, the way many of the Indian employees interacted with authority was different from what we were used to in Argentina. They seemed more accustomed to a leadership style that was more rigid and directive, where people expect to receive instructions and follow them closely because they are concerned about making mistakes or facing negative consequences. I think that played a role in their difficulties when it came to solving problems independently. In our experience in Argentina, the dynamic between leaders and teams is usually different. We give instructions and explanations, but we do not constantly monitor people or pressure them while they work. I have also not seen situations, at least within Ecolab, where people are treated poorly or punished for making mistakes. Because of that difference in leadership dynamics, some employees seemed less comfortable making decisions on their own at the beginning.*

Question N° 23: What were the main KPIs or metrics monitored during the transition to evaluate the performance of the Pune team? Can you mention the most relevant ones with their target values?

Interviewed: The main KPI was the quality check metric, where the target was 90% accuracy, meaning that at least 90% of the cases had to be completed correctly. Another important KPI was the SLA, where the target was five days for the analyst to respond to the stakeholder. During the first weeks of the transition, neither of these KPIs was being achieved because the Pune team was still in the training process. For that reason, the Buenos Aires team continued providing support to help prevent excessive backlog and to avoid the performance metrics from declining too much while the new team was still learning the process.

Question N° 24: How was it detected when an analyst on the Pune team claimed to understand something but had not actually comprehended it? Were there specific mechanisms to identify that gap or was it discovered only when they made errors in the operation?

Interviewed: In my case, when I was training the team, I always asked them to show me what they had understood so I could see in real time, from their perspective, how they interpreted and applied what had been covered during that day's training. This allowed me to verify whether the concepts had actually been understood and not just acknowledged. Later, I also started pairing people together so they could work in teams of two within the larger group and support each other. By doing this, I could observe whether they discussed the process, asked each other questions, and actively participated. I could then evaluate their understanding again when they had to demonstrate what we had worked on during the training session.

Question N° 25: Most Indian employees claimed to understand, but there were discrepancies between that statement and practical implementation. From your

perspective, was that mainly a cultural behavior related to not wanting to seem incompetent, or genuinely a language comprehension barrier?

Interviewed: As I mentioned before, I think a lot of it was related to the way the relationship between employees and supervisors is structured. Sometimes people would not ask questions or seek clarification because they were afraid of how a superior might react. I think that, just as they may have felt that way with other supervisors, they could also have felt that way with us at the beginning, worrying that if they asked too many questions we might become annoyed or call attention to them. We always tried to reinforce the idea that no question is a silly question and that they should ask whenever they had doubts.

Question N° 26: Did this pattern change over time as the teams interacted more? Or did it persist during both waves?

Interviewed: Yes, it improved significantly over time, mainly as trust was built between the teams. We constantly encouraged them to participate, ask questions, and speak up whenever they had doubts. We tried to make it clear that they should not be afraid to ask questions. As the days went by, that tension and fear gradually decreased. In the first wave, everything was new for both sides, but in the following waves we already had a better understanding of their work and cultural dynamics. That helped us be more patient and better understand that sometimes they were not asking questions because of that same concern or fear, rather than because they had fully understood the process.

Question N° 27: What strategies did you or the training team develop to verify real understanding, beyond being able to ask "Did you understand?"

Interviewed: One of the main strategies we used was asking them to explain the cases back to us. We wanted them to tell us what they were doing, how they were doing it, and why they were doing it. We also encouraged them to explain the process to each other while we observed their interactions and paid attention to how they reasoned through the cases. By

listening to their explanations and observing their discussions, we could better understand whether their interpretation of the process was correct and whether they had genuinely understood the training.

Question N° 28: For the India team, English was their third language. How did the Buenos Aires trainers adapt their communication to improve effective comprehension: simplification, visual examples, structured repetition?

***Interviewed:** Since English is their third language and our second, we were highly aware it wasn't our native tongue. I relied heavily on the visual dynamics of the PowerPoints and DTPs, but I didn't just stop there; I emphasized making real practical test cases. Since it is highly unlikely for people to re-watch a recorded session, we focused on practicing together. I also set up a structured, school-like format: I would sit with a whiteboard behind me while the team sat at individual desks, and I grouped them into pairs. I had them sit together, work through five test cases each, talk to one another, and find each other's errors. This dynamic was highly successful, to the point that other teams liked my method and adopted it for their training. By the second trip, we were in the proper office, so I strategically sat in the middle of them, surrounded by their desks, to keep this collaborative dynamic active. We also had to balance cultural habits, like their deeply ingrained tea breaks where they would leave for an hour instead of the scheduled 30 minutes, which required speaking empathetically with their supervisor to find a common ground while respecting their culture.*

Question N° 29: Did Ecolab provide any formal cross-cultural training, either for the Argentine travelers before going to Pune or for the Pune team before receiving the transition? If there wasn't any, do you think it would have made a significant difference?

***Interviewed:** Yes. In addition to the Train the Trainer sessions, which prepared us to train other people, we also received cultural awareness training before traveling for the transition. These sessions helped prepare us for the cultural differences and potential challenges we*

could encounter during the process. I do believe they added value because most of us had very limited interaction with India beforehand and did not have much previous knowledge of the culture, so the training helped us arrive better prepared.

Question N° 30: Beyond formal training, were there moments of informal relationship building between the teams (social interactions, shared meals, informal conversations)? Or was the interaction mainly transactional?

Interviewed: *Yes, we had several opportunities to build relationships outside of the formal training environment. There were multiple occasions when we went out for meals together after work, and we also shared tea breaks, which are an important part of their culture. In the same way that sharing mate is common in Argentina, they had their tea breaks and included us in those moments. Those interactions gave us opportunities to get to know each other better and have more informal conversations beyond the day-to-day work activities.*

Question N° 31: With the time zone difference, were there times of the day when neither team had full coverage of the process? How were exceptions or urgent problems handled during those gaps?

Interviewed: *Yes, there were time zone differences between the Pune team and the Buenos Aires team. Regarding urgent issues, the Buenos Aires team was quite autonomous and generally knew how to resolve problems on their own. There were also team leaders in Buenos Aires who did not travel to Pune and remained available to support the operation. In many cases, the team was able to solve issues internally. At the same time, we still had access to our phones, messages, and team communication platforms, so we tried to stay attentive whenever possible and respond if something particularly urgent came up. However, there were also periods when support was naturally limited because of the time difference, as there were times when we simply had to be sleeping while the Buenos Aires team was still working.*

Question N° 32: Did either team have to adapt their working hours because of the transition? How did this affect the morale and productivity of both teams in the medium term?

Interviewed: Yes, the Buenos Aires team had to adapt their schedules by connecting earlier in the day so they could overlap with the Pune team and provide training. At the beginning, this was challenging because many people had to start working much earlier than usual, and we know that this can affect performance since they had been awake for longer periods of time. However, to compensate for this situation, employees were allowed to work fully remotely during that period. Since this arrangement lasted for several weeks, the flexibility of full home office helped reduce some of the impact of the schedule changes.

Question N° 33: Was there a point when digital coordination tools were sufficient to replace face-to-face interaction, or did you feel that some dependence on face-to-face contact persisted?

Interviewed: I think it depends on the context of the team. In the case of the Pune team, since they were starting from zero with both the process and the company, it was much more effective to conduct the training in person and face-to-face. In that situation, the hybrid approach worked well, with most of the training being delivered in person. Virtual training sessions were still useful and added value, especially because they allowed the Buenos Aires team to remain involved and participate in the transition. However, for this specific case, I believe face-to-face interaction was more effective and remained important throughout the training process.

Question N° 34: Did internal stakeholders in the United States notice the transition, in terms of delays, quality changes, or communication differences? Or was the handover effectively transparent to them?

Interviewed: Yes, the stakeholders in the United States were informed in advance about the transition. They were told that they would be interacting with different people, that the work would now be handled from a different location, and that there could be some delays or a slightly higher margin of error at the beginning because the Pune team was still learning and improving. The intention was to set expectations early and make stakeholders aware that there would be an adjustment period while the new team gained experience with the process.

Question N° 35: How many people traveled in the first trip, and how many in the second? What do you attribute the change to, and what do you think was the factor that most influenced having to change the amount of people when traveling again?

Interviewed: I don't have the exact total numbers for the entire transition across all sectors, as around 40 to 50 people traveled initially for different teams. However, I can tell you that between the first and second trip, the number of travelers dropped significantly, by about half, because many people did not want to travel again. A lot of travelers had a very hard time there due to the massive time zone differences, being so far away from their families, the food, and various cultural differences that impact men and women differently. Some had a genuinely bad experience and refused to return.

Question N° 36: The offshoring decision was framed as strategic: proximity to Asian markets and competitive positioning. Was that rationale communicated to the operational team, or did the decision come from above without much explanation of the "why"?

Interviewed: Yes, the decision to open a center in India was mainly related to Ecolab's strategy of establishing a presence in Asia and strengthening its positioning by having operations in that region. At the same time, there was also a cost-related benefit for the company. However, this strategic rationale was not communicated in great detail to analysts or the employees directly involved in the operations. For them, the message was more

focused on the fact that certain processes were being migrated to a new center. In the case of RCC, the process that moved to Pune was, from my perspective, less analytical in nature. At the same time, Buenos Aires received EDI activities, which involved a higher level of analytical work. That was true in our case, although I cannot say whether the same applied to all the other teams and processes that were also transferred to India.

Question N° 37: Do you have knowledge of the EDI process that was relocated from the United States to Buenos Aires? Were learnings from that experience formally incorporated into the design of the RCC transition, or did the two processes develop independently?

***Interviewed:** Yes, I have knowledge of the EDI process because after the RCC migration I was promoted to Supervisor of the EDI team. In my opinion, the two cases were very different, which is why I think they were managed independently. In Pune, a new center was being built from scratch and the employees were also being hired from scratch. In our case, when the EDI process was transferred from Minnesota to Buenos Aires, the transition was simpler for several reasons. The Buenos Aires team already had previous finance knowledge, and culturally I think we are somewhat more compatible with the United States. There were also fewer language barriers because at least one side was working in its native language, and although English was not our native language, we were able to communicate very effectively. I would not say that the RCC model was used as inspiration for the EDI transition. Perhaps some best practices related to training, collaboration, and encouraging questions were applied, but I think those were already things that the Buenos Aires team had internalized. In general, people in Buenos Aires did not have major issues asking questions or speaking up when they had doubts.*

Question N° 38: What were the EDI team's daily responsibilities?

***Interviewed:** The EDI team was responsible for managing invoices that were submitted electronically to customers. Most of our day-to-day work involved reviewing invoices that had*

been rejected by vendor systems, identifying what caused the rejection, correcting the issue, and resubmitting the invoice. We also managed bulk invoice files for customers whose invoices could not be processed automatically due to system limitations or specific requirements. A big part of the job was troubleshooting issues, understanding why a transaction had failed, and making sure the invoice was successfully processed and received by the customer.

Question N° 39: How was the EDI team previously organized in terms of roles?

***Interviewed:** Before the transition, the EDI team in Minnesota had a Manager, a Supervisor, and Senior Analysts. The Manager was responsible for the overall performance of the process and oversaw several teams within the GBS organization. The Supervisor coordinated the team's daily operations, managed escalations, monitored performance, and distributed the workload. The Senior Analysts handled all types of cases, from the simplest to the most complex, and were responsible for troubleshooting invoice rejections, resolving operational issues, and supporting knowledge sharing within the team. During the transition, the Supervisor and two Senior Analysts from Minnesota traveled to Buenos Aires to train the new team.*

Question N° 40: How is the EDI team currently organized in terms of roles and reporting structure?

***Interviewed:** When the process moved to Buenos Aires, the structure was initially simpler because we started with a Supervisor and a group of analysts, most of whom had already worked in other teams within Ecolab. The analysts were responsible for the day-to-day execution of the process, including reviewing rejected invoices, identifying errors, correcting them, and resubmitting transactions. As the team gained experience and grew, one of the analysts eventually took on Team Leader responsibilities while continuing to perform Senior Analyst work, and some others moved from Junior Analyst to Senior Analyst positions. The Team Leader role focused on supporting analysts, helping resolve operational issues,*

prioritizing work, and monitoring daily performance while still remaining involved in the operational tasks. The Supervisor remained responsible for coordinating the operation, managing escalations, monitoring team performance, and distributing the workload, while the Manager continued overseeing the process together with other teams within the GBS organization. In terms of reporting structure, analysts reported to the Team Leader or Supervisor, the Supervisor reported to the Manager, and the Manager continued overseeing the process together with other teams within the GBS organization.

Question N° 41: What were the RCC team's daily responsibilities?

***Interviewed:** The RCC team was responsible for handling billing errors and correcting them. On a daily basis, we had to identify invoices that had issues, make the necessary corrections, create rebills when an invoice needed to be replaced, and issue credits when charges had to be adjusted or reversed. We also dealt with exceptions that could not be resolved through the standard billing process, so those cases required additional analysis to understand what had gone wrong and how to fix it. Overall, the goal was to make sure billing issues were resolved accurately and within the established SLA, which was five days.*

Question N° 42: How was the RCC team organized in terms of roles and reporting structure?

***Interviewed:** The team had a fairly traditional structure. At the top there was the RCC Manager, then the Supervisors, followed by the Team Leaders, and finally the Analysts, who were divided between Senior Analysts and Junior Analysts. Analysts were responsible for the day-to-day operational work, while Team Leaders provided support, helped resolve issues, and coordinated the workload. Supervisors were more focused on performance, priorities, and overall team coordination, while the Manager was responsible for the overall operation and results. Reporting followed that same structure, with Analysts reporting to Team Leaders, Team Leaders reporting to Supervisors, and Supervisors reporting to the RCC Manager.*

Question N° 43: If Ecolab were to replicate this transition process with another financial function, what would you change? What surprised you most, positively and negatively?

Interviewed: I would completely change the approach to the learning process. The baseline knowledge we had in Buenos Aires regarding Excel and standard tools is simply not the same as what was available in India. We must adapt to the fact that their tools, learning capacity, and process adaptation are different, and we cannot expect optimal results in a rigid three-month window. I would allocate one to two months just to understand the baseline tools and environment, and then two to three additional months to fully learn the core process until they can stand alone. Even though the process in India is running well today, an extra one to two months of dedicated coaching and learning would have been ideal. Negatively, trying to force the exact working methods we use in Argentina or the United States onto a team with a completely different cultural work method is incorrect; we should look for common ground. Positively, the second trip was far more productive because we already knew the people, their culture, and the environment, which allowed us to be more empathetic.

Question N° 44: Based on your experience, do you think the RCC transition model is replicable in other countries or business units? What would need to be maintained and what would need to be adapted?

Interviewed: Yes, I believe the RCC transition model is quite replicable if Ecolab decides to carry out a similar transition again in the future. From a cultural perspective, I think this case was relatively complex because it involved two cultures that are not necessarily very similar and do not have many things in common. Since Ecolab was able to successfully carry out a transition in that context, I think it would likely be easier in situations where there is greater cultural compatibility or familiarity. If, on the other hand, Ecolab were to transfer a process to a country with even greater cultural differences, then some adjustments would probably be needed, especially in terms of preparing the people who will travel, train others, and support

the transition, just as we were prepared for this one. However, if the transition involved a country or location that is more culturally familiar to Argentina, I do not think the model would need to be significantly redesigned or adapted.

Question N° 45: What is the one thing that, if it had been different from the beginning, would have had the greatest positive impact on the transition overall?

***Interviewed:** It would be adapting entirely to them from day zero regarding their cultural differences and starting our training from level zero instead of assuming they were at level one. That shift in baseline preparation would have been the single greatest change.*

Question N° 46: If you had to give the transition process an overall score from 1 to 10, what would it be, and what factors influenced that score?

***Interviewed:** I would give it an 8, because if we orient it strictly toward results, the outcome of the transition was good. No jobs were lost in Buenos Aires, high-value analytical tasks were brought in from the United States, and an entirely new shared service center was successfully generated in another country. Looking at a year's worth of global metrics, India's performance is solid. It doesn't get a 9 or a 10 due to the lack of prudence regarding training times and the failure to fully adjust to their culture and tool baseline at the start.*

Question N° 47: Based on your full experience, what three concrete recommendations would you give to a manager in another area of Ecolab who is about to start a similar offshoring process toward India?

***Interviewed:** Firstly, involve the local team in recruitment. Buenos Aires team members who know the day-to-day tasks should participate directly in the interviews and candidate selection in India. This avoids hiring people whose real skills don't match their CVs. Secondly, do not impose rigid corporate deadlines. I understand companies look at quarters and demand immediate results, but a manager must prioritize long-term effectiveness. Setting a strict three-month deadline means you are just hitting a calendar date rather than*

properly developing a team. Give them more time. Lastly, understand and adapt to the local culture. Truly comprehend the cultural background of the team delivering the training and the team receiving it, staying entirely open to finding common ground between both countries.

Table 9: Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars - Self-developed

Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars Ex RCC Team Leader / EDI Supervisor, Buenos Aires - Ecolab GBS			
Pillar	Statement	Points	Pillar Average
1	Leadership and communication were conveyed adequately during the transition.	4	4
	Team commitment and performance were sustained throughout the transition.	5	
	Decision-making was distributed correctly between Buenos Aires and Pune.	3	
2	The DTPs and documentation effectively captured the information necessary for the transition.	5	4.3
	The Pune team demonstrated adequate absorptive capacity to internalize the knowledge received.	4	
	Quality control mechanisms were effective for identifying and correcting process gaps.	4	
3	Cultural differences were anticipated and managed adequately during the transition.	3	4
	Language barriers significantly impacted the effectiveness of knowledge transfer sessions.	4	
	The teams developed genuine working relationships beyond transactional interaction.	5	
4	Time zone differences were managed effectively without significant operational disruption.	2	2.6
	Digital coordination tools adequately compensated for the lack of physical proximity.	4	
	The handover was effectively transparent to stakeholders in other regions.	2	
5	Learnings from prior offshoring experiences were incorporated into the design of the RCC transition.	4	4.3
	The RCC transition, exactly as executed, is replicable to future Ecolab offshoring projects.	5	
	The strategic rationale behind the offshoring decision was communicated correctly to the team.	4	

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table summarizes the participant's assessment of key aspects of the transition process across the analytical

pillars of this study. Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements associated with each analytical pillar.

3.2. Asynchronous written interviews

3.2.1. RCC Supervisor, Pune - Ecolab GBS

Question N° 1: Which was your role within the organization and your participation in the transition process from Buenos Aires to Pune?

Interviewed: I am the supervisor of the RCC team in Pune. I was in charge of overseeing training, daily execution, and quality during the transition

Question N° 2: How is the current RCC team structure and roles?

Interviewed: Right now the team is composed of a manager, supervisor, team leader, and junior analysts, we are planning to promote in the next months some juniors to seniors.

Question N° 3: Before wave 1 began (visits from the Buenos Aires team to Pune), how much information did you have about the process you were going to start: its complexity, scope and performance expectations?

Interviewed: No information was provided we just knew we will be part of billing process

Question N° 4: During the transition, who held primary decision-making authority over the process, the Buenos Aires team, your local Pune management, or a shared structure? Did that distribution feel adequate from your position?

Interviewed: It was Buenos Aires team

Question N° 5: Were there moments when you needed a decision or clarification but could not get it quickly? How did your team handle those gaps?

Interviewed: We reached out to the BA team lead for clarification

Question N° 6: Between waves, did you notice concrete changes in how the transition was managed or how communication with Buenos Aires worked?

Interviewed: There were some gaps however we identified and cleared during transition

Question N° 7: Which processes or sub-processes were hardest to internalize? Was the difficulty mainly a technical complexity, the need for judgment, unfamiliar systems or insufficient staffing?

Interviewed: There were few activities which was kept to transfer at end, but due to less time there was not adequate clarity

Question N° 8: What training format was most effective for your team: live demonstrations, shadowing, documentation, Q&A, or daily error feedback? What worked least well?

Interviewed: Live demonstration and practice session along with error feedback worked well

Question N° 9: If the team did not meet the 90% quality threshold in early stages, how was that communicated: as a learning opportunity or as a performance issue? How did it affect team confidence?

Interviewed: Initially it was learning opportunity, but team struggled to achieve those due to pressure to go live

Question N° 10: How would you describe the communication style of the Argentine trainers in terms of directness, pace, and level of detail? Was it easy to follow, or did it require adjustment on your part?

Interviewed: Communication was good

Question N° 11: Were there moments when you were uncertain about something but found it difficult to say so during the session? If yes, what made it hard to ask for clarification?

Interviewed: There were some conflicts of process understanding found within team in BA and that made some confusion in process, however it was clarified

Question N° 12: Did you notice differences in how the Argentine team related to hierarchy and authority compared to what you were used to like for example, in how instructions were given, feedback was delivered, or disagreements were handled?

Interviewed: It was structured and team lead would contact team lead and associate were aligned with trainer

Question N° 13: Were there aspects of the Argentine team's working culture that positively surprised you or that you found effective and adopted into your own approach?

Interviewed: Only thing was shift timing in compare to IST

Question N° 14: Did Ecolab provide any guidance about Argentine working culture or communication style before the training began? If not, would it have helped?

Interviewed: Pretty much not much helpful, but yes it would have helped in terms of how disciplined are they or how much casual

Question N° 15: Did your team have to adjust its working hours to create overlap with Buenos Aires? How significant was that adjustment and how did it affect team productivity and morale over time?

Interviewed: BA team needs to adjust to our work timing hence it helped

Question N° 16: How were urgent issues or process exceptions handled during periods when there was no real-time overlap between the two teams?

Interviewed: We had fewer associates from Pune who came in night shift to overcome the overlap of timing

Question N° 17: Which digital coordination tools worked well for your team after the in-person waves ended, and which created friction? Was remote coordination ever sufficient to replace what had been done in person?

Interviewed: Microsoft Teams

Question N° 18: Looking at the overall design of the transition regarding timeline, training structure, performance targets, did it feel well-prepared for a team that was starting from scratch or were there structural gaps?

Interviewed: Yes we always felt the time was short, as we needed time to better feel keystroke level confidence

Question N° 19: What was the single thing that, had it been done differently from the start, would have had the greatest positive impact on the transition from the Pune team's perspective?

Interviewed: More time, that's all

Question N° 20: If Ecolab were to transfer another process to Pune in the future, what are the two or three changes you would recommend based on your experience?

Interviewed: at least 4 week training and 2 month hyper care

Question N° 21: If you were to rate the overall transition process from 1 to 10, what would your rating be and what factors most influenced it?

Interviewed: 6

Question N° 22: Looking back, what aspect of the transition went better than you expected?

Interviewed: Team picked up good in short time and performance was good

Question N° 23: What was harder or more complex than you anticipated when you first joined?

Interviewed: Number of activities and different scenario

Question N° 24: Is there anything important about your experience that our questions have not covered and that you would like to add?

Interviewed: We discovered many things and those were later aligned with business

Table 10: Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars - Self-developed

Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars RCC Supervisor, Pune - Ecolab GBS			
Pillar	Statement	Points	Pillar Average
1	Leadership and communication were conveyed adequately during the transition.	3	4.0
	Team commitment and performance were sustained throughout the transition.	5	
	Decision-making was distributed correctly between Buenos Aires and Pune.	4	
2	The DTPs and documentation effectively captured the information necessary for the transition.	5	4.3
	The Pune team demonstrated adequate absorptive capacity to internalize the knowledge received.	3	
	Quality control mechanisms were effective for identifying and correcting process gaps.	5	
3	Cultural differences were anticipated and managed adequately during the transition.	5	4.0
	Language barriers significantly impacted the effectiveness of knowledge transfer sessions.	2	
	The teams developed genuine working relationships beyond transactional interaction.	5	
4	Time zone differences were managed effectively without significant operational disruption.	4	3.7
	Digital coordination tools adequately compensated for the lack of physical proximity.	4	
	The handover was effectively transparent to stakeholders in other regions.	3	
5	Learnings from prior offshoring experiences were incorporated into the design of the RCC transition.	4	3.3
	The RCC transition, exactly as executed, is replicable to future Ecolab offshoring projects.	4	
	The strategic rationale behind the offshoring decision was communicated correctly to the team.	2	

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table summarizes the participant's assessment of key aspects of the transition process across the analytical pillars of this study. Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements associated with each analytical pillar.

3.2.2. RCC Analyst, Pune - Ecolab GBS

Question N°1: Which was your role within the organization and your participation in the transition process from Buenos Aires to Pune?

***Interviewed:** I joined the team in the analyst position. My participation in the transition was as a trainee so i was capacitated to continue with the RCC activities*

Question N°2: Before Wave 1 began, how much information did you have about the process you were going to start, including its complexity, scope, and performance expectations?

***Interviewed:** Very limited information was provided initially. Most details were learned during training*

Question N°3: Were there moments when you needed a decision or clarification but could not get it quickly? How did you handle those situations?

***Interviewed:** Yes sometimes. We raised questions through our team lead or the trainers from Argentina and waited for clarification*

Question N°4: Between waves, did you notice concrete changes in how the transition was managed or how communication with Buenos Aires worked?

***Interviewed:** Communication became smoother as the both teams started to get to know each other better. At first there was not a lot of trust but it was later built*

Question N°5: Which processes or sub-processes were the most difficult to learn, and why?

***Interviewed:** I think the processes that involve many steps and attention to detail because they are more complex*

Question N°6: What training format was most effective for your learning: live demonstrations, shadowing, documentation, Q&A sessions, or daily error feedback?

***Interviewed:** I think live demonstrations, Q&A sessions and error feedback*

Question N°7: During the initial stages, how did your team react to quality targets and performance expectations?

Interviewed: At first the targets were challenging and we were not able to achieve them the first weeks, but we we all knew it was part of the learning process so that decreased the pressure

Question N°8: What helped you most to become confident in performing the process independently?

Interviewed: Practice, feedback from trainers, and handling real cases helped with the confidence

Question N°9: How would you describe the communication style of the Argentine trainers in terms of directness, pace, and level of detail?

Interviewed: The communication was clear and direct, with a good level of detail.

Question N°10: Were there moments when you were uncertain about something but found it difficult to ask for clarification? If so, why?

Interviewed: Sometimes there was confusion due to all the explanations and amount of new information, but we eventually asked for clarification.

Question N°11: Did you notice differences in how the Argentine team approached hierarchy, authority, or feedback compared to what you were accustomed to?

Interviewed: Yes, I think our trainers from Argentina were less strict and felt more friendly. I think we are used to different dynamics with higher positions

Question N°12: Were there aspects of the Argentine team's working culture that positively surprised you or that you adopted into your own way of working?

Interviewed: Their willingness to support and answer questions was very helpful.

Question N°13: Did Ecolab provide any guidance about Argentine working culture or communication styles before the transition? Would that have been useful?

Interviewed: No. I think so yes

Question N°14: Did your team have to adjust its working hours to create overlap with Buenos Aires? How did this affect your daily work?

Interviewed: No, the Argentina team adapted

Question N°15: When you encountered a process issue that you could not resolve independently, who did you usually contact for support?

Interviewed: I usually contacted my team lead or the assigned trainer from Argentina

Question N°16: Which digital coordination tools worked best after the in-person training waves ended?

Interviewed: The best tool was Teams but we also had outlook available

Question N°17: Looking at the timeline, training structure, and performance expectations, did the transition feel adequately prepared for a team starting from scratch?

Interviewed: The structure was good, but additional time for training and practice would have been beneficial

Question N°18: What was the single factor that, if handled differently from the beginning, would have had the greatest positive impact on the transition?

Interviewed: More time for training and practice before the Argentina team leaving Pune and delegating all the process to us

Question N°19: If Ecolab were to transfer another finance process to Pune in the future, what recommendations would you make based on your experience?

***Interviewed:** I think to take into consideration the time for training and preparation, be more flexible with it*

Question N°20: Looking back, what aspect of the transition was more successful than you expected, and what aspect was more challenging than you anticipated?

***Interviewed:** I think the fact that we learned quickly taking into account that we all didn't have the same level of expertise. And the challenge aspect was those tasks that needed too much steps and attention*

Table 11: Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars - Self-developed

Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars RCC Analyst, Pune - Ecolab GBS			
Pillar	Statement	Points	Pillar Average
1	Leadership and communication were conveyed adequately during the transition.	4	4.5
	Team commitment and performance were sustained throughout the transition.	5	
2	The DTPs and documentation effectively captured the information necessary for the transition.	4	4.0
	The Pune team demonstrated adequate absorptive capacity to internalize the knowledge received.	4	
3	Cultural differences were anticipated and managed adequately during the transition.	4	4.5
	The teams developed genuine working relationships beyond transactional interaction.	5	
4	Time zone differences were managed effectively without significant operational disruption.	4	4.0
	Digital coordination tools adequately compensated for the lack of physical proximity.	4	
5	The RCC transition, exactly as executed, is replicable to future Ecolab offshoring projects.	4	3.0
	The strategic rationale behind the offshoring decision was communicated correctly to the team.	2	

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table summarizes the participant's assessment of key aspects of the transition process across the analytical pillars of this study. Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements associated with each analytical pillar.

3.2.3. Human Resources (HR) Analyst, Pune - Ecolab GBS

Question N°1: Could you briefly describe your role within the Pune HR team and explain how you supported the establishment of the RCC team in Pune?

Interviewed: I work as an HR Analyst and supported recruitment, onboarding, employee documentation, and hiring activities for the RCC team. These responsibilities were not limited

to the RCC team, I also supported the onboarding and integration of new joiners across different teams within the Pune GBS center as it continued to grow

Question N°2: At what stage did HR become involved in the creation of the RCC team, and what were your main responsibilities during that period?

***Interviewed:** When the Pune GBS center was first established, the local HR team itself was newly hired and onboarded by HR teams from other Ecolab centers. Once our HR team was established in Pune, we became responsible for supporting the recruitment process for new teams, including RCC. We worked with managers and supervisors to understand hiring requirements, align candidate profiles with business needs, coordinate recruitment activities, and support onboarding and workforce planning as the operation expanded*

Question N°3: Did HR receive clear information regarding hiring timelines, staffing requirements, and business expectations for the RCC operation?

***Interviewed:** Yes, the hiring targets and timelines were clearly communicated*

Question N°4: How did HR support the onboarding and preparation of newly hired RCC employees before they began receiving training from the Buenos Aires team?

***Interviewed:** Once employees were hired and joined Ecolab, HR coordinated their onboarding process during their first days in the office. This included company orientation, policy training, administrative activities, and mandatory HR and IT sessions. These onboarding activities were completed 1-2 days before employees began their operational training and knowledge transfer sessions with the team from Argentina*

Question N°5: Did HR identify any challenges related to the learning curve of employees who were receiving processes transferred from Buenos Aires?

***Interviewed:** Some employees required additional time to become comfortable with the complexity of the processes being transferred*

Question N°6: From an HR perspective, what factors helped the new RCC employees adapt more quickly to their responsibilities?

Interviewed: Structured training delivered by the trainers from Argentina was a key factor in helping employees learn the process. In addition, continuous support from managers and supervisors in Pune after the transition helped employees address challenges, monitor their progress, and continue developing their skills as they gained operational experience.

Question N°7: Did HR provide any guidance, training, or resources to help employees work effectively with colleagues from Argentina?

Interviewed: No. HR did not provide any specific guidance or training related to working with colleagues from Argentina. Employees mainly developed their understanding through direct interaction and collaboration during the training and transition process.

Question N°8: Were any cultural or communication challenges reported by employees during their interactions with the Buenos Aires team?

Interviewed: No. HR did not receive reports of significant cultural or communication challenges during employees interactions with the Buenos Aires team

Question N°9: How would you assess the overall preparedness of the newly hired RCC employees when they began assuming operational responsibilities?

Interviewed: The recruitment process was challenging because HR did not have direct technical knowledge of the operational processes for which we were hiring. Candidate evaluations were based on their experience, CVs, interview performance, and the requirements provided by managers. However, without operational specialists participating in the interviews, it was sometimes difficult to fully assess whether candidates' practical skills matched the specific demands of the role. This was one of the main challenges during the hiring process

Question N°10: Were there any employee retention, engagement, or performance concerns during the first stages of the RCC operation?

Interviewed: The employees were generally prepared. I think some members adapted more quickly than others, but that is normal in most hiring processes. Practical experience and confidence were developed progressively after training as employees gained exposure to real operational situations

Question N°11: Looking back, what aspects of the recruitment and onboarding process worked particularly well during the establishment of the RCC team?

Interviewed: The recruitment process was completed on time, and onboarding activities helped employees integrate quickly into the organization

Question N°12: What HR-related challenges would you address differently if Ecolab were to establish another finance operation in a new location?

Interviewed: I would strengthen onboarding and provide more structured preparation for employees entering complex operational roles

Question N°13: Based on your experience, what are the most important workforce and talent management factors for successfully building a new finance team that will receive processes from another country?

Interviewed: I would encourage involving people with technical knowledge of the process in the recruitment and selection stages. Their participation would help evaluate candidates not only from an HR perspective, but also from the technical perspective of the area for which they are being hired. I believe this would improve hiring decisions and is applicable not only to finance teams, but to any function undergoing a similar transition

Table 12: Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars - Self-developed

Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars Human Resources (HR) Analyst, Pune - Ecolab GBS			
Pillar	Statement	Points	Pillar Average
1	HR received adequate information regarding hiring requirements, timelines, and workforce needs for the RCC operation.	4	4.0
	HR was involved early enough to effectively support the establishment of the RCC team in Pune.	4	
2	The onboarding and preparation process adequately supported employees before operational training began.	4	4.0
	The support provided during employees' learning and adaptation process was sufficient.	4	
3	Employees adapted effectively to working with colleagues from Buenos Aires despite the absence of formal cultural training.	4	3.5
	Cultural and communication differences did not significantly affect collaboration between the Pune and Buenos Aires teams.	3	
4	The recruitment process successfully attracted candidates with the qualifications required for the RCC operation.	2	2.5
	Newly hired RCC employees were adequately prepared to assume operational responsibilities after training.	3	
5	The workforce management approach used during the RCC transition could be replicated in future relocation projects.	4	4.5
	Greater involvement of operational specialists in recruitment would improve future transition outcomes.	5	

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table summarizes the participant's assessment of key aspects of the transition process across the analytical pillars of this study. Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements associated with each analytical pillar.

3.2.4. Human Resources (HR) Partner, Buenos Aires - Ecolab GBS

Question N°1: Could you briefly describe your role within the Buenos Aires HR team and explain your involvement in the RCC transition from Buenos Aires to Pune?

Interviewed: I work as an HR Partner in Buenos Aires and support employees affected by the transition, internal mobility processes, and employee communications

Question N°2: At what stage did the Buenos Aires HR team become involved in the transition, and what were your main responsibilities?

Interviewed: HR became involved during the planning stages. Our main responsibilities were supporting employees, coordinating internal opportunities, and assisting managers throughout the transition

Question N°3: How were the transition objectives, timelines, and workforce impacts communicated to the HR team?

Interviewed: The information was communicated through meetings, which allowed HR to prepare the necessary support actions

Question N°4: Did HR have any role in supporting employees who participated in the knowledge transfer process with the Pune team?

Interviewed: Yes. HR provided support when needed and monitored employee concerns during the transition period

Question N°5: Were there any initiatives to support employees during the transition period and help them adapt to changes in their responsibilities?

Interviewed: Yes. Employees received support from managers and HR as they prepared to move into new roles or responsibilities within the organization. Employee wellbeing and career development are important priorities for us. We actively worked on internal transitions

within Ecolab Buenos Aires after the migration, identifying opportunities that matched employees' experience and skills, creating new career paths when possible, and helping ensure they remained engaged and satisfied within the organization

Question N°6: Were any cultural or communication challenges reported by employees who worked directly with the Pune team?

***Interviewed:** From the HR perspective, no cultural or communication challenges were formally reported or documented. However, we became aware informally that some employees were reluctant to participate in subsequent waves or travel opportunities due to factors related to cultural differences and their overall experience during the transition. These concerns were never raised as formal complaints, but they were discussed informally among employees and managers*

Question N°7: Did HR provide any resources, guidance, or support to help employees navigate cross-cultural interactions during the transition?

***Interviewed:** From the HR side, we did not provide this type of cultural support or training. My understanding is that the project team was more directly involved in supporting and coordinating those aspects of the transition*

Question N°8: How did HR support employees whose RCC responsibilities were transferred but who remained at Ecolab in Buenos Aires?

***Interviewed:** HR worked with managers to identify new opportunities and support employees as they transitioned into different roles within the organization*

Question N°9: Were employees reassigned to other roles or processes after their RCC activities were transferred? If so, how was that managed?

***Interviewed:** Yes. Employees were gradually reassigned based on business needs, individual experience, and available opportunities*

Question N°10: Were there any concerns related to employee engagement, retention, morale, or uncertainty during the transition?

Interviewed: Some employees initially had concerns about their future roles, but communication and internal opportunities helped address most of those concerns. Also, Ecolab regularly conducts employee satisfaction surveys, typically on a quarterly basis, to understand employee perceptions and engagement across the organization. During this transition, we also conducted specific surveys related to the migration process to better understand employees' main concerns and monitor how those concerns evolved over time, allowing us to take actions where necessary

Question N°11: Looking back, what aspects of the workforce transition process worked particularly well?

Interviewed: The internal mobility process worked well and allowed employees to continue their careers within the organization. Another positive factor was that, while some teams and processes were being transferred to Pune, other processes were shortly after migrated to Buenos Aires. Many of these new processes required a more analytical profile, which created opportunities for employees affected by the migrations to continue growing professionally, take on new challenges, and in some cases move into more advanced roles within the company

Question N°12: What HR-related challenges would you address differently if Ecolab were to relocate another finance process in the future?

Interviewed: I would increase communication regarding future career paths earlier in the process to reduce uncertainty among employees

Question N°13: Based on your experience, what are the most important people-management factors for successfully relocating a process from one country to another while retaining employees in the original location?

Interviewed: Clear communication, career development opportunities and employee support

Table 13: Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars - Self-developed

Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars Human Resources (HR) Partner, Buenos Aires - Ecolab GBS			
Pillar	Statement	Points	Pillar Average
1	HR was involved early enough to effectively support employees affected by the RCC transition.	4	4.0
	Communication regarding workforce impacts and transition planning was adequate.	4	
2	HR provided adequate support to employees participating in the knowledge transfer process.	3	3.5
	Employees received sufficient support to adapt to new responsibilities following the transition.	4	
3	Cultural and communication differences did not significantly disrupt collaboration between the Buenos Aires and Pune teams.	4	3.5
	Employees received adequate support for navigating cross-cultural interactions during the transition.	3	
4	Internal mobility and workforce reassignment processes were managed effectively.	5	5
	Employee engagement and morale were monitored and supported throughout the transition.	5	
5	The people-management approach used during the RCC transition could be successfully replicated in future relocation projects.	4	4.5
	Career development opportunities helped mitigate the impact of the transition on affected employees.	5	

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table summarizes the participant's assessment of key aspects of the transition process across the analytical pillars of this study. Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements associated with each analytical pillar.

3.2.5. Information Technology (IT) Analyst, Pune - Ecolab GBS

Question N°1: Could you briefly describe your role within the Pune GBS organization and explain how your IT team supported the establishment and operational readiness of the RCC process in Pune?

Interviewed: I am an IT support analyst. With my team, we prepared systems access and equipment to support the colleagues in Pune

Question N°2: How much advance notice did the Pune IT team receive regarding the RCC transition, and was there sufficient time to prepare the required technical resources?

Interviewed: We received several weeks of notice and some technical requirements were confirmed shortly before the colleagues joined Ecolab

Question N°3: From an IT support perspective, how would you describe the experience of enabling the RCC process transition to Pune? Did it feel like a well-planned implementation or one that required significant adaptation along the way?

Interviewed: The transition was structured and well planned

Question N°4: Was the Pune IT team provided with a clear technical roadmap and implementation schedule to support the RCC transition? How were priorities and timelines communicated?

Interviewed: We received the steps to follow related to preparing the equipment and granting access in advance and the day the colleagues joined we provided cybersecurity training

Question N°5: How would you characterize the leadership and communication provided during the transition? Did the Pune IT team feel adequately informed and consulted regarding decisions that affected technical operations?

Interviewed: Communication was effective

Question N°6: Were there delays or issues in enabling system access, applications, or permissions that affected employees during the transition? If so, how were they addressed?

Interviewed: There were issues with the initial setup of some systems in the colleagues computers, but they were resolved fast onsite

Question N°7: During the transition, did technical support demand increase significantly? How did the Pune IT team manage the workload?

Interviewed: In general yes, the requests increased because there were different teams transitioning, we managed the workload through prioritization of the requests

Question N°8: How was the creation of accounts, permissions, and system access managed for employees involved in the transition? Were there any challenges in the process?

Interviewed: the creation of accounts was overall smooth, some permissions requests required additional follow-up. The challenges were related to the system setup as mentioned

Question N°9: Were any specific cybersecurity controls, compliance measures, or risk mitigation actions implemented to support cross-border access to financial systems during the transition?

Interviewed: Standard security measures such as multi-factor authentication and different access depending on the roles

Question N°10: Were there technical knowledge gaps among the newly hired Pune RCC employees that generated additional support requirements for the IT team? How were these addressed?

Interviewed: No

Question N°11: In your overall assessment, how effectively did the IT function support the RCC transition, and what structural limitations affected the quality or speed of technical support?

Interviewed: I think the IT support role was effective

Question N°12: If Ecolab were to establish a similar finance operation in another location in the future, what would you identify as the most critical technical success factors, and what would you recommend doing differently based on your experience?

Interviewed: Maintaining early planning and effective IT onboarding procedures

Table 14: Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars - Self-developed

Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars Information Technology (IT) Analyst, Pune - Ecolab GBS			
Pillar	Statement	Points	Pillar Average
1	Overall organizational preparedness of the IT team during the transition was adequate, with timely information from the outset.	4	4.0
	Leadership accessibility and responsiveness throughout the process was adequate.	4	
2	The adequacy of support mechanisms provided during the transition was sufficient.	4	4.5
	The IT team's capacity to absorb additional support demand during the transition was sufficient.	5	
3	Collaboration between the Pune IT team and operational stakeholders supported the transition effectively.	4	4.0
	Communication between technical and business teams was adequate throughout the transition.	4	
4	The sufficiency and quality of equipment provided to support the transition was adequate.	5	5.0
	The level of preparedness and compliance in cybersecurity matters during the transition was adequate.	5	
5	The technical support model used during the transition could be replicated in future relocation projects.	4	4.5
	Lessons learned from this transition would improve future technical readiness and planning.	5	

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table summarizes the participant's assessment of key aspects of the transition process across the analytical pillars of this study. Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements associated with each analytical pillar.

**3.2.6. Information Technology (IT) Specialist, Buenos Aires - Ecolab
GBS**

Question N°1: Could you briefly describe your role within Ecolab and your responsibilities within the Buenos Aires IT support team?

Interviewed: I work as an IT Support Specialist in Buenos Aires. My responsibilities include user support, equipment provisioning, system access management, onboarding activities, and technical assistance for employees across different business functions

Question N°2: What type of technical support did your team provide to employees involved in the RCC transition?

Interviewed: We supported system access, laptop preparation and general technical assistance for employees participating in the transition before travelling to Pune

Question N°3: Did the transition generate additional requests related to equipment, system access, or technical support?

Interviewed: Yes. We received additional requests specially for access changes

Question N°4: Were there any delays or challenges in providing access to systems, applications, or collaboration tools?

Interviewed: Some approvals took longer than expected, especially when multiple teams were involved, but most requests were resolved within a reasonable timeframe.

Question N°5: How were laptops, equipment, and other technical resources prepared for employees traveling to Pune or participating in training activities?

Interviewed: We prepared and configured laptops and ensured employees had the necessary software and access before their travel or training sessions

Question N°6: Did your team provide onboarding support or technical setup assistance to employees involved in the transition?

Interviewed: Yes. We assisted with device setup, account creation and activation and access validation

Question N°7: For employees whose RCC responsibilities were transferred to Pune but who remained in Buenos Aires and moved into new roles, did the IT team need to provide additional support related to system access, permissions, equipment, or technical setup?

Interviewed: Yes. In most cases employees kept their existing laptops if the equipment was in good condition. Our main responsibility was updating system access, permissions, and application profiles to support the requirements of their new roles

Question N°8: What cybersecurity or information security requirements were communicated to employees before accessing systems or working internationally?

Interviewed: Employees were required to complete standard cybersecurity training and follow company policies regarding password protection and data security

Question N°9: Did the transition create a higher volume of support requests than normal operations? If so, how was this managed?

Interviewed: There was an increase in support requests during key transition periods. The team managed the workload by prioritizing critical requests and coordinating internally

Question N°10: Did the Buenos Aires IT team coordinate with the Pune IT team when technical issues required support from both locations?

Interviewed: No, we did not have contact with IT team in Pune, if the Buenos Aires team that travelled had any technical issues would check directly with Pune or contact us, so each center managed the issues independently

Question N°11: Were there recurring technical issues or common support requests during the transition period?

***Interviewed:** The most common requests were related to system access and account permissions*

Question N°12: If Ecolab were to carry out a similar transition in the future, what recommendations would you make from an IT support perspective?

***Interviewed:** Early planning and more time for the access and systems requirements*

Table 15: Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars - Self-developed

Table of the Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars Information Technology (IT) Specialist, Buenos Aires - Ecolab GBS			
Pillar	Statement	Points	Pillar Average
1	The IT team received timely information and adequate visibility regarding the transition.	2	2.5
	Leadership and communication adequately supported the IT team's involvement during the transition.	3	
2	Support mechanisms were sufficient to address the technical needs generated by the transition.	4	3.5
	The IT team had adequate capacity to absorb the additional support workload created by the transition.	3	
3	Coordination between stakeholders enabled effective resolution of technical issues.	4	4.0
	Communication between teams was sufficient to maintain operational continuity.	4	
4	Access provisioning, equipment preparation, and onboarding support were managed effectively.	4	4.0
	Cybersecurity and compliance requirements were adequately addressed during the transition.	4	
5	The technical support model used during the transition can be replicated in future relocations.	4	4.0
	Lessons learned from this transition would improve future technical readiness and planning.	4	

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table summarizes the participant's assessment of key aspects of the transition process across the analytical pillars of this study. Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements associated with each analytical pillar.

3.2.7. EDI Team Leader, Buenos Aires - Ecolab GBS

Question N° 1: Could you briefly describe your role as Analyst and your participation in the EDI process transition from the United States to Buenos Aires?

Interviewed: My role as a Team Leader and Senior Analyst involved overseeing some of the team's processes related to delivering invoices to clients and handling problems that arose in

that workflow. During the EDI transition from the U.S. to Buenos Aires, I moved from a mostly operational role with some analytical components to a much more analytical one. I had to delegate tasks in order to have the bandwidth to understand and manage everything that was new.

Question N°2 : Were you part of the team from the beginning of the transition from the U.S., or did you join when the process was already underway, and at what stage did you come on board?

Interviewed: When the process migrated in its entirety, I was already part of the team. I was present throughout the transition and experienced the full cycle of receiving the process from Eagan.

Question N° 3: In your own words, how would you describe the overall experience of receiving this process from the U.S.? Did it feel like a well-planned and structured transition, or something the team had to build as it went?

Interviewed: In my view, the training period was a bit short and the planning was not fully solid from the start. That said, we figured it out as we went. Part of the challenge is that this process requires real examples to learn from, and certain cases simply do not come up every day, so we had to wait until they arrived to work through them. Even months after the processes were formally our responsibility, the people from the U.S. remained available to answer questions, which made a real difference.

Question N° 4: How was the decision to transfer the EDI process from the U.S. to Buenos Aires communicated: was there a formal communication plan, or did information arrive in a fragmented or informal way?

Interviewed: There were internal emails notifying the team of the migration approximately one month in advance. It was not fragmented, the communication arrived through official channels and gave us a reasonable lead time to start preparing mentally and operationally.

Question N° 5: Did you receive a clear explanation of the objectives, scope, and timeline of the transition before it began, or did that information emerge gradually as the process advanced?

Interviewed: Yes, we were given transition dates, a list of the processes that would be transferred to us, client lists, and detailed information about the scope. The upfront communication was clear and gave the team a solid baseline understanding of what was coming before the formal training began.

Question N° 6: How would you characterize the leadership style of those who managed the transition from the U.S.? Were they accessible, transparent, and responsive to the Buenos Aires team's concerns, or did decisions arrive from above with limited local participation?

Interviewed: The decision to migrate was not something that was consulted with me at my analyst level, which is understandable given that these are decisions made at leadership level. However, the people who actually managed the transition were accessible, patient, and genuinely invested in making sure we understood the processes. They were willing to explain and clarify for a long time after the formal handover, and it was clear that they cared about the outcome, not just the timeline.

Question N° 7: How far in advance did formal preparation of the Buenos Aires team begin before assuming the operation, and was that time sufficient to be ready by the handover?

Interviewed: Approximately one month. That was enough to cover the most important topics, but given the lack of real cases to practice with during training, some scenarios only came up after the migration was already our responsibility. When that happened, we asked for help and received it. The preparation covered the framework; the real learning happened in the field.

Question N° 8: Was there a local reference or leader in Buenos Aires who accompanied the team during the reception of the process, or did the team have to self-manage a large part of the adaptation?

Interviewed: It was largely self-managed. Both the supervisor and the team leader of the group had only been in the team for about two months at the time of the transition. That meant there was no experienced local anchor to lean on, and the team had to build its own understanding of the process without the benefit of someone with deep institutional memory of the Buenos Aires side.

Question N° 9: What formal support mechanisms were implemented to help the Buenos Aires team absorb the process, such as extended support periods from the U.S., consultation sessions, or defined training processes?

Interviewed: For the first three months, we had a weekly meeting with the U.S. team where we brought our open questions and worked through them together. After those three months, the formal structure ended but the communication did not. We continued reaching out, sometimes with cases that had not come up before, and they were always willing to engage. Some of that knowledge could only be transferred when a specific situation actually arose, not in the abstract.

Question N° 10: How was the knowledge transfer process from the U.S. to Buenos Aires structured? Was there formal documentation, in-person or remote training sessions, shadowing periods, or Desktop Procedures delivered in advance?

Interviewed: There were DTPs, but the core of the transfer happened through meetings, trainings organized by topic or by specific client, combined with a highly active Teams group where we asked questions and built up knowledge incrementally. We took our own notes and deepened our understanding day by day. The documentation served as a reference, but the live bidirectional communication was where the real learning happened.

Question N° 11: Did the U.S. team travel to Buenos Aires to train the local team, or was all of the transfer done remotely? What was the impact of that format on the quality of learning?

Interviewed: The training was entirely remote. In-person sessions would probably have been more effective, but the communication quality compensated for the distance. Both teams were in contact multiple times per day, with fast response times on both sides. The willingness to engage on short notice made the remote format work better than it might have otherwise.

Question N° 12: What were the most significant barriers the Buenos Aires team encountered when absorbing the EDI process from the U.S.? Were they primarily technical, linguistic, cultural, organizational, or related to the quality of documentation received?

Interviewed: The main barrier was time pressure: we were made responsible for tasks before we fully understood them. Being accountable for a process from one day to the next, when many of those cases had not yet come up during training, was stressful and created a learning-under-pressure dynamic. It was a challenge, but it also accelerated the learning curve significantly.

Question N° 13: Looking back, what conditions or practices made the absorption of the process more effective? What resources, tools, or working dynamics genuinely helped the team reach operational autonomy?

Interviewed: The training meetings and constant communication were key, both through calls and through the Teams chat. The recordings and DTPs helped, but the live, bidirectional interaction was where I learned the most. Being able to ask a question and get an answer in context, in real time, was far more effective than reading a procedure document after the fact.

Question N° 14: Were there formal metrics or indicators monitored during the transition to evaluate the team's progress? If so, what were they and how did they evolve throughout the process?

Interviewed: What migrated from the U.S. was added to the daily metrics that were already being tracked in Buenos Aires, rather than having a separate set of transition-specific indicators. The monitoring of how the transition was progressing was more qualitative in nature, based on the team's own sense of confidence and the frequency of questions being escalated.

Question N° 15: How long did it take the Buenos Aires team to reach an autonomous and stable level of performance in the EDI process, and what defined that moment for you?

Interviewed: Approximately three months to resolve the vast majority of open questions. After that period, situations that had never come up before still required contact with the Eagan team for support, but the overwhelming majority of cases were well within the team's control. That shift from frequent escalation to occasional consultation was the moment that felt like genuine autonomy.

Question N° 16: How did the time zone difference between Buenos Aires and the U.S. affect daily coordination during the transition? Were there defined remote support windows, or was communication primarily asynchronous?

Interviewed: It did not feel like a negative factor. The U.S. was two or three hours behind, which meant that from around 11 AM in Buenos Aires onwards we could hold meetings and communicate through Teams without any problem. There were no formally defined support windows, we connected when it made sense for both teams, and that flexibility worked well in practice.

Question N° 17: Were there moments of performance decline or frequent errors during the learning curve, and how long did it take to recover operational stability?

Interviewed: There were not many errors in the traditional sense, because whenever we were uncertain we consulted the Egan team before acting rather than resolving the case incorrectly. The main impact on performance was in response time: for cases we did not yet know how to handle, we sometimes waited until the weekly meeting to review them, which occasionally meant missing an SLA deadline.

Question N° 18: Was there a formal remote support period from the U.S. after Buenos Aires assumed the operation, or did the local team find itself relatively on its own to resolve questions and incidents from the start?

Interviewed: Yes, there was a formal and extended support period. The first three months included structured support as part of the migration process. After that, the communication continued at a lower frequency but never fully stopped. The relationship remained collaborative rather than transactional, which made a real difference in how quickly the team could handle edge cases.

Question N° 19: Did the Buenos Aires team have full access to the necessary systems, platforms, and tools from the start of the operation, or were there delays or technical limitations that affected the ability to work normally?

Interviewed: Yes, we had full access to all necessary tools from the beginning: SAP, the relevant portals, SharePoint access, and everything else required to operate the process. There were no significant technical delays or access issues that affected daily operations.

Question N° 20: In your assessment, did the quality and continuity of the EDI process remain stable during the transition from the U.S., or were there periods of performance decline, frequent errors, or difficulty meeting SLAs?

Interviewed: *There were small SLA delays for certain cases. Because we did not always know how to resolve them immediately, we sometimes held them until the weekly meeting to get guidance, which meant the response time exceeded the target. These were not widespread failures, they were specific to the more complex or infrequent case types that had not come up during training. Overall continuity was maintained, but with occasional delays on the hardest cases.*

Table 16: Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars - Self-developed

Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars EDI Team Leader, Buenos Aires - Ecolab GBS			
Pillar	Statement	Points	Pillar Average
1	Overall organizational preparedness during the reception of the EDI process from the U.S. was adequate.	4	4.5
	Accessibility and support from leadership during the transition was adequate.	5	
2	The overall structure and quality of the knowledge transfer process from the U.S. was adequate.	4	4.0
	The learning and consolidation process of the EDI team in Buenos Aires was efficient in terms of time and quality.	4	
3	Communication and collaboration between the U.S. and Buenos Aires teams supported the transition effectively.	5	4.5
	The effectiveness of remote coordination with the U.S. team during and after the transition was adequate.	4	
4	The availability and access to systems and tools necessary to operate the EDI process from Buenos Aires was adequate from the outset.	5	4.5
	The level of continuity and operational quality of the EDI process during the transition was satisfactory.	4	
5	The EDI team experience demonstrates that an interregional transition can successfully achieve operational autonomy.	4	4.0
	Lessons learned from this transition would improve future process migrations within Ecolab.	4	

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table summarizes the participant's assessment of key aspects of the transition process across the analytical pillars of this study. Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements associated with each analytical pillar.

3.2.8. EDI Senior Analyst, Buenos Aires - Ecolab GBS

Question N° 1: Could you briefly describe your role as Analyst and your participation in the EDI process transition from the United States to Buenos Aires?

Interviewed: My role as Senior Analyst requires me to pay attention to the general causes behind certain invoice transmission errors, collaborate with my teammates, and produce some reports. I had no participation in the transition itself.

Question N° 2: Were you part of the team from the beginning of the transition from the U.S., or did you join when the process was already underway, and at what stage did you come on board?

Interviewed: I joined after the formal transition process had already concluded.

Question N° 3: In your own words, how would you describe the overall experience of receiving this process from the U.S.? Did it feel like a well-planned and structured transition, or something the team had to build as it went?

Interviewed: It was something that had to be built along the way. The specific knowledge was explained to us as problems arose, not in advance. There was no comprehensive upfront training, learning happened reactively, through the issues that came up in daily operations.

Question N° 4: How was the decision to transfer the EDI process from the U.S. to Buenos Aires communicated: was there a formal communication plan, or did information arrive in a fragmented or informal way?

Interviewed: I am not aware of the details of how that decision was communicated, as I was not part of the team at that stage of the process.

Question N° 5: Did you receive a clear explanation of the objectives, scope, and timeline of the transition before it began, or did that information emerge gradually as the process advanced?

Interviewed: I was not part of the team at that point and cannot speak to how that information was shared with the original group.

Question N° 6: How would you characterize the leadership style of those who managed the transition from the U.S.? Were they accessible, transparent, and responsive to the Buenos Aires team's concerns, or did decisions arrive from above with limited local participation?

Interviewed: I was not present during that phase of the transition and do not have direct visibility into how leadership operated at that time.

Question N° 7: How far in advance did formal preparation of the Buenos Aires team begin before assuming the operation, and was that time sufficient to be ready by the handover?

Interviewed: I was not part of the team during that preparation period and cannot provide a first-hand account of the timeline.

Question N° 8: Was there a local reference or leader in Buenos Aires who accompanied the team during the reception of the process, or did the team have to self-manage a large part of the adaptation?

Interviewed: My understanding is that there was a local reference in place who provided guidance, though I did not directly experience that support period myself.

Question N° 9: What formal support mechanisms were implemented to help the Buenos Aires team absorb the process, such as extended support periods from the U.S., consultation sessions, or defined training processes?

Interviewed: *I know that extended support periods are standard practice in these transitions. However, as I was not part of the team at the time, I cannot describe the specific mechanisms that were in place during this particular handover.*

Question N° 10: How was the knowledge transfer process from the U.S. to Buenos Aires structured? Was there formal documentation, in-person or remote training sessions, shadowing periods, or Desktop Procedures delivered in advance?

Interviewed: *Yes, there was a combination of all those elements: formal documentation, both in-person and remote training sessions, and extended support periods. The structure was broader than what I personally experienced when I joined, which was already after the main transfer had been completed.*

Question N° 11: Did the U.S. team travel to Buenos Aires to train the local team, or was all of the transfer done remotely? What was the impact of that format on the quality of learning?

Interviewed: *Yes, the U.S. team did travel to Buenos Aires. Based on what I was told by colleagues who were present, the in-person sessions made a meaningful difference compared to remote-only training, particularly for the more complex and process-specific scenarios that are harder to convey through video calls alone.*

Question N° 12: What were the most significant barriers the Buenos Aires team encountered when absorbing the EDI process from the U.S.? Were they primarily technical, linguistic, cultural, organizational, or related to the quality of documentation received?

Interviewed: *The main barrier I can identify from my experience joining the team after the transition was insufficient or outdated documentation. When I came on board, many of the procedures were not fully captured in written form, which meant that knowledge was largely*

held by individuals rather than embedded in accessible materials. That created dependency on specific people and made onboarding harder than it needed to be.

Question N° 13: Looking back, what conditions or practices made the absorption of the process more effective? What resources, tools, or working dynamics genuinely helped the team reach operational autonomy?

***Interviewed:** Several Desktop Procedures were useful as reference material. More importantly, having a Team Leader who could explain procedures directly and patiently made a significant difference. The one-on-one explanations, especially for cases that did not appear frequently, were more effective than any written document because they provided context and reasoning, not just steps.*

Question N° 14: Were there formal metrics or indicators monitored during the transition to evaluate the team's progress? If so, what were they and how did they evolve throughout the process?

***Interviewed:** I am not aware of specific metrics that were tracked during the transition period itself. Monitoring of the team's progress appeared to be handled more qualitatively than through formal KPIs, at least from my vantage point.*

Question N° 15: How long did it take the Buenos Aires team to reach an autonomous and stable level of performance in the EDI process, and what defined that moment for you?

***Interviewed:** I would estimate around nine months. For me, that milestone was defined by the point at which we no longer needed to consult on a regular basis. When the volume of questions dropped significantly and the team could handle the vast majority of cases independently, that felt like the moment genuine autonomy had been reached.*

Question N° 16: How did the time zone difference between Buenos Aires and the U.S. affect daily coordination during the transition? Were there defined remote support windows, or was communication primarily asynchronous?

Interviewed: The time zone difference did not create major problems. Calls were scheduled at times that worked for both teams. The overlap was manageable and did not result in the kind of coordination breakdowns that a larger time gap might have caused. Communication happened when both teams were available, without the need for rigid defined windows.

Question N° 17: Were there moments of performance decline or frequent errors during the learning curve, and how long did it take to recover operational stability?

Interviewed: Yes, there were some difficulties. Given the nature of the EDI process, which involves complex and non-routine problems, there were cases that took longer to resolve than expected during the early period. The stabilization period was approximately two weeks of heightened error frequency before things settled.

Question N° 18: Was there a formal remote support period from the U.S. after Buenos Aires assumed the operation, or did the local team find itself relatively on its own to resolve questions and incidents from the start?

Interviewed: Yes, there was a formal remote support period. Ecolab's transition methodology has well-defined stages, and extended support from the sending team is a standard component. The particular challenge with EDI is that the nature of its problems is quite different from other processes, which means that some situations arose after the formal support window had ended and still required occasional escalation to the U.S. team.

Question N° 19: Did the Buenos Aires team have full access to the necessary systems, platforms, and tools from the start of the operation, or were there delays or technical limitations that affected the ability to work normally?

Interviewed: *Yes, access to the required systems was in place from the beginning. There were no significant technical barriers that prevented the team from operating once responsibilities were formally transferred.*

Question N° 20: **In your assessment, did the quality and continuity of the EDI process remain stable during the transition from the U.S., or were there periods of performance decline, frequent errors, or difficulty meeting SLAs?**

Interviewed: *There were certain difficulties, largely due to the nature of the problems involved. EDI issues are complex and not always predictable, which meant that during the initial period the team occasionally struggled to meet expected timelines. These were not systemic failures, but they reflected the steep learning curve that this particular process requires.*

Question N° 21: **If you could redesign the EDI transition from the U.S. to Buenos Aires, what three things would you do differently from the start and why?**

Interviewed: *First, I would redesign the training to focus less on portal posting procedures and more on developing a genuine understanding of the types of problems that are specific to EDI, the underlying logic, not just the steps. Second, I would ensure there is a clear map of all the teams involved in the process and an explicit escalation guide so that the team knows exactly who to contact for each type of case. Without that clarity, resolution time suffers and people spend time figuring out the routing rather than solving the problem.*

Question N° 22: **In your opinion, does the EDI team experience in Buenos Aires demonstrate that this type of interregional transition can work well if designed correctly, or are there structural limitations that make them always complex regardless of preparation?**

Interviewed: *Yes, it can be done. The Buenos Aires team demonstrated that a complex process with unusual problem types can be successfully transferred and stabilized. The*

structural complexity is real, especially for a process like EDI where no two days are the same, but it is manageable with the right preparation, documentation, and sustained support from the sending team. The key is not assuming that a standard transition framework will cover everything; some processes require a tailored approach.

Table 17: Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars - Self-developed

Ratings Across the Analytical Pillars EDI Senior Analyst, Buenos Aires - Ecolab GBS			
Pillar	Statement	Points	Pillar Average
1	Organizational readiness during the reception of the EDI process from the U.S. was adequate.	3	3.0
	The accessibility and support of leadership during the transition was adequate.	3	
2	The overall structure and quality of the knowledge transfer process from the U.S. was adequate.	3	3.0
	The learning and consolidation process of the EDI team in Buenos Aires was efficient in terms of time and quality.	3	
3	The effectiveness of remote coordination with the U.S. team during and after the transition was adequate.	4	4.0
	Communication and collaboration between the U.S. and Buenos Aires teams supported knowledge sharing effectively.	4	
4	The availability of and access to the systems and tools needed to operate the EDI process from Buenos Aires was adequate from the start.	4	3.0
	The level of operational continuity and quality of the EDI process during the transition from the U.S. was satisfactory.	2	
5	The EDI team's experience demonstrates that a well-designed interregional transition can achieve operational results equivalent to those of the original team.	4	4.0
	Lessons learned from this transition would improve future process migrations and onboarding activities.	4	

Note: Ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table summarizes the participant's assessment of key aspects of the transition process across the analytical pillars of this study. Pillar averages were calculated as the arithmetic mean of the ratings assigned to the statements associated with each analytical pillar.

4. Annex 4 - Instrument 2: Survey

4.1. Survey Questions Google Forms

Argentina–India Cross-Cultural Collaboration: Perceptions and Work Dynamics

Estimated completion time: 10–15 minutes. This survey is intended only for participants from Argentina or India who have directly collaborated with colleagues from the other country in a professional context. If you do not meet these criteria, please avoid completing the survey. All responses are anonymous and will be used exclusively for academic research purposes.

A. Demographics & Background

These variables will serve as grouping factors for comparative and multivariate statistical analyses.

A1. From which country are you participating in this survey? *

- ☐ Argentina
- ☐ India

A2. What is your age range? *

- ☐ 22–27 years
- ☐ 28–33 years
- ☐ 34–39 years
- ☐ 40–45 years
- ☐ 46 years or older

A3. Gender *

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary / other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

A4. In which industry did your cross-cultural collaboration primarily take place? *

- ☐ Technology / IT
- ☐ Finance / Accounting
- ☐ Consulting
- ☐ Manufacturing / Industry
- ☐ Services / BPO
- ☐ Healthcare
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Other

A5. How long did your collaboration with colleagues from the other culture last? *

- ☐ Less than 6 months
- ☐ 6 months to 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 3 years
- ☐ More than 3 years

A6. What type of work relationship did you have with colleagues from the other culture? *

- ☐ Same team / same project
- ☐ Same company but different teams
- ☐ Client / supplier relationship
- ☐ Occasional contact

A7. How would you rate your English proficiency? *

- ☐ Basic
- ☐ Intermediate
- ☐ Advanced
- ☐ Native or near-native

B. Communication and Working Style

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree | 5 = Strongly agree

B1. Rate the following statements about communication and working style *

	1	2	3	4	5
Communication with my colleagues from the other culture was clear and direct	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Differences in communication style (direct vs. indirect) created misunderstandings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The level of formality in communication was different from what I was used to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Over time, communication became more fluid and effective	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Colleagues from the other culture expressed disagreement openly when needed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The English language was a barrier to effective communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C2. Rate the following statements about trust and interpersonal relationships *

	1	2	3	4	5
I developed genuine trust-based relationships with colleagues from the other culture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal relationships were important for the work to function well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt that colleagues from the other culture trusted my professional judgment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trust took longer to build with colleagues from the other culture than with my own	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Informal moments helped build the relationship	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C3. Rate the following statements about working styles and pace *

	1	2	3	4	5
Colleagues from the other culture had a more structured and formal working style than mine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I observed differences in how deadlines and punctuality were managed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The other culture prioritized formal processes over quick solutions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There were differences in willingness to improvise or adapt to last-minute changes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Differences in working style created operational friction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

D. Operational Coordination and Performance

D1. Rate the following statements about operational coordination *

	1	2	3	4	5
The time zone difference was a significant obstacle to daily coordination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Digital tools (Teams, Slack, email) were sufficient to maintain effective coordination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Remote work amplified cultural differences in communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There were clear protocols for handling urgent issues outside shared working hours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Coordination improved progressively as the collaboration advanced	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

D2. Rate the following statements about team performance and outcomes *

	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural differences negatively affected team productivity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The team achieved its work objectives despite cultural differences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural diversity brought valuable perspectives that improved the final outcome	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural conflicts or misunderstandings were resolved effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collective performance improved as the teams got to know each other better	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

D3. Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of operational coordination with the other culture team?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very poor ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Excellent

E. Intercultural Learning and Adaptation

E1. Rate the following statements about intercultural learning and adaptation *

	1	2	3	4	5
I received formal intercultural training before or during the collaboration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The intercultural preparation I received was sufficient for the real challenges I encountered	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I adapted my communication style to work better with colleagues from the other culture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The cross-cultural experience significantly broadened my professional perspective	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I developed greater awareness of my own cultural biases through this experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would work again with colleagues from the other culture without hesitation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

E2. What adjustments did you make to your working style to collaborate better? *
(select all that apply)

- ☐ More direct or indirect communication depending on the context
- ☐ Greater patience and active listening
- ☐ Flexibility towards different ways of organising work
- ☐ More attention to cultural context when interpreting messages
- ☐ I did not modify my working style
- ☐ Other

E3. Overall, how would you rate your Cultural Intelligence (CQ) at the time the collaboration began? *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very low ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Very high

F. Overall Perception and Open Questions

F1. Rate the following statements about your overall experience *

	1	2	3	4	5
The experience of working with colleagues from the other culture was positive overall	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cultural differences were more of an enrichment than an obstacle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would recommend that other professionals prepare interculturally before collaborating with the other culture	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The organisation adequately managed cultural differences within the team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The experience positively changed my view of cross-cultural work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

F2. Overall, how would you rate your Argentina–India cross-cultural collaboration ^{*} experience?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Very poor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Excellent

F3. What was the biggest cultural challenge you faced? Please describe it briefly.

Tu respuesta

F4. What aspect of the other country culture positively surprised you in a professional context?

Tu respuesta

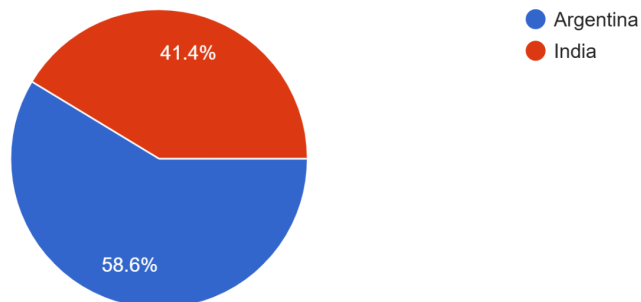
F5. If you could give one piece of advice to someone working for the first time with colleagues from the other culture, what would it be?

Tu respuesta

4.2. Survey Responses Google Forms

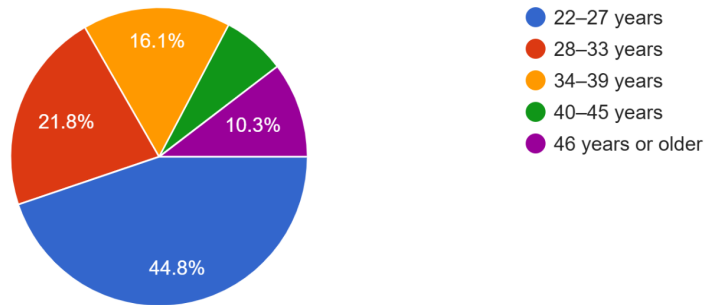
A1. From which country are you participating in this survey?

87 respuestas



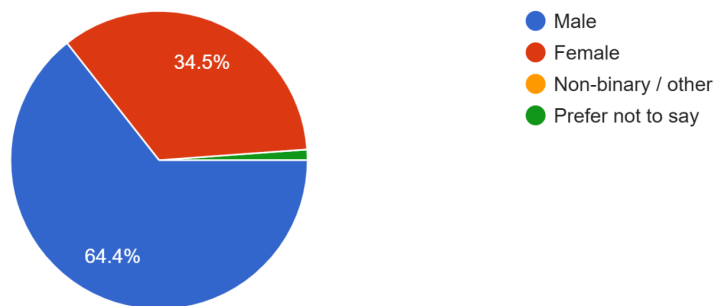
A2. What is your age range?

87 respuestas



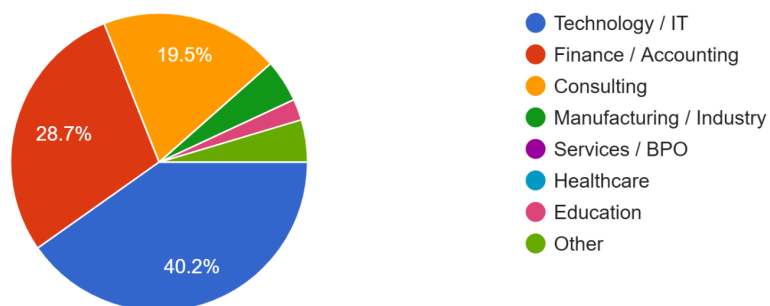
A3. Gender

87 respuestas



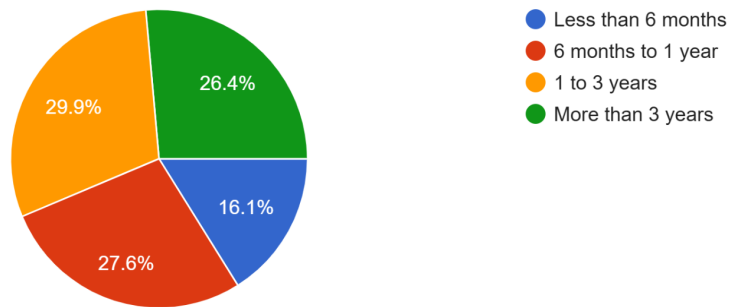
A4. In which industry did your cross-cultural collaboration primarily take place?

87 respuestas



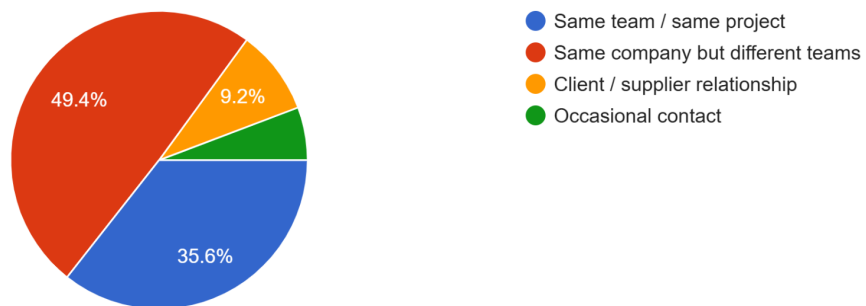
A5. How long did your collaboration with colleagues from the other culture last?

87 respuestas



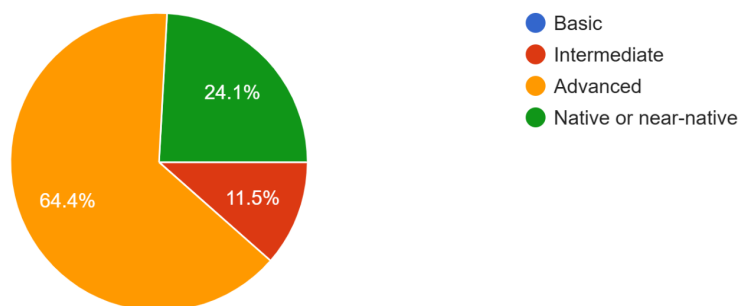
A6. What type of work relationship did you have with colleagues from the other culture?

87 respuestas

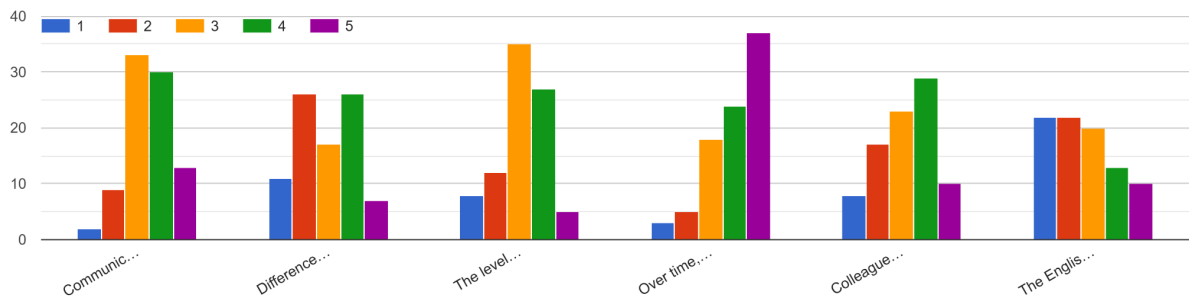


A7. How would you rate your English proficiency?

87 respuestas

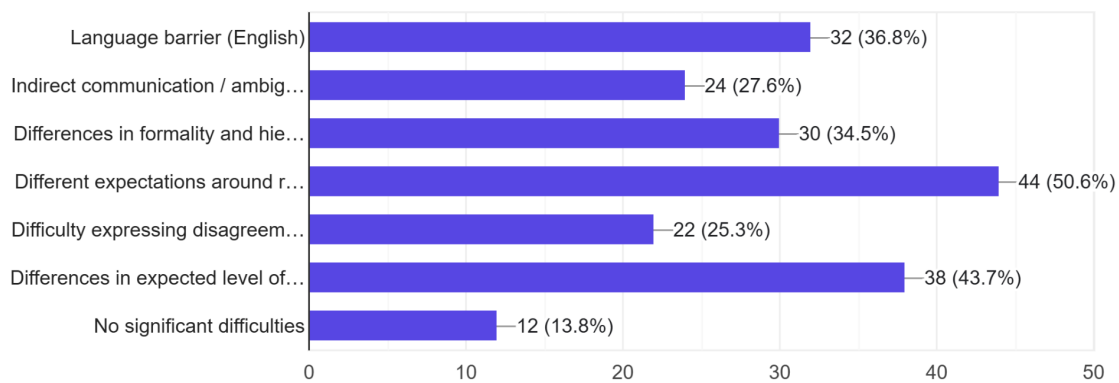


B1. Rate the following statements about communication and working style



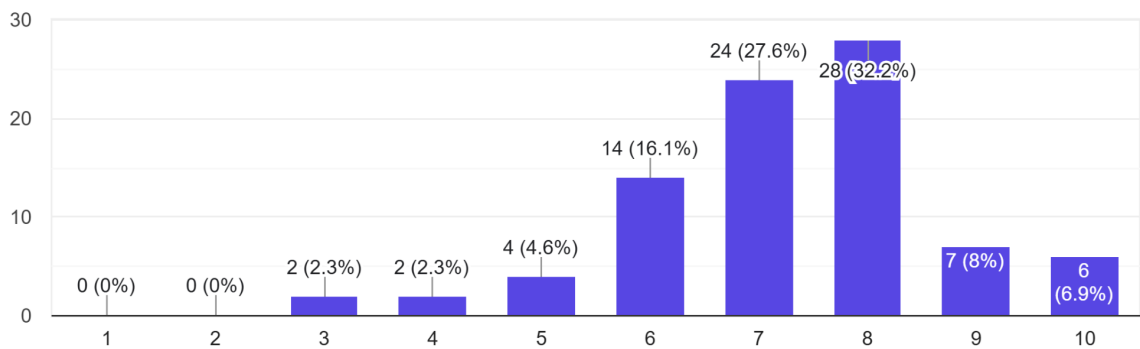
B2. What were the main sources of communication difficulty? (select all that apply)

87 respuestas

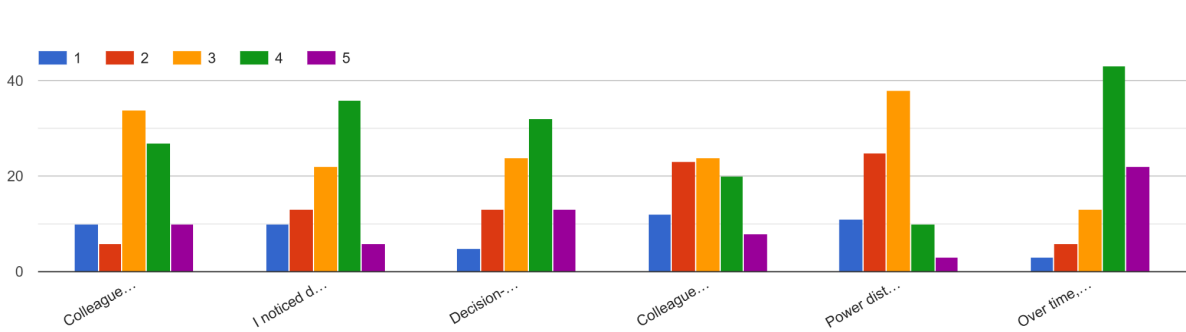


B3. Overall, how would you rate the quality of communication with your colleagues from the other culture?

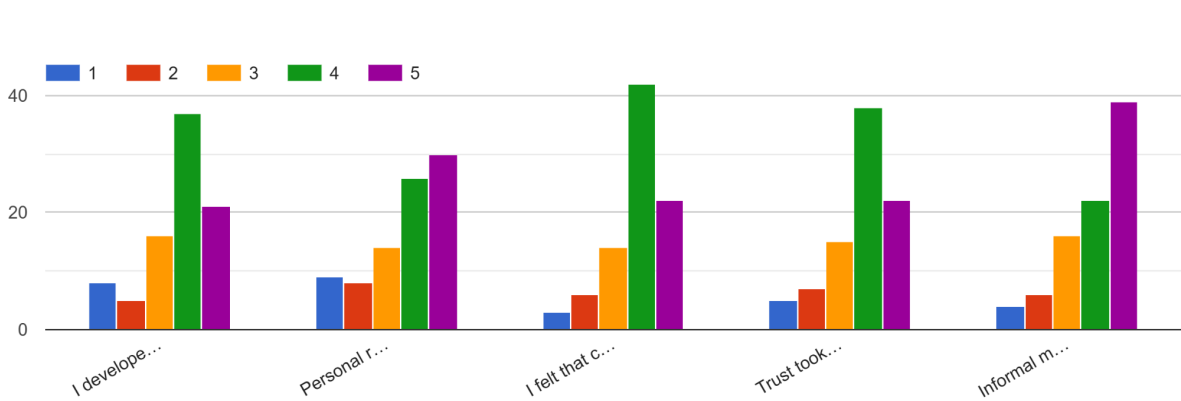
87 respuestas



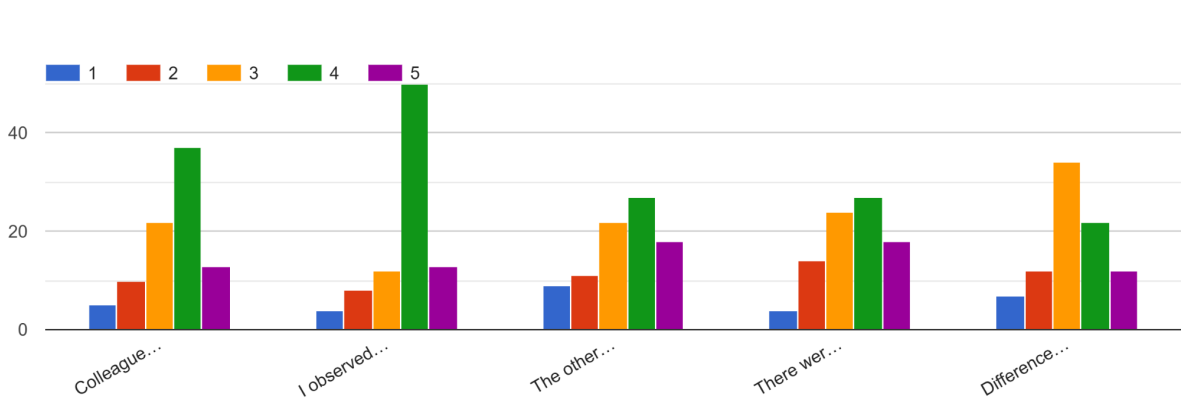
C1. Rate the following statements about hierarchy and decision-making



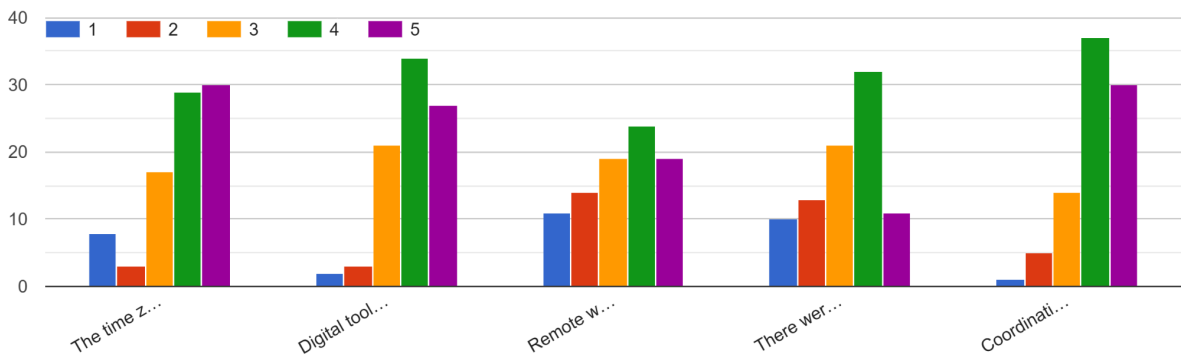
C2. Rate the following statements about trust and interpersonal relationships



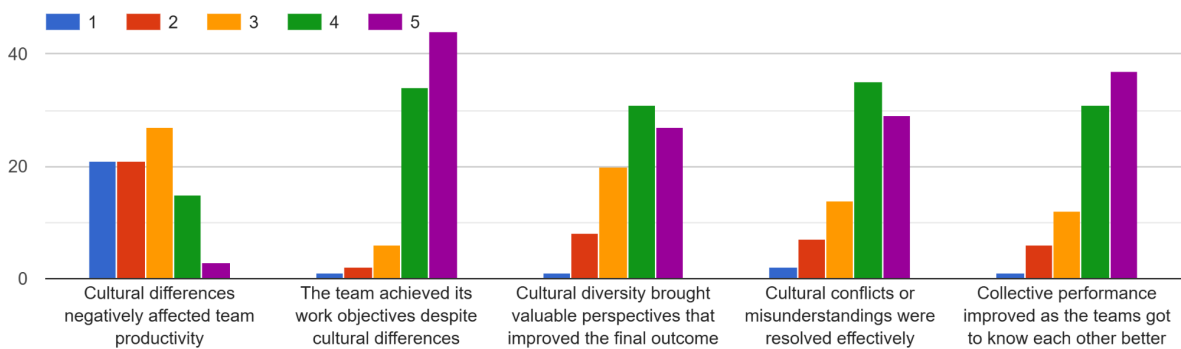
C3. Rate the following statements about working styles and pace



D1. Rate the following statements about operational coordination

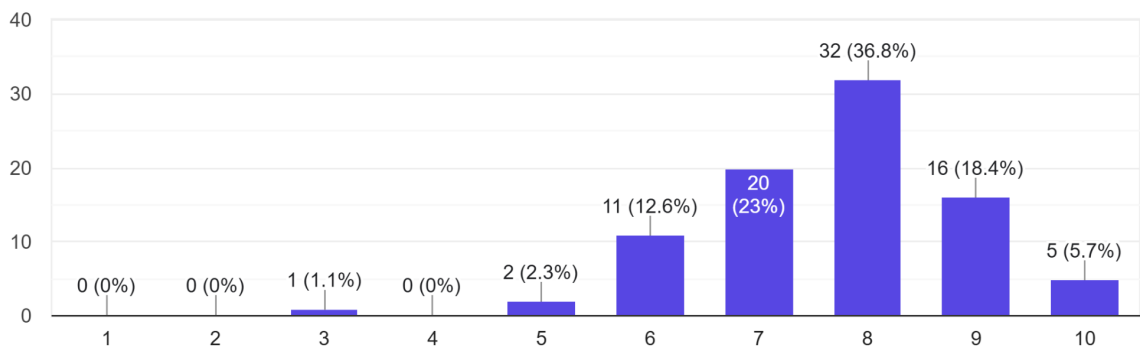


D2. Rate the following statements about team performance and outcomes

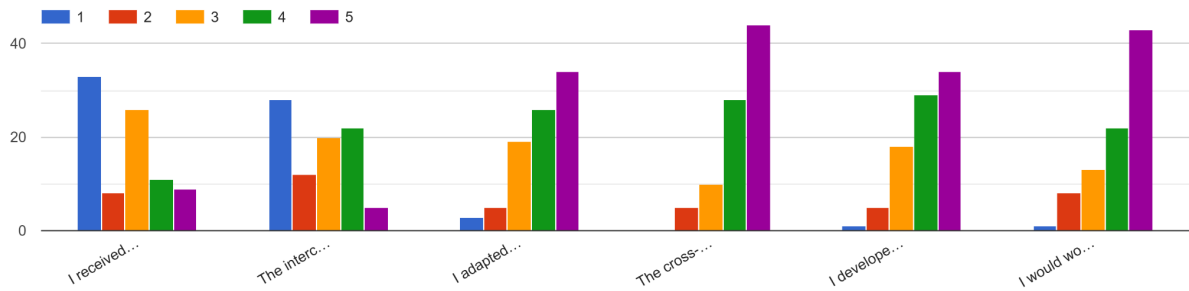


D3. Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of operational coordination with the other culture team?

87 respuestas

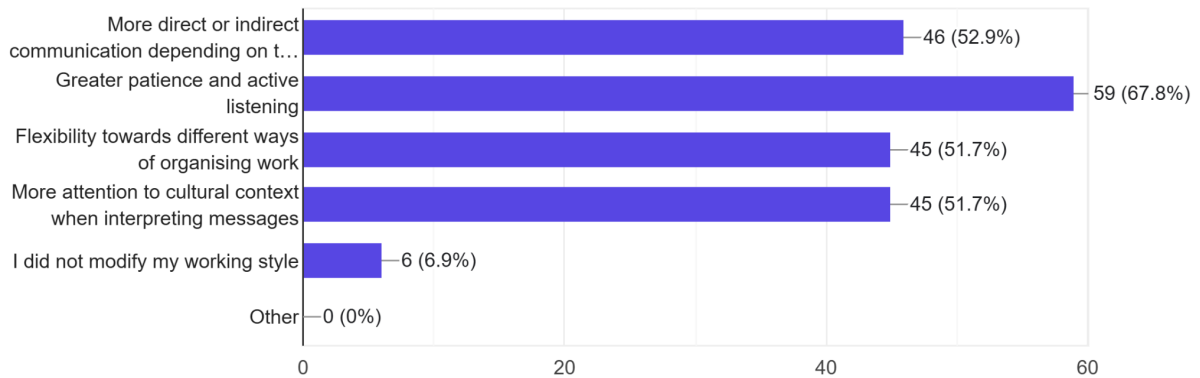


E1. Rate the following statements about intercultural learning and adaptation



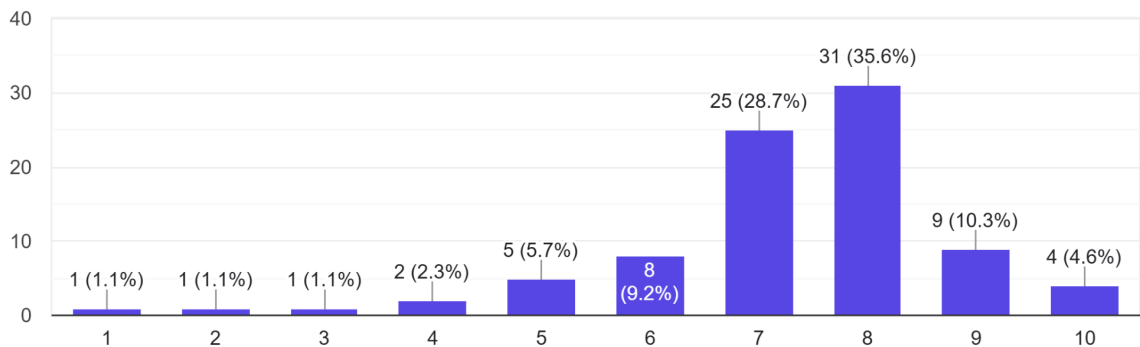
E2. What adjustments did you make to your working style to collaborate better? (select all that apply)

87 respuestas

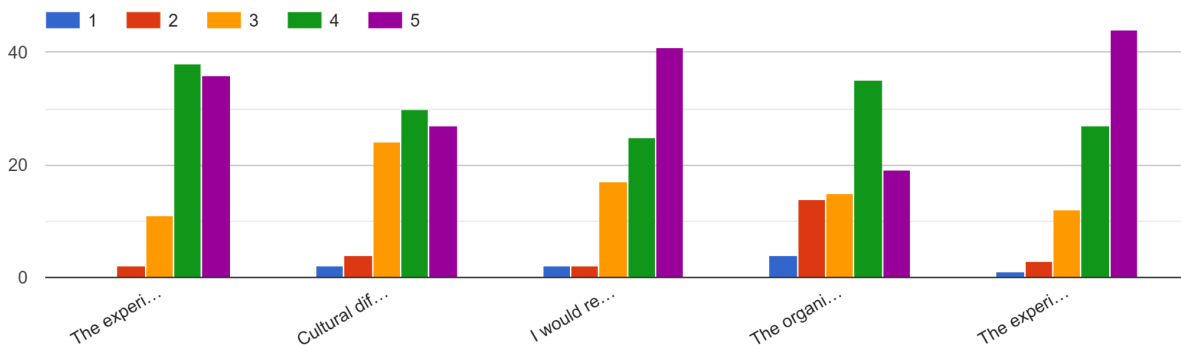


E3. Overall, how would you rate your Cultural Intelligence (CQ) at the time the collaboration began?

87 respuestas

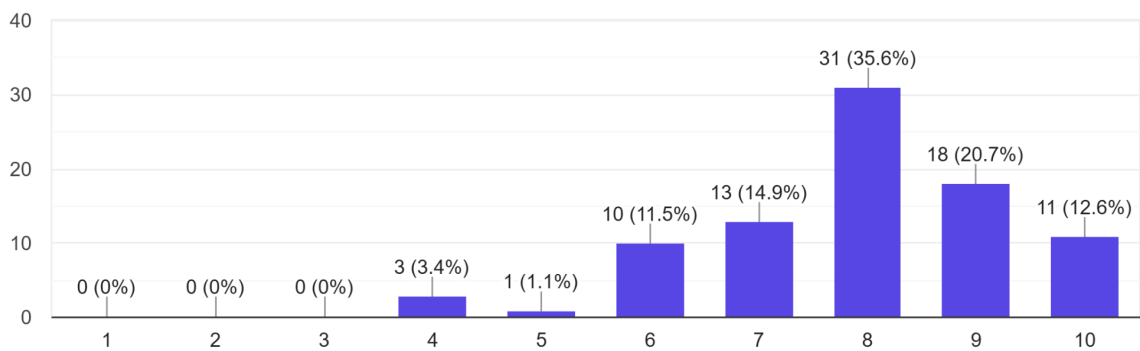


F1. Rate the following statements about your overall experience



F2. Overall, how would you rate your Argentina–India cross-cultural collaboration experience?

87 respuestas



F3. What was the biggest cultural challenge you faced? Please describe it briefly.
Expectations
A bit of difference in way of speaking english, and the style of responding.
The biggest cultural challenge I faced was adapting to different communication styles in a diverse team. I overcame it by being more flexible, improving clarity in my communication, and proactively confirming understanding.
Kissing on the cheeks as part of greeting
Nothing major challenge did I face.
To know person style, pattern to show displeasures , happiness
Style of English language slight different but got used to it slowly
none
The accent varies from person to person, so it takes a while to get used to it, or we will have to ask them to repeat what they have said.
Communication and decision making styles
Indian offices tended to be more open to work after formal work hours. I had to stay up late/wake up too early.

F4. What aspect of the other country culture positively surprised you in a professional context? 
Dedication towards work
The kind of respect they have for everyone. They are also as willing as we are to collaborate.
I was pleasantly surprised by the level of professionalism and clarity in communication, which made collaboration more efficient and goal-oriented.
I think professionalism, punctuality, focus on work, owning responsibility for actions and pending items. Talking to the point but very welcoming to name a few.
Work style, open to adopt, openness
Balancing Work and life
Style of work and working culture and friendly style is similar to Indian culture
none
Usually they respect the meeting timeliness and the agenda without drifting away from the context too much.
Openness to ideas and appreciation for the effort of each employee
Argentinians are great people who show more passion in the way they talk about work than my home locality. We're a Lil more boring.
F5. If you could give one piece of advice to someone working for the first time with colleagues from the other cul 
Try to understand there expectations from you
Always respect other's culture and actively listen to the people. Always be prepare about the content and the people as well. When we speak something common about the other person we instantly tend to connect for example may be the famous sport they like or some festival or some place or anything they are proud off. If we talk about these things we can definitely create better relations and it goes vice versa. As a human being we also like when somebody talks something about our culture. Do what you would like others to do for you.
Be open-minded and adaptable—understand different communication styles and always clarify expectations instead of assuming.
Start drinking mate early on.
Stay open, ask questions, and let differences teach you something new.
It's better to understand other's culture a bit atleast. Try to be accomodative, patient and respect people's opinion and their views. In case of disagreement, try to showcase the point but not thrust on other.
Be honest, be transparent, keep smile a bit, professionalism
Keep patience and trust for great outcomes
Be patient understand their culture and slow adapt to their style to develop great relationship.
none
Be open minded and patient, ask questions without hesitation when you don't understand something.
Don't assume. Ask.
Ensuring clarity in every aspect prevent many challenging factors when collaborating with people from other culture.
Look up a little bit on cultural distance. When I worked with japanese colleagues they would never question their boss even if they were wrong. This puts the onus on us to challenge their boss respectfully.

4.3. Survey Raw Statistical Analysis

Note: All the tables and figures provided by this section were made with Anthropic's Claude AI. The "analysis requested" paragraphs include the prompts applied to the GPT. All the prompt structures were provided by a professional Business Intelligence and Data Analytics graduate.

4.1 Study Overview

Metric	Value
Survey respondents	87 (51 Argentina · 36 India)
Statistical tests	t-test, ANOVA, Pearson, linear & logistic regression, PSM, bootstrap, sensitivity, K-means, decision trees, sentiment/NMF
Linear-model R ² — F2 (overall experience)	0.655
Decision-tree AUC — adaptation-cluster classification	0.908

Table 4.1. Study overview — sample, statistical methods and headline model-fit metrics.

4.2 Central Finding — Perceptual Asymmetry

Variable	Mean AR	Mean IN	Δ	Cohen's d / p
F2 — Overall experience	7.39	8.64	+1.25	d=0.98 ★★★★★
B3 — Communication quality	6.76	8.00	+1.24	d=0.93 ★★★★★
D3 — Coordination	7.29	8.25	+0.96	d=0.82 ★★★★★
E3 — Cultural intelligence	7.04	7.56	+0.52	d=0.33 ns

Table 4.2. Central finding — perceptual asymmetry between Argentina and India on the 1–10 scale variables.

Key insight: the D3 coordination gap PERSISTS after Propensity Score Matching (p=.0033), confirming that communication (B3), coordination (D3) and overall experience (F2) are all three genuine country effects — they hold after controlling for industry, English level, age and duration.

Limitations. The Indian subsample is n=36 and the subgroup regression model R² is 0.618, a healthy value with no sign of overfitting. High VIFs are present (B3=54.1, D3=64.8) — the parsimonious model (B3+D3+E3) is preferred for inference. The cross-sectional design precludes strong causal claims; a longitudinal follow-up would strengthen the duration-effect finding. Open-ended responses are skewed toward Argentina (AR≈27–29 vs. IN≈10–12), so qualitative findings for the Indian group should be read with some caution.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis

Analysis requested: I have the results of a survey on Argentina–India intercultural collaboration. I will paste the CSV with the responses. Produce a complete descriptive analysis: means, standard deviations and frequency distributions for each Likert item, split by country of origin. Also include the 1–10 scale items with their confidence intervals.

Item	Argentina	India	Δ
Communication quality (B3)	6.76	8.00	+1.24
Operational coordination (D3)	7.29	8.25	+0.96
CQ at the outset (E3)	7.04	7.56	+0.52
Overall experience (F2)	7.39	8.64	+1.25

Table 4.4. Mean scores on the 1–10 scale items by country, with the Argentina–India difference (Δ).

Largest differences in Likert items. The three largest gaps between groups:

- More hierarchical decision-making (C1): Argentina 3.84 vs. India 2.78 — Δ 1.06. Argentines perceived the Indian team as more hierarchical; Indians do not see themselves that way.
- Clear and direct communication (B1): India 4.03 vs. Argentina 3.12 — Δ 0.91. Indians perceived communication as more direct than Argentines considered it to have been.
- Genuine trust developed (C2): India 4.17 vs. Argentina 3.31 — Δ 0.86. Indians report having built more genuine bonds.



Figure 4.1. Section A — demographic profile of the sample (n=87).

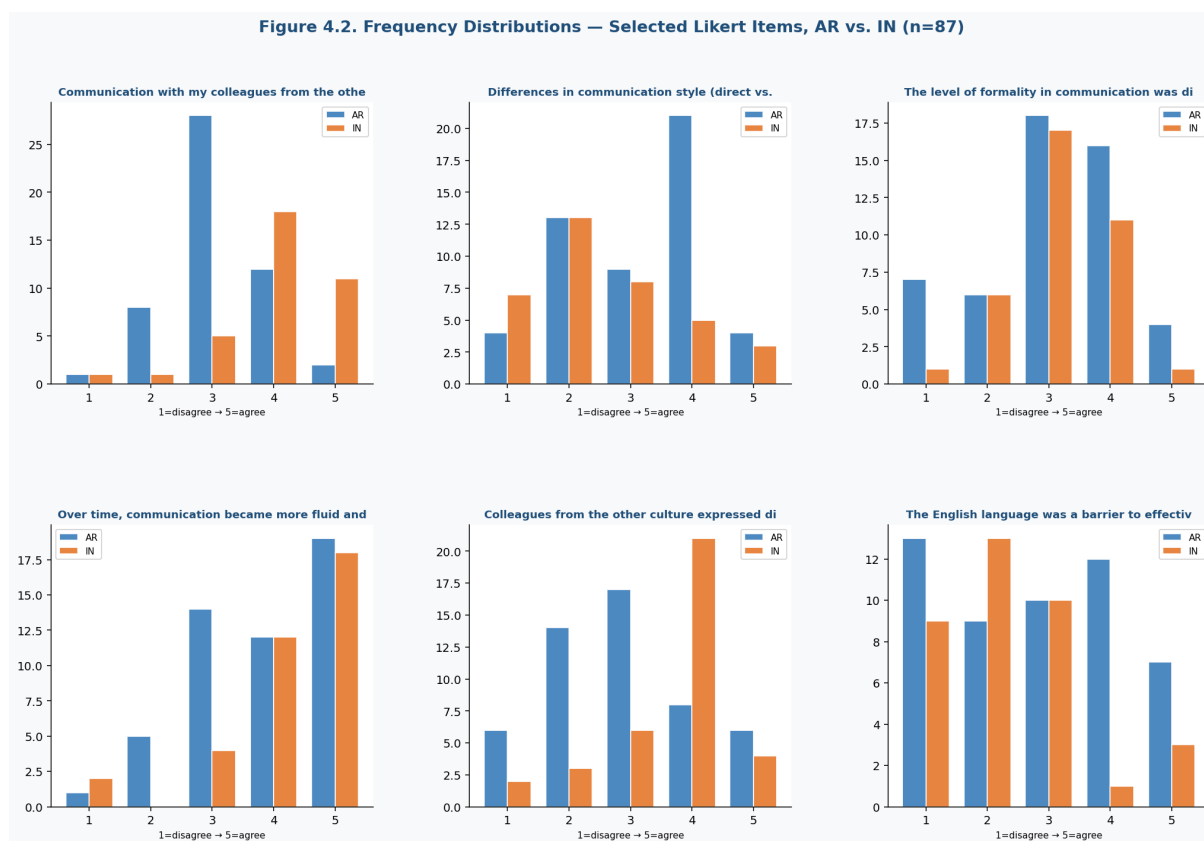


Figure 4.2. Frequency distributions for selected representative Likert items, Argentina vs. India.

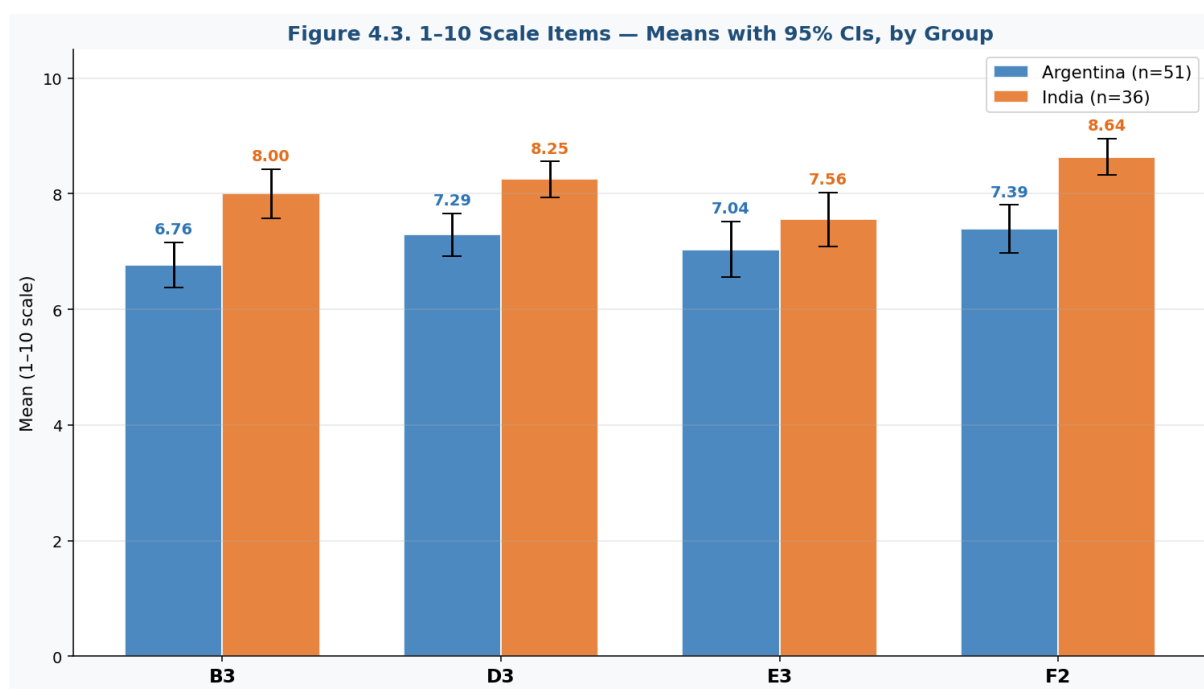


Figure 4.3. 1-10 scale items (B3, D3, E3, F2) — means with 95% confidence intervals, by group.

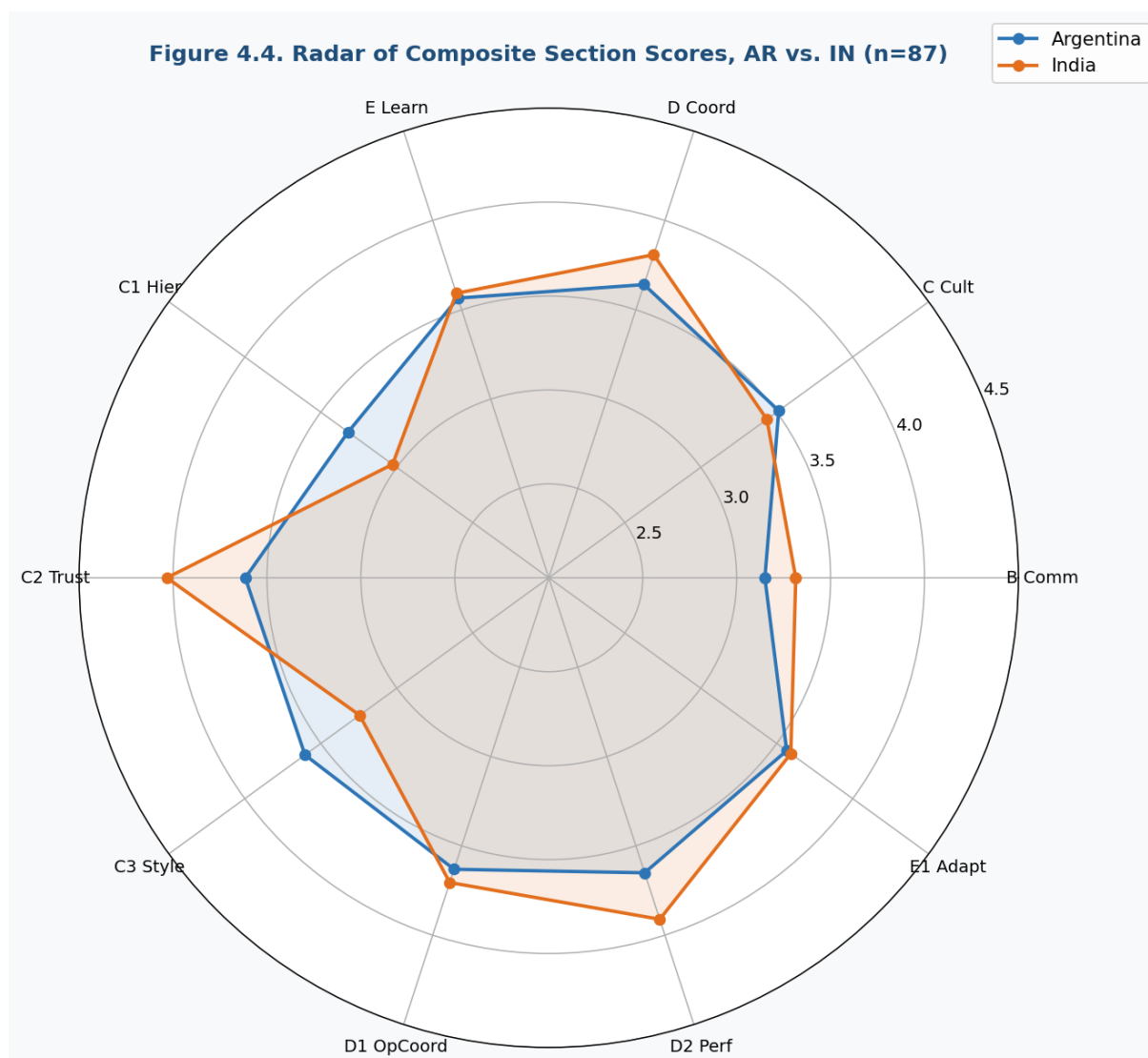


Figure 4.4. Radar chart of composite section scores, Argentina vs. India.



Figure 4.5. Heatmap of all Likert-item means by group.

4.4 Chi-Square & Fisher's Exact Tests

Analysis requested: With this survey data, run Chi-square tests to assess associations between categorical variables. The combinations of interest are: Country × Overall experience, Age range × Collaboration duration, Country × “No significant difficulties”, Country × Language barrier, Country × Duration, Country × Would work again, Industry × CQ, Country × English level, Country × Relationship type. Report the χ^2 statistic, degrees of freedom, the p-value and whether the association is significant.

Significant associations

1. Country × Overall experience (F2) — $\chi^2=19.44$, $df=2$, $p=.00006$ ★★★. Large effect (Cramér's $V=0.450$). Of 36 Indian respondents, 20 rate the experience in the high range

(9–10) and none in the low range; Argentina concentrates in the mid-range. The strongest association in the dataset.

2. Country × Would work again — $\chi^2=12.68$, $df=2$, $p=.0018$ ★★. Large effect ($V=0.352$). 34 of 36 Indians agree vs. 31 of 51 Argentines.

3. Country × English level — $\chi^2=11.59$, $df=2$, $p=.003$ ★★. $V=0.334$. Argentina concentrates native/near-native speakers (19 vs. 2).

4. Industry × CQ — $\chi^2=11.80$, $df=4$, $p=.019$ ★. $V=0.214$. Some expected cells <5; treat as indicative.

5. Country × Language barrier — $\chi^2=7.42$, $df=2$, $p=.025$ ★. $V=0.250$.

Test	p-value	Interpretation
Age × Collaboration duration	.145	No association between age group and duration
Country × Relationship type	.171	No difference in closeness of the bond
Country × Duration	.621	Identical temporal distribution across countries
Country × No significant difficulties	.222†	Fisher's exact; not significant

Table 4.5. Non-significant associations from the Chi-square / Fisher tests. † Fisher's exact test (2×2 with expected cell <5).

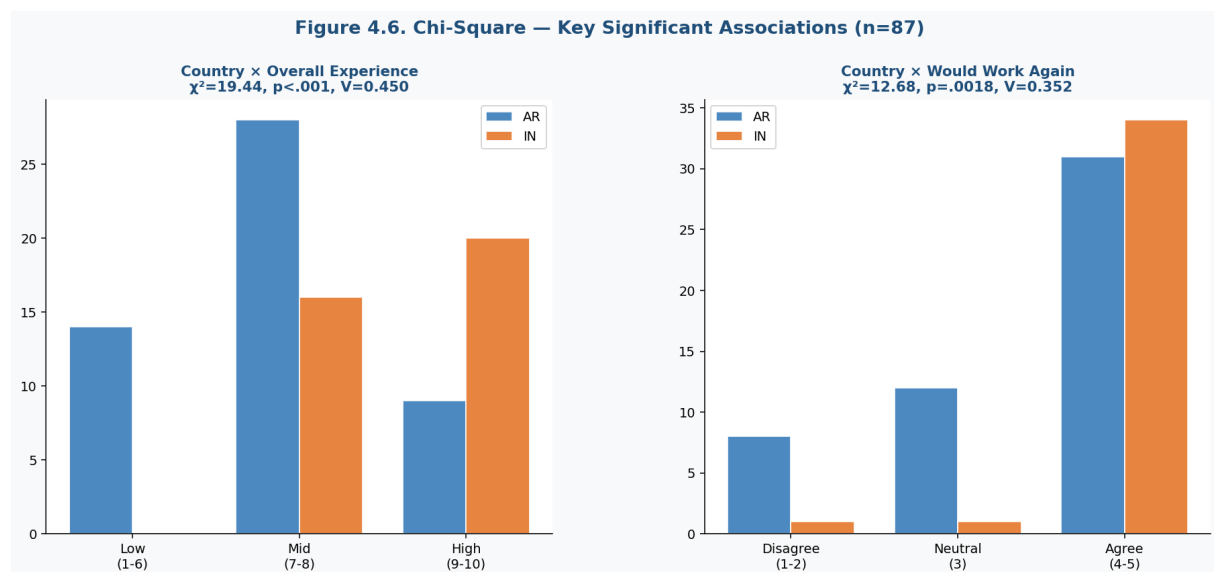


Figure 4.6. Chi-square — key results (significant associations).

Figure 4.7. Chi-Square — Complete Results Summary (n=87)

Association	χ^2	df	p	Sig	V
Country × Overall experience	19.44	2	.00006	***	0.450
Country × Would work again	12.68	2	.0018	**	0.352
Country × English level	11.59	2	.0030	**	0.334
Industry × CQ	11.80	4	.019	*	0.214
Country × Language barrier	7.42	2	.025	*	0.250
Age × Collaboration duration	5.39	3	.145	ns	0.166
Country × Relationship type	5.02	3	.171	ns	0.152
Country × Duration	1.77	3	.621	ns	~0
Country × No sig. difficulties	0.94	1	.333†	ns	~0

Figure 4.7. Chi-square — complete results summary table.

4.5 Independent-Samples T-Tests

Analysis requested: Run independent-samples t-tests comparing mean scores between Argentine and Indian respondents for: communication quality (B3), coordination effectiveness (D3), CQ at the outset (E3), and overall experience (F2). Report group means, mean difference, t statistic, p-value and effect size (Cohen's d).

Variable	M Argentina	M India	Δ	t(85)	p	Cohen's d	Effect
B3 Communication	6.76 ± 1.38	8.00 ± 1.26	-1.24	-4.26	.00005	-0.93	Large
D3 Coordination	7.29 ± 1.32	8.25 ± 0.91	-0.96	-3.77	.0003	-0.82	Large
E3 CQ (initial)	7.04 ± 1.72	7.56 ± 1.38	-0.52	-1.49	.139	-0.33	Small (ns)
F2 Overall exp.	7.39 ± 1.47	8.64 ± 0.93	-1.25	-4.49	.00002	-0.98	Large

Table 4.6. Independent-samples t-tests on the 1–10 scale variables (Argentina vs. India). Levene's test non-significant for all; Student's t used, df=85.

Three of the four variables are statistically significant with large effect sizes. B3 Communication (d=0.93) and F2 Overall experience (d=0.98) are the largest effects. E3 CQ (d=0.33, ns) is the only non-significant one, consistent across every cut of the data — it is a retrospective self-assessment of one's own initial cultural intelligence, before the collaboration dynamics took effect.

Significant Likert items (supplementary analysis). Of the 43 Likert items, 16 show significant differences between groups. Top effects:

- “Decision-making was more hierarchical” ($d=-1.11$, ★★★): the largest effect in the instrument; the only item where Argentina scores higher.
- “Communication was clear and direct” ($d=+1.08$, ★★★): India perceives communication as much clearer.
- “Would work again without hesitation” ($d=+0.79$, ★★★).
- “Genuine trust developed” ($d=+0.77$, ★★★).
- “Trusted my professional judgment” ($d=+0.67$, ★★) and “Diversity brought valuable perspectives” ($d=+0.64$, ★★).

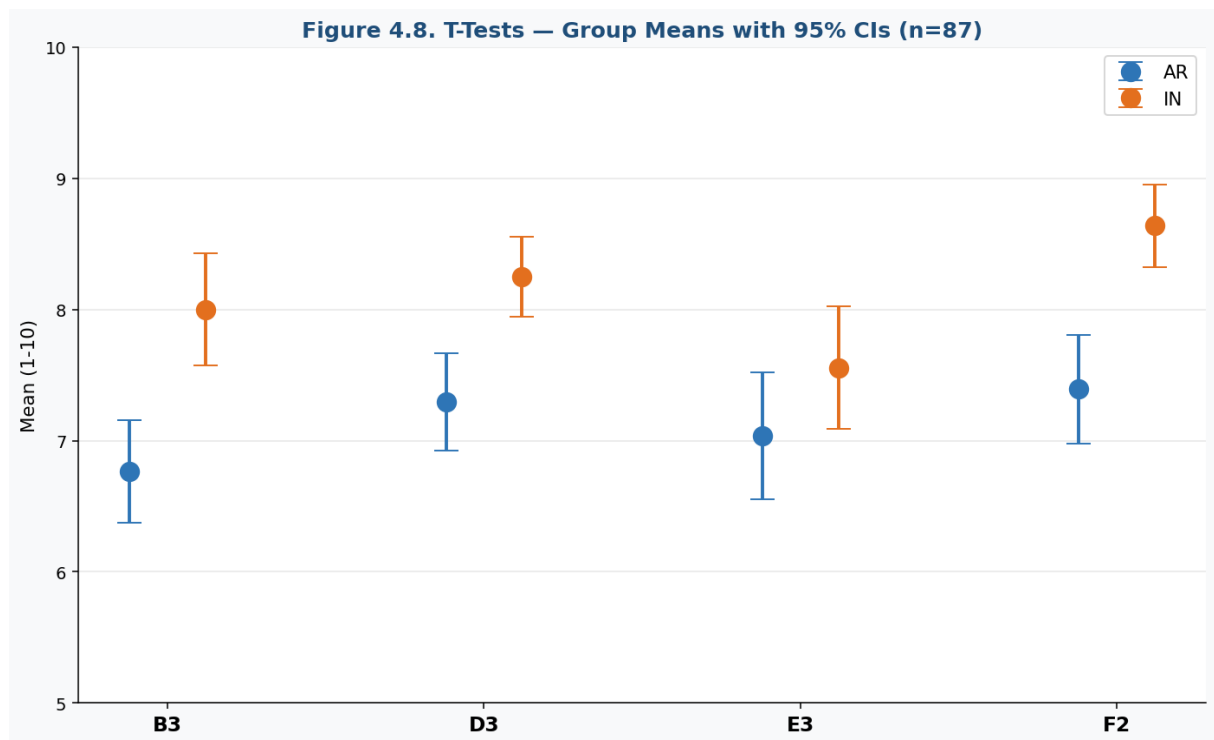


Figure 4.8. Independent-samples *t*-tests — group means with confidence intervals.

Figure 4.9. Independent-Samples T-Tests — Primary Results (n=87)

Variable	M AR	M IN	Δ	t(85)	p	Cohen d	Effect
B3 Communication	6.76 ± 1.38	8.00 ± 1.26	-1.24	-4.26	.00005	-0.93	Large
D3 Coordination	7.29 ± 1.32	8.25 ± 0.91	-0.96	-3.77	.0003	-0.82	Large
E3 CQ (initial)	7.04 ± 1.72	7.56 ± 1.38	-0.52	-1.49	.139	-0.33	Small (ns)
F2 Overall exp.	7.39 ± 1.47	8.64 ± 0.93	-1.25	-4.49	.00002	-0.98	Large

Figure 4.9. Independent-samples *t*-tests — primary results summary table.

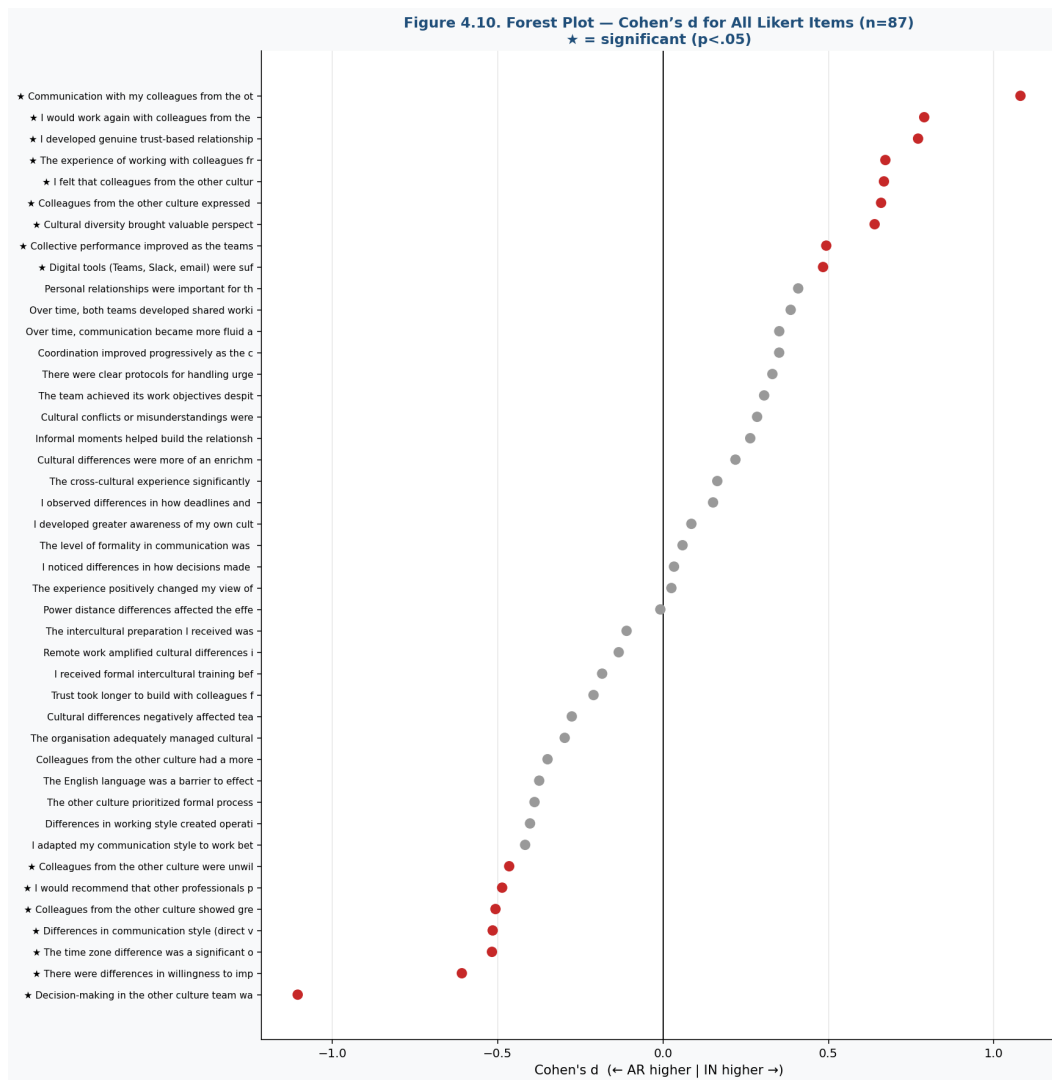


Figure 4.10. Forest plot — Cohen's d for all Likert items by group.

4.6 ANOVA & Pearson Correlations

Of the factor × outcome combinations, three are statistically significant:

1. Age × Communication quality (B3) — $F(1,85)=10.81$, $p=.0015$ ★★. Seniors (34+) perceive communication as significantly better ($M=7.97$) than younger respondents ($M=6.93$).
2. Age × Overall experience (F2) — $F(1,85)=8.85$, $p=.0038$ ★★. Seniors report a more positive experience ($M=8.52$ vs. 7.60).
3. English level × CQ at the outset (E3) — $F(2,84)=4.35$, $p=.016$ ★. Intermediate-English respondents report lower CQ ($M=6.00$) than advanced ones ($M=7.54$).

Pearson correlations — 50 significant correlations ($p<.001$). Strongest:

Pair	r	Interpretation
B3 ↔ F2	0.757	Communication quality is the strongest predictor of overall experience

C2 ↔ D	0.703	Trust co-occurs with stronger coordination
D3 ↔ F2	0.702	Effective coordination also predicts a positive experience
B3 ↔ D3	0.677	Communication and operational coordination go hand in hand
C2 ↔ D2	0.670	Trust → better perceived team performance
C1 ↔ C3	0.653	Perception of hierarchy and differences in work pace co-occur
B ↔ C	0.623	B and C co-vary

Table 4.7. Strongest significant Pearson correlations among the continuous variables.

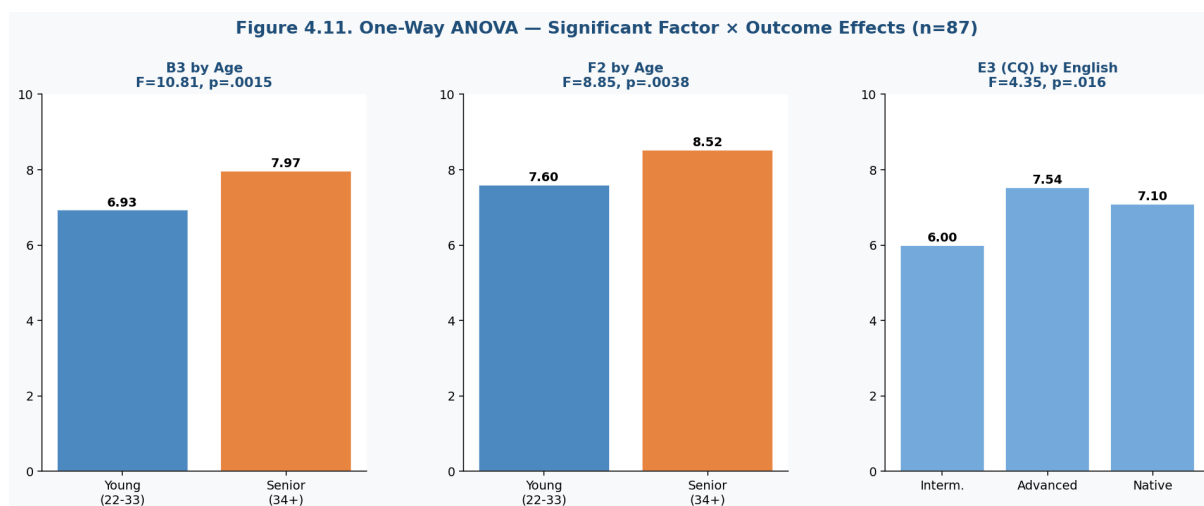


Figure 4.11. One-way ANOVA — group means by factor and outcome variable.

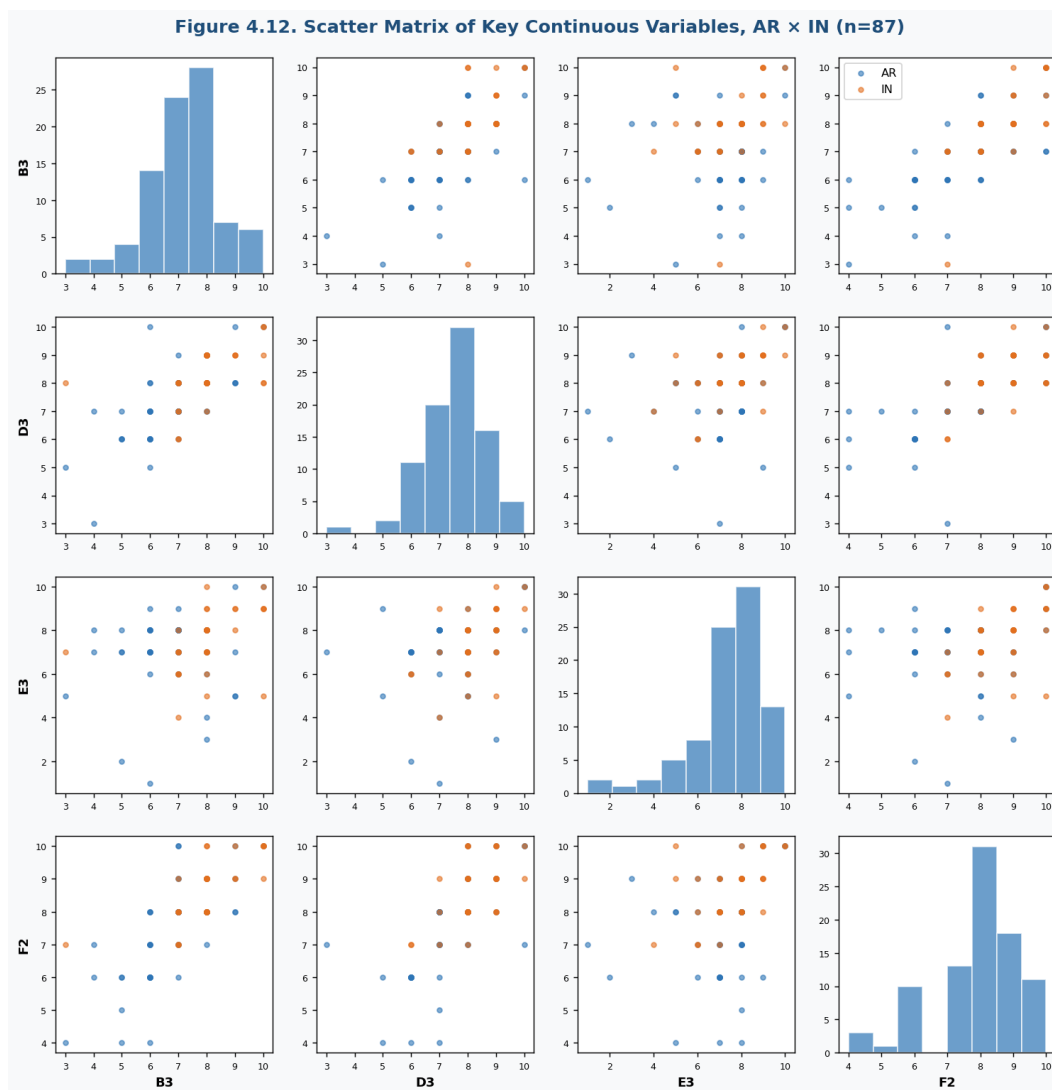


Figure 4.12. Scatter matrix of the key continuous variables, Argentina × India.

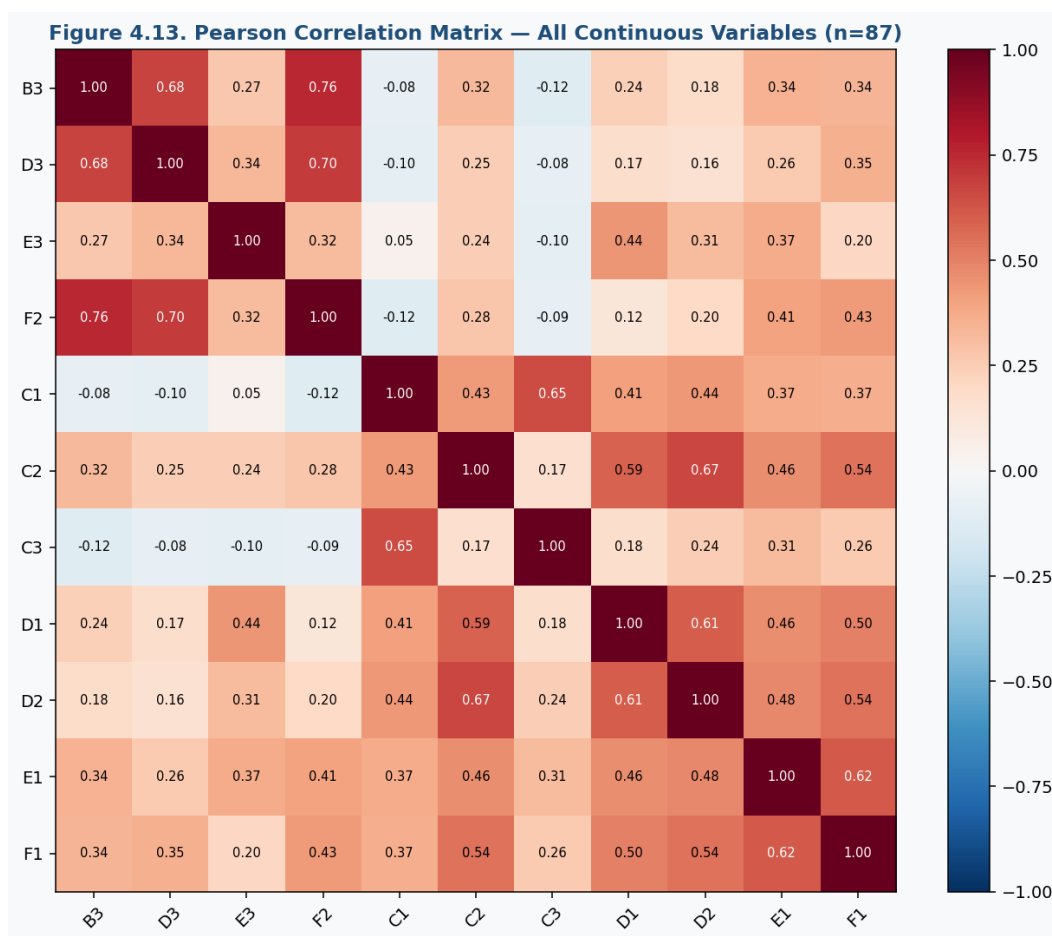


Figure 4.13. Pearson correlation matrix — all continuous variables.

4.7 Multiple Linear Regression

Analysis requested: Build a multiple linear regression model where the dependent variable is overall experience (F2). Predictors: B3, E3, a power-distance composite (C1), a trust composite (C2), D3, English level (A7), collaboration duration (A5) and country (A1 dummy). Report β coefficients, standard errors, p-values, R^2 and adjusted R^2 .

Statistic	Value
N	87
R^2	0.655
Adjusted R^2	0.619
$F(8, 78)$	18.48
p (global model)	< 0.001
AIC	231.3

Table 4.8. Overall fit statistics of the multiple linear regression model.

The model explains 65.5% of the variance in overall experience.

Predictor	β	SE	β^*	t	p	Sig	VIF
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B3 Comm. Quality	0.460	0.093	0.475	4.94	0.0000	★★★	54.1
D3 Coordinat ion	0.345	0.106	0.306	3.25	0.0017	★★	64.8
E3 CQ	0.059	0.064	0.067	0.92	0.3609	ns	25.5
C1 Power Distance	-0.096	0.158	-0.051	-0.61	0.5453	ns	28.6
C2 Trust	0.055	0.144	0.033	0.38	0.7046	ns	35.3
A7 English	-0.008	0.176	-0.003	-0.04	0.9649	ns	15.4
A5 Duration	0.034	0.097	0.025	0.35	0.7271	ns	8.5
A1 Country=I ndia	0.275	0.231	0.096	1.19	0.2371	ns	2.5

Table 4.9. Regression coefficients, significance and variance-inflation factors (VIF).

Critical multicollinearity. VIFs of B3 (54.1) and D3 (64.8) are far above the threshold of 10, inflating standard errors and masking predictors such as C2 Trust that correlate strongly with F2 at the bivariate level. The parsimonious model (B3+D3+E3) is preferred for inference.

Step	Predictor added	R ²	Adj R ²	AIC
1	B3 Comm. Quality	0.577	0.572	—
2	+ D3 Coordination	0.629	0.620	—
3	+ E3 CQ	0.643	0.632	min.
4+	+ remaining predictors	0.655	0.619	↑

Table 4.10. Forward stepwise selection — model fit at each step. The 3-predictor model (B3+D3+E3) is the most parsimonious and robust.

Diagnostics. Shapiro-Wilk on residuals: $W=0.969$, $p=.032$ — a mild departure from normality. Breusch-Pagan: $p=.029$ — mild heteroscedasticity. Both are borderline rather than gross violations; reporting heteroscedasticity-consistent (HC3) standard errors is recommended as a robustness check.

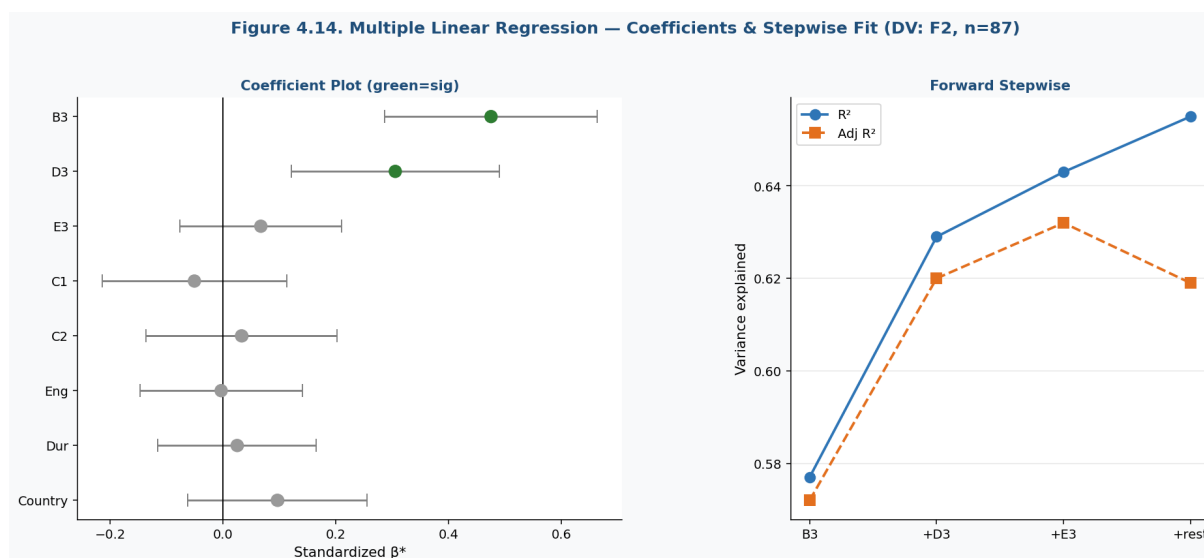


Figure 4.14. Multiple linear regression — coefficient plot and stepwise model fit (DV: F2).

4.8 Logistic Regression

Analysis requested: Run two logistic regression models. Model 1: DV = willingness to work again (E1.6, 1=agree/0=disagree). Model 2: DV = perceiving differences as enriching (F1.2, recoded the same). Both use the same predictors as the linear regression. Report odds ratios, 95% CIs and p-values.

Outcome distribution. M1 (Would work again ≥ 4): 65 of 87 (75%). M2 (Differences = enrichment ≥ 4): 57 of 87 (66%).

Predictor	OR	95% CI	p	Sig
C2 (Trust)	8.287	[1.960, 35.043]	0.0040	★★
B3 (Comm. Quality)	1.543	[0.720, 3.305]	0.2647	ns
D3 (Coordination)	1.841	[0.845, 4.014]	0.1248	ns
C1 (Power Distance)	0.145	[0.027, 0.765]	0.0229	★
E3 (CQ)	1.224	[0.699, 2.144]	0.4797	ns
A1 (Country=India)	1.295	[0.146, 11.447]	0.8163	ns
A5 (Duration)	1.623	[0.751, 3.508]	0.2179	ns
A7 (English)	0.309	[0.080, 1.195]	0.0889	ns

Table 4.11. Logistic regression Model 1 — Would Work Again. McFadden $R^2=0.486$ | AUC=0.922.

Predictor	OR	95% CI	p	Sig
C2 (Trust)	4.963	[1.891, 13.024]	0.0011	★★
B3 (Comm. Quality)	1.246	[0.724, 2.144]	0.4263	ns
D3 (Coordination)	1.597	[0.843, 3.026]	0.1509	ns

C1 (Power Distance)	1.296	[0.471, 3.566]	0.6155	ns
E3 (CQ)	0.857	[0.582, 1.264]	0.4377	ns
A1 (Country=India)	0.403	[0.096, 1.697]	0.2155	ns
A5 (Duration)	1.117	[0.615, 2.029]	0.7154	ns
A7 (English)	0.222	[0.068, 0.723]	0.0125	★

Table 4.12. Logistic regression Model 2 — Differences as Enrichment. McFadden $R^2=0.307$ | $AUC=0.863$.

C2 (Trust) is the only significant predictor in both models — the most consistent behavioural finding in the analysis. A one-point increase in the trust composite multiplies the odds of willingness to repeat the collaboration by ~8 (M1) and of viewing differences as enrichment by ~5 (M2).

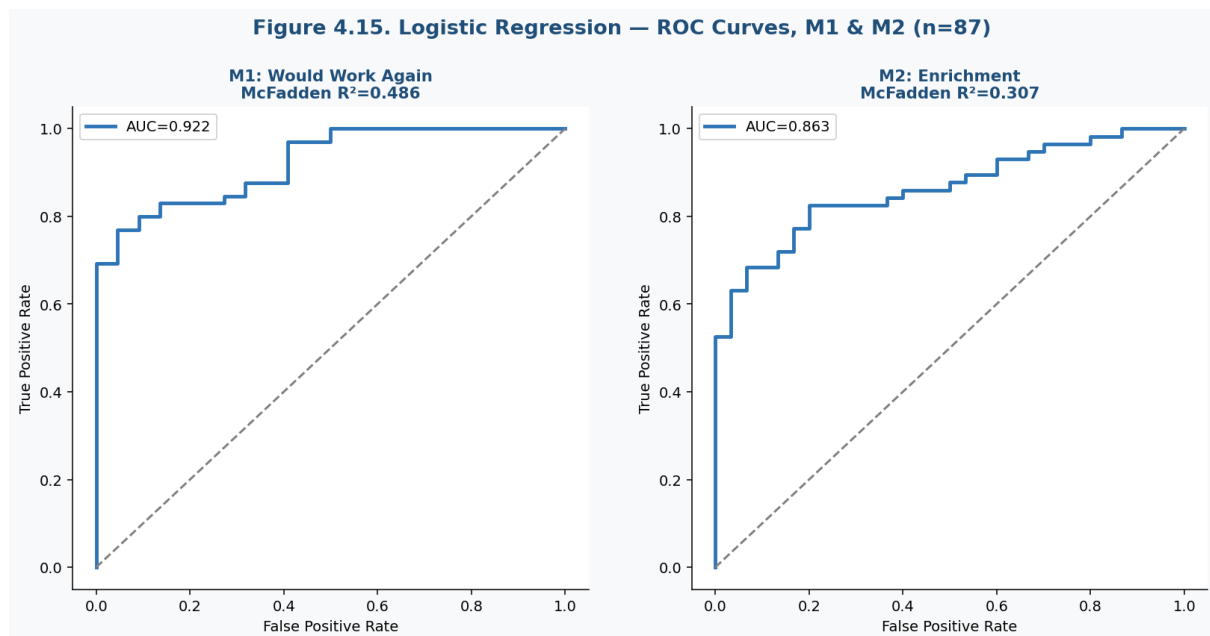


Figure 4.15. Logistic regression — ROC curves for Model 1 (Would Work Again) and Model 2 (Enrichment).

4.9 K-Means Clustering

Analysis requested: Apply K-means clustering using the composite scores of sections B, C, D and E. Determine the optimal number of clusters using the elbow method and the silhouette coefficient ($k=2$ to $k=5$). Describe the average profile of each cluster and analyse its composition by country, industry, age and relationship type.

k	Inertia	Silhouette
2	209.19	0.34 ← optimal
3	165.27	0.281
4	136.03	0.306
5	121.27	0.225

Table 4.13. Inertia and silhouette coefficient for $k = 2$ to 5. The silhouette is maximal at $k=2$ (0.340), indicating clearly separated clusters.

Section	Cluster 1 (High adapt.)	Cluster 2 (Low adapt.)
B — Communication	3.55	2.81
C — Cultural dynamics	3.89	2.98
D — Coordination	4.06	3.28
E — Intercultural learning	3.94	3.13
n	48 (55%)	39 (45%)
% Argentina	56%	62%

Table 4.14/4.15. Cluster profiles — mean composite scores by section and country composition ($k=2$).

The two clusters present distinct profiles, but country composition is balanced (56% vs. 62% Argentina), reinforcing a prudent reading: cluster membership is driven by the cultural-dynamics, coordination and communication dimensions rather than by nationality per se.

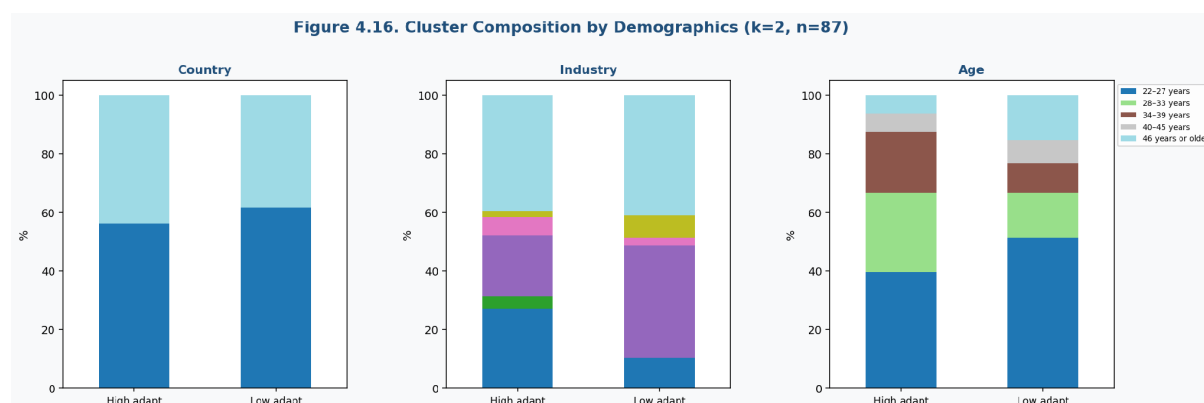


Figure 4.16. Cluster composition — demographic breakdown by country, industry and age ($k=2$).

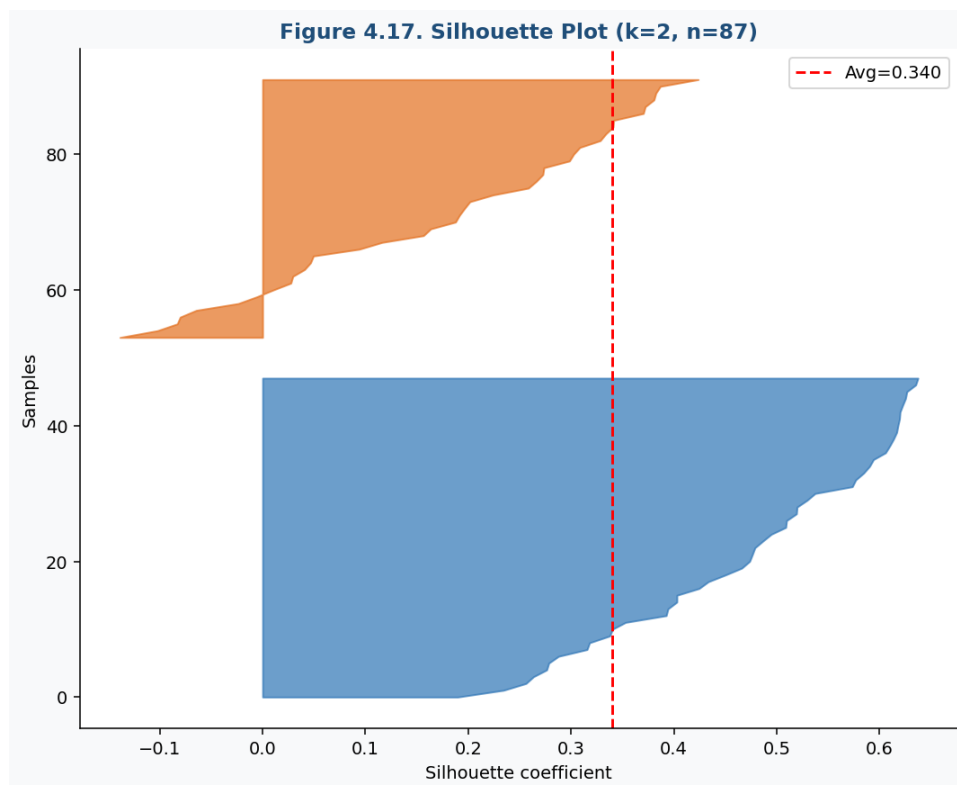


Figure 4.17. Silhouette plot for the $k=2$ solution.

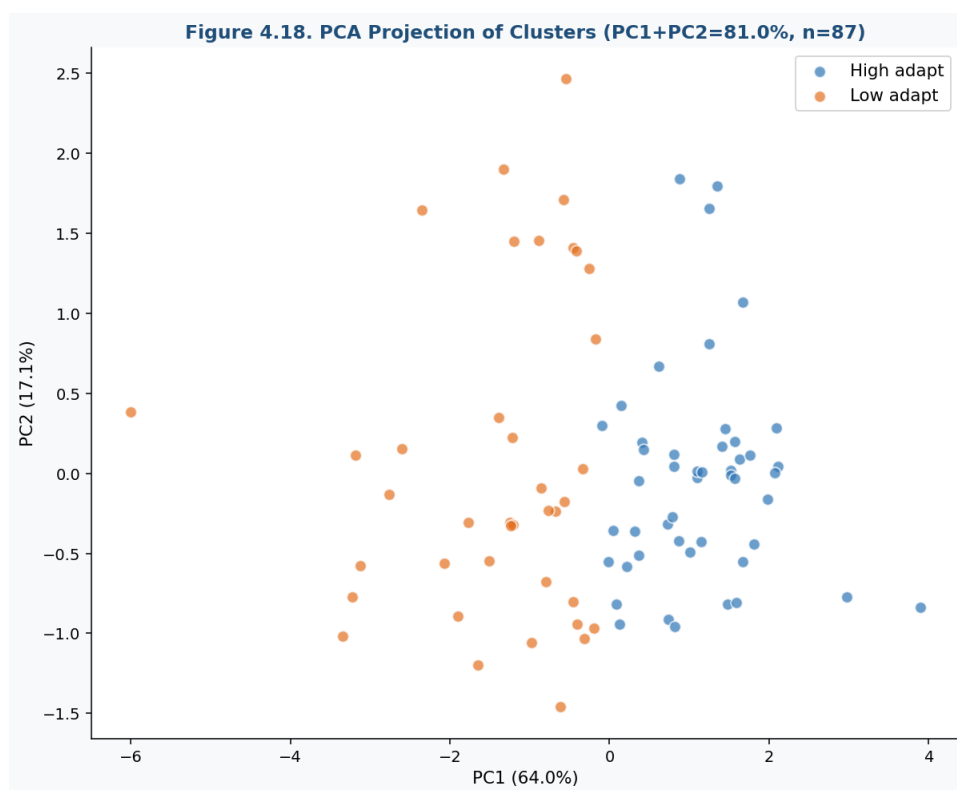


Figure 4.18. PCA projection of the two clusters, coloured by cluster.

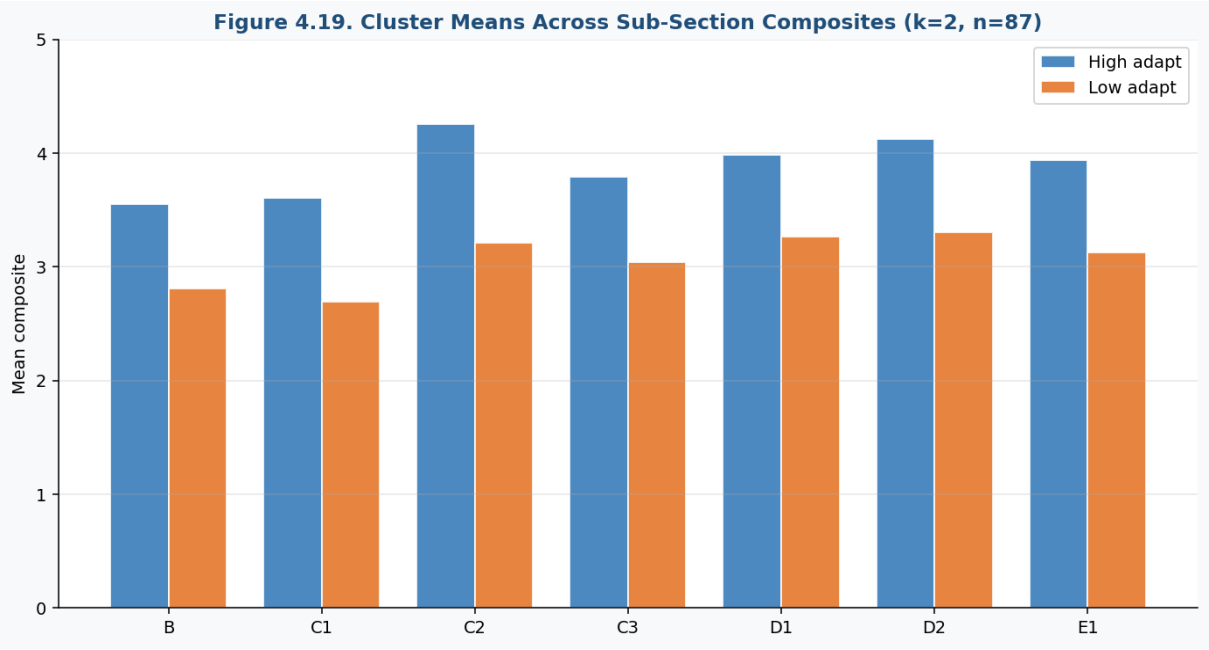


Figure 4.19. Cluster means across all sub-section composites (k=2).

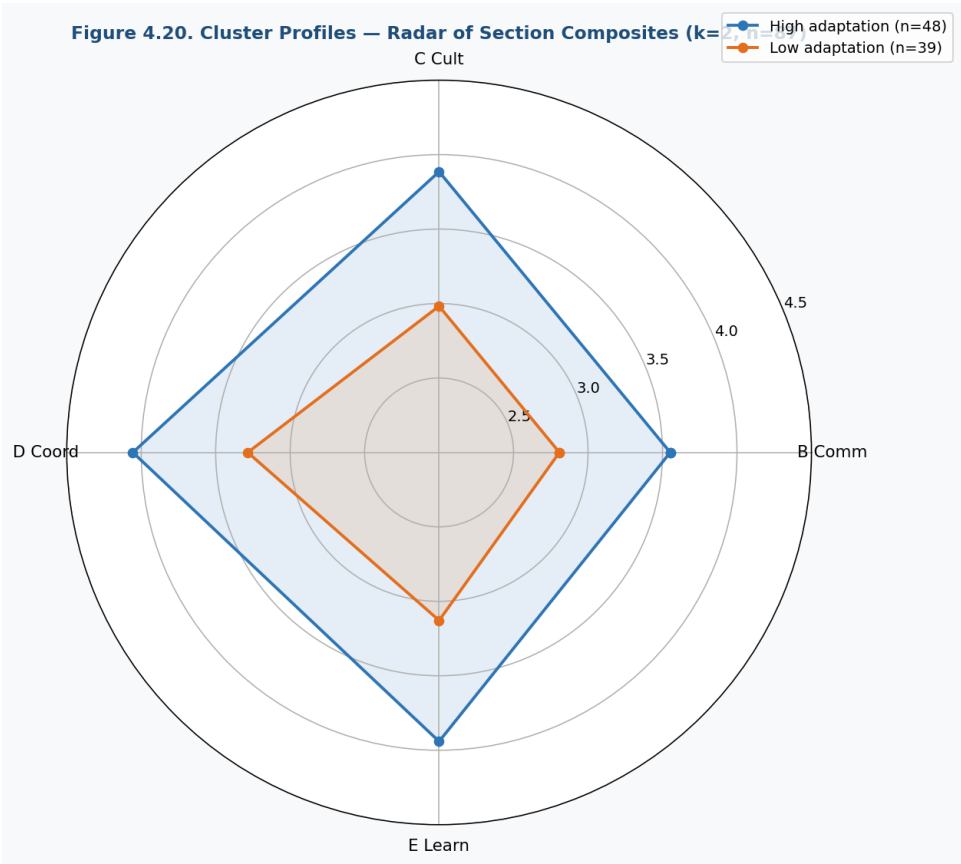


Figure 4.20. Cluster profiles — radar chart of section composites (k=2).

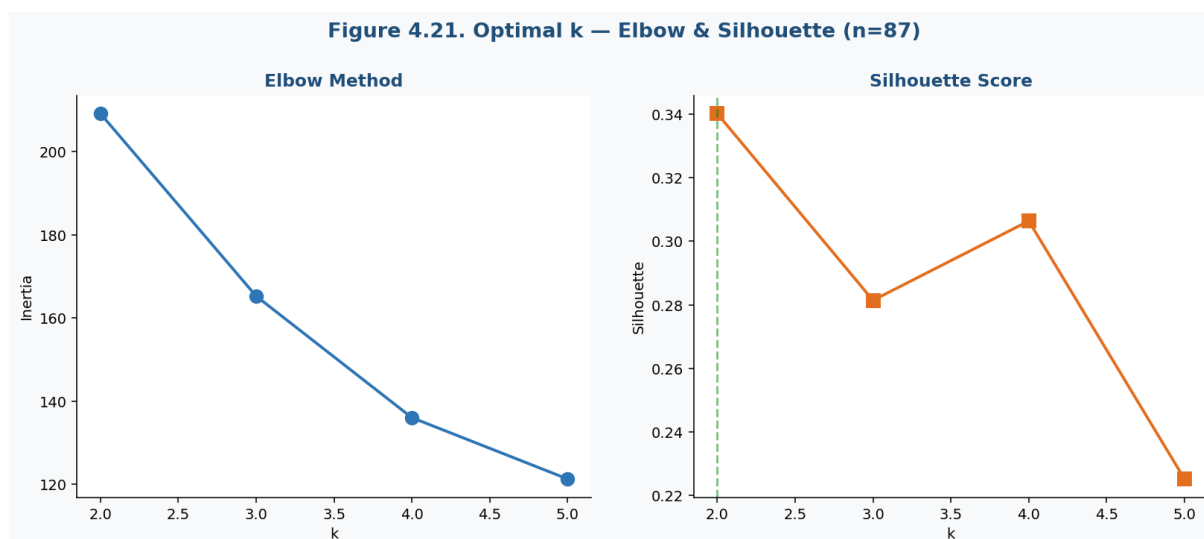


Figure 4.21. Optimal k — elbow method and silhouette score.

4.10 Propensity Score Matching

Analysis requested: Apply Propensity Score Matching to compare Argentine and Indian respondents after controlling for: age range (A2), industry (A4), English level (A7) and collaboration duration (A5). Outcomes: B3, F2 and D3. Report balance before/after matching and the differences in outcomes.

Matching design. 1:1 nearest-neighbour without replacement, caliper=0.0217. Matched pairs: 19 of 36 Indian units.

Stage	M Argentina	M India	Δ	p
Before	6.76	8.0	1.24	0.0
After	6.37	7.95	1.58	0.0027

Table 4.17. B3 (Communication quality) — outcome difference before vs. after matching.

Stage	M Argentina	M India	Δ	p
Before	7.29	8.25	0.96	0.0001
After	7.32	8.37	1.05	0.0033

Table 4.18. D3 (Operational coordination) — outcome difference before vs. after matching.

Stage	M Argentina	M India	Δ	p
Before	7.39	8.64	1.25	0.0
After	7.37	8.63	1.26	0.009

Table 4.19. F2 (Overall experience) — outcome difference before vs. after matching.

Most important PSM finding: all three outcomes remain significant after matching. With 19 matched pairs, B3 ($p=.0027$), D3 ($p=.0033$) and F2 ($p=.009$) all persist once Argentine and Indian respondents are equalized on age, industry, English level and duration. This indicates the differences are genuine country effects rather than artefacts of observable covariates such as industry concentration.

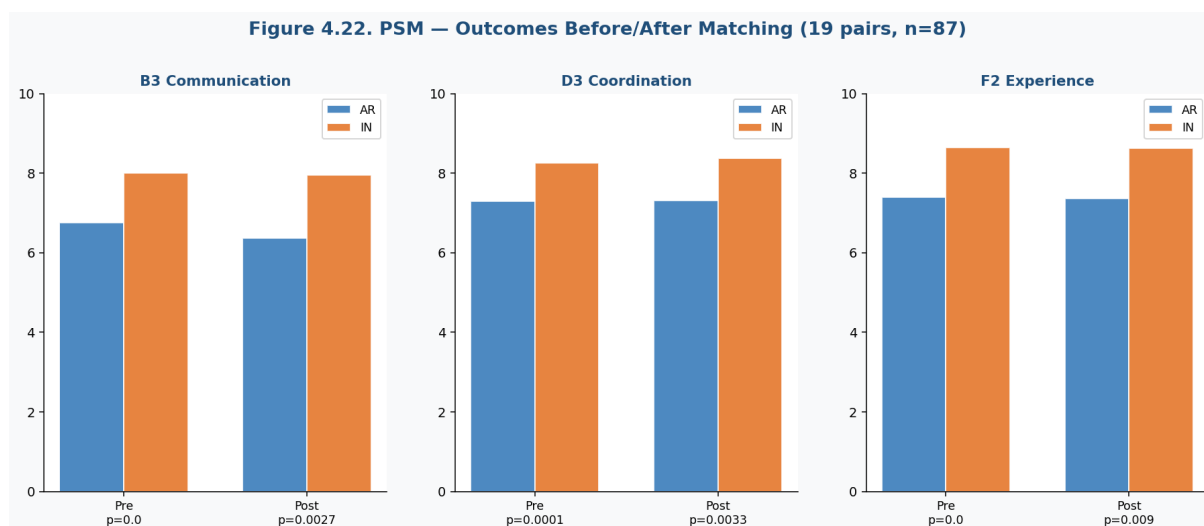


Figure 4.22. Propensity Score Matching — outcome comparisons before/after matching.

4.11 Bootstrap (BCa)

Analysis requested: Apply bootstrap resampling (n=2000 samples) to all 1–10 scale variables (B3, D3, E3, F2) to generate bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. Do this separately for the Argentine group, the Indian group and the full sample. Compare with the standard parametric intervals.

Variable	Group	n	M obs.	Bias	BCa 95% CI	Param 95% CI
B3 Comm.	All	87	7.276	-0.005	[6.931, 7.563]	[6.965, 7.587]
B3 Comm.	Argentina	51	6.765	-0.002	[6.373, 7.098]	[6.377, 7.153]
B3 Comm.	India	36	8.0	0.003	[7.500, 8.306]	[7.572, 8.428]
D3 Coord.	All	87	7.69	0.0	[7.394, 7.931]	[7.423, 7.956]
D3 Coord.	Argentina	51	7.294	0.0	[6.882, 7.608]	[6.924, 7.664]
D3 Coord.	India	36	8.25	-0.005	[7.895, 8.500]	[7.943, 8.557]
E3 CQ	All	87	7.253	-0.005	[6.874, 7.552]	[6.912, 7.594]
E3 CQ	Argentina	51	7.039	-0.002	[6.451, 7.431]	[6.555, 7.523]
E3 CQ	India	36	7.556	-0.004	[7.074, 7.944]	[7.088, 8.023]
F2 Exp.	All	87	7.908	-0.002	[7.567, 8.149]	[7.607, 8.209]
F2 Exp.	Argentina	51	7.392	-0.001	[6.941, 7.765]	[6.978, 7.806]
F2 Exp.	India	36	8.639	-0.004	[8.333, 8.917]	[8.324, 8.954]

Table 4.20. Bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap intervals vs. parametric intervals, by variable and group.

Bias is negligible across all estimates ($|\text{bias}| < 0.02$), and BCa intervals closely track the parametric ones — validating the use of parametric tests throughout the analysis.

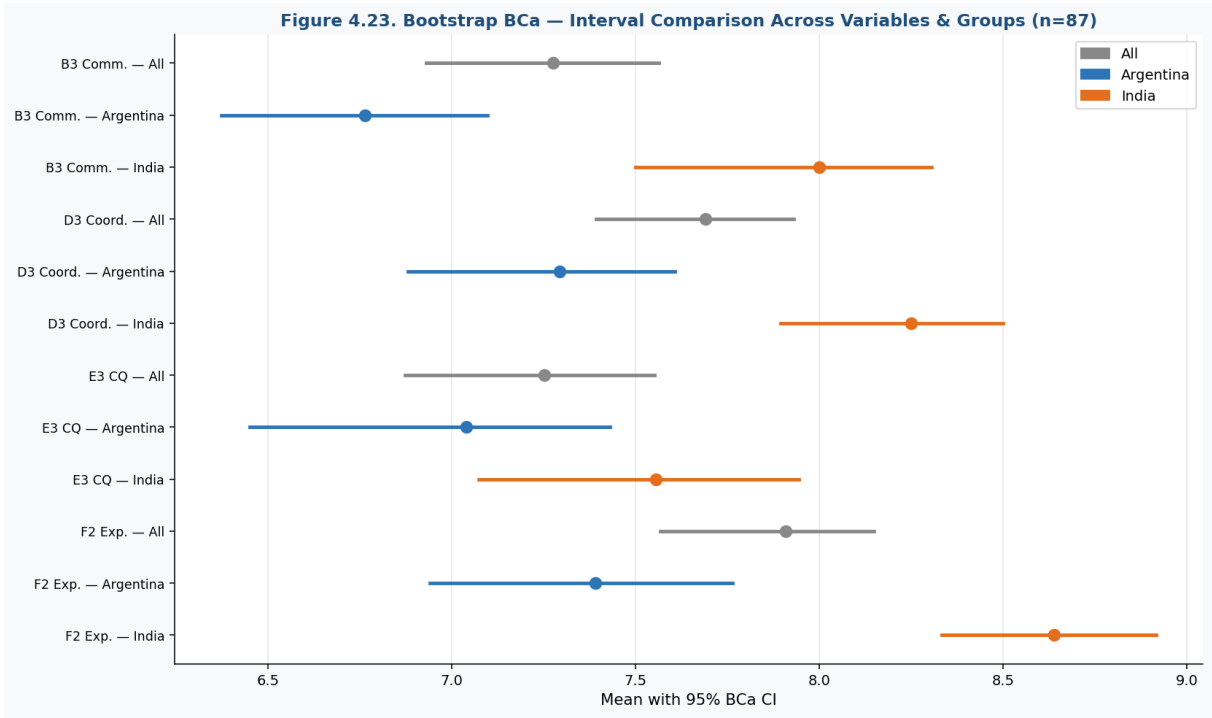


Figure 4.23. Bootstrap BCa summary — interval comparison across all variables and groups.

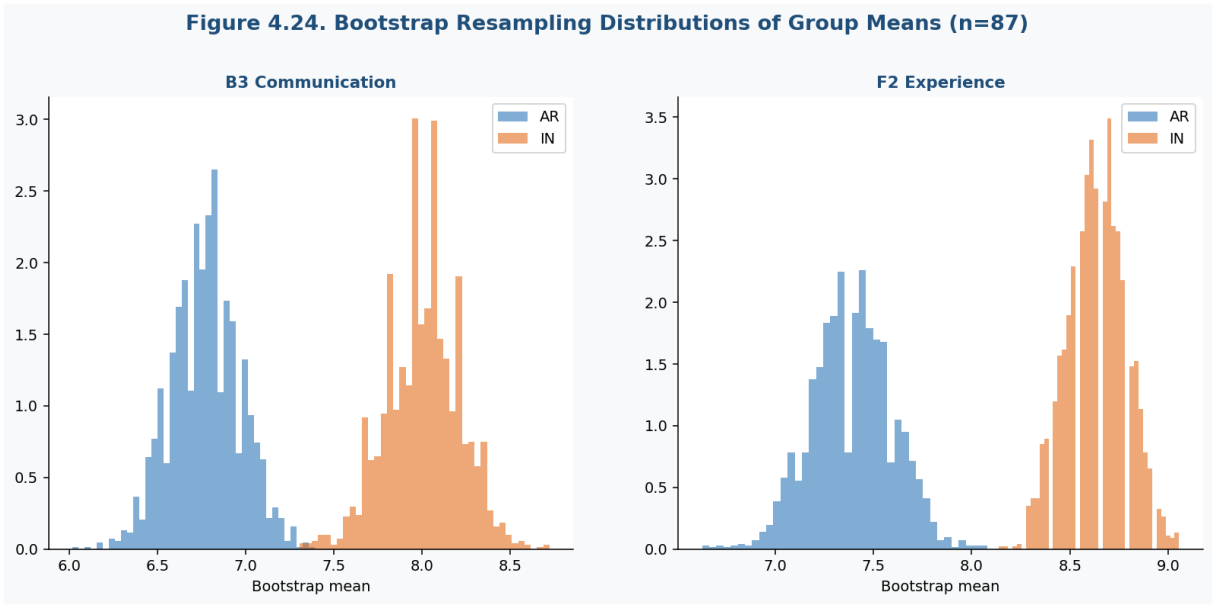


Figure 4.24. Bootstrap resampling distributions of the group means.

4.12 Sensitivity Analysis

Test 1 — Excluding occasional contact (n=87 → 82). B3 keeps its significance and magnitude (β 0.46→0.441, $p<.001$). D3 also remains significant (p 0.0017→0.0021), confirming both effects are not driven by occasional-contact respondents.

Test 2 — Subgroup models. B3 is significant in both subgroups with consistent direction: Argentina $\beta=0.529$ ($p=0.0023$, $R^2=0.582$); India $\beta=0.395$ ($p=0.0005$, $R^2=0.618$). Both subgroup models show healthy R^2 values with no overfitting.

Test 3 — Binary cut-off sensitivity (≥ 4 vs. ≥ 5).

Model	Outcome	n positive	McFadden R^2	C2 (Trust) OR	p
M1 ≥ 4	Would Work Again	65	0.486	8.29	0.004
M1 ≥ 5	Would Work Again	43	0.296	1.86	0.1875
M2 ≥ 4	Enrichment	57	0.307	4.96	0.0011
M2 ≥ 5	Enrichment	27	0.233	2.06	0.1207

Table 4.23. Test 3 — logistic-model robustness across binary cut-offs. C2 is significant at ≥ 4 in both models; the effect attenuates at the stricter ≥ 5 cut-off.

Predictor	Verdict	Argument
B3 — Communication	✓ ROBUST	Significant in full, restricted, AR and IN models; consistent direction
C2 — Trust	✓ ROBUST	Significant in M1 and M2 at ≥ 4 cut-off (OR 5–8); attenuates at ≥ 5
D3 — Coordination	✓ ROBUST	Significant in the full model and persists post-PSM
A5 — Duration (India)	⚠ PARTIAL	Group-moderated effect, India subgroup only
E3, C1, A7, A1	✗ NOT SIG.	Do not reach significance in any configuration

Table 4.24. Robustness verdict per predictor across all specification tests.

Figure 4.25. Sensitivity Analysis — Robustness Verdict per Predictor (n=87)

Predictor	Verdict	Argument
B3 — Communication	☐ ROBUST	Sig in full, restricted, AR & IN subgroups; consistent direction
C2 — Trust	☐ ROBUST	Sig in M1 & M2 at ≥ 4 cutoff (OR 5–8); attenuates at ≥ 5
D3 — Coordination	☐ STRENGTHENED	Now sig in full model ($p=.0017$) and persists post-PSM
A5 — Duration (India)	⚠ PARTIAL	Group-moderated effect, India subgroup only
E3, C1, A7, A1	☐ NOT SIG.	Do not reach significance in any configuration

Figure 4.25. Sensitivity analysis — robustness verdict per predictor.

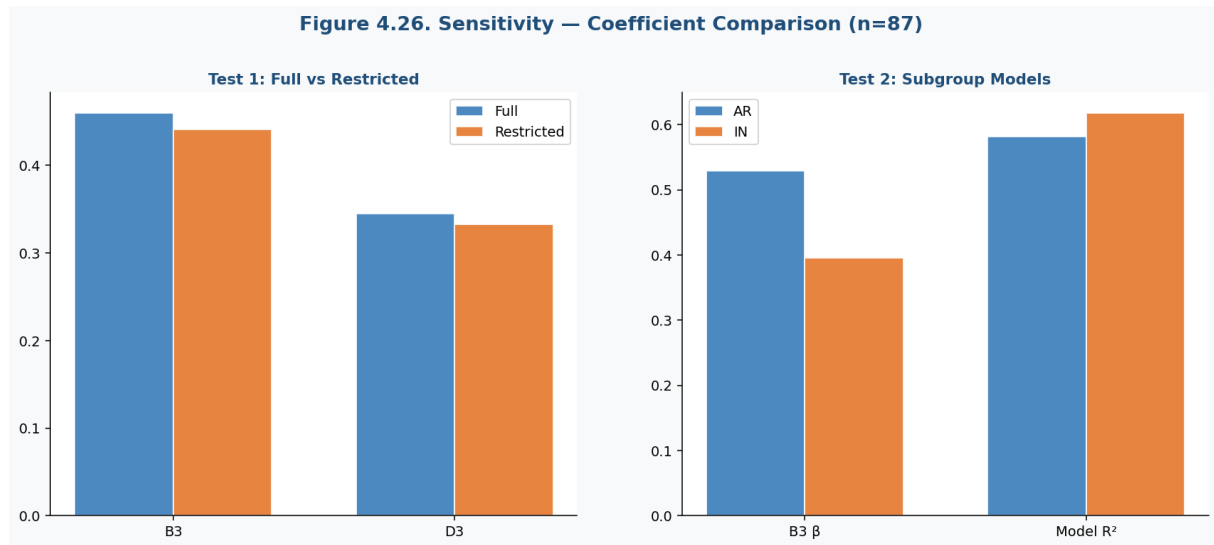


Figure 4.26. Sensitivity analysis — coefficient comparison (full vs. restricted, and by subgroup).

4.13 Decision Trees

Model	Train Acc	CV AUC (5-fold)	Interpretation
Tree 1 — Cluster (adaptation)	0.943	0.908 ± 0.035	Excellent discrimination

Table 4.25. Performance of the cluster decision tree (training accuracy and 5-fold CV AUC).

Feature	Tree importance	Role
C: Cultural dynamics	0.746	← Primary driver (root node)
D: Coordination	0.234	Secondary driver
B: Communication	0.013	Minor
C2: Trust	0.007	Minor

Table 4.26. Feature importance in the decision tree.

The root variable is C (Cultural dynamics), with 75% of the tree's importance, followed by D (Coordination) at 23%. Cultural dynamics and operational coordination are therefore the primary discriminators of the adaptation profile. The tree reaches strong predictive power (CV AUC=0.908).

Cluster-tree rules (simplified):

IF C (Cultural dynamics) ≤ 3.47: branch governed by D (Coordination) — if D > 4.05 → High adaptation, otherwise Low. IF C > 3.47: branch governed by D and B — higher coordination predicts the High-adaptation cluster.

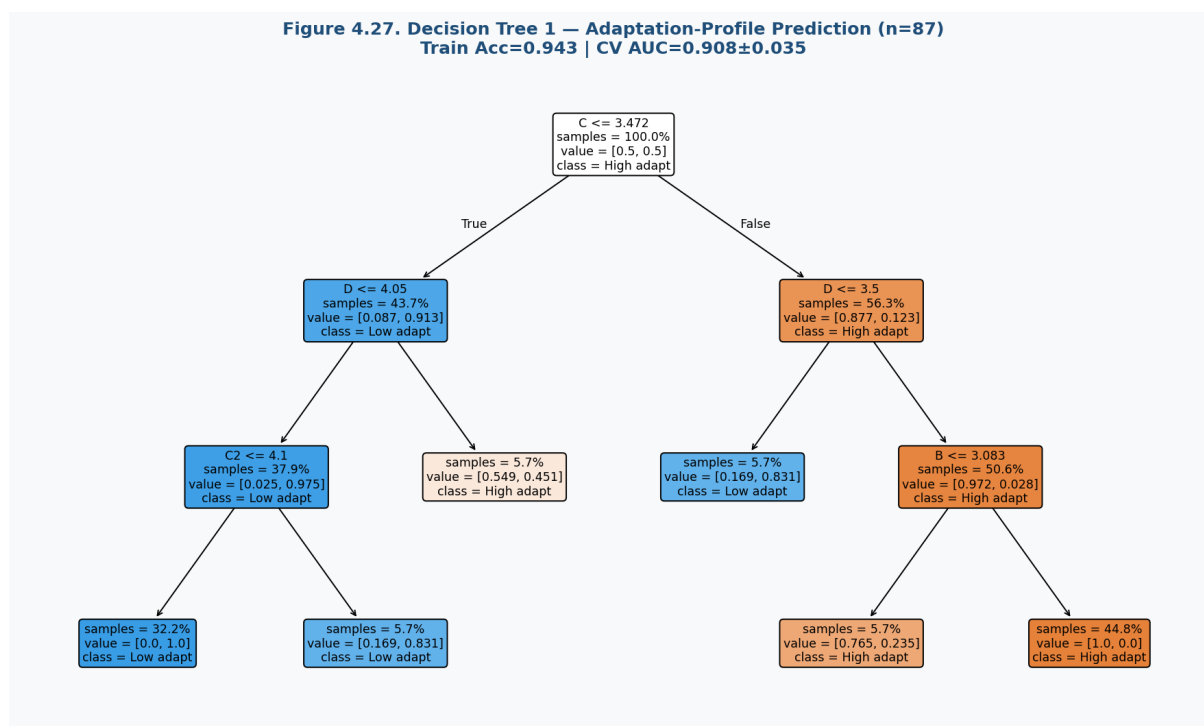


Figure 4.27. Decision Tree 1 — adaptation-profile prediction: structure, feature importance and validation.

4.14 Open-Ended Responses

Dimension	F3 (Challenge)	F4 (Surprise)	F5 (Advice)
Central topic	Communication & accent	Openness & respect	Patience & active listening
Sentiment AR	-0.006	0.325	0.316
Sentiment IN	0.206	0.478	0.332
Linked theory	Hall, Ting-Toomey	Expectations / stereotypes	CQ (Earley & Ang)

Table 4.28. Cross-cutting synthesis of the open-ended responses (F3, F4, F5). VADER compound sentiment.

The AR vs. IN sentiment asymmetry present in the quantitative data is replicated in the free-text responses. F3 (challenges) is the only question where Argentina drops to a neutral tone (-0.006) while India stays positive (0.206). This convergent validity strengthens the instrument: the open-ended responses do not merely confirm the numbers — they enrich them with the “how” and “why.”

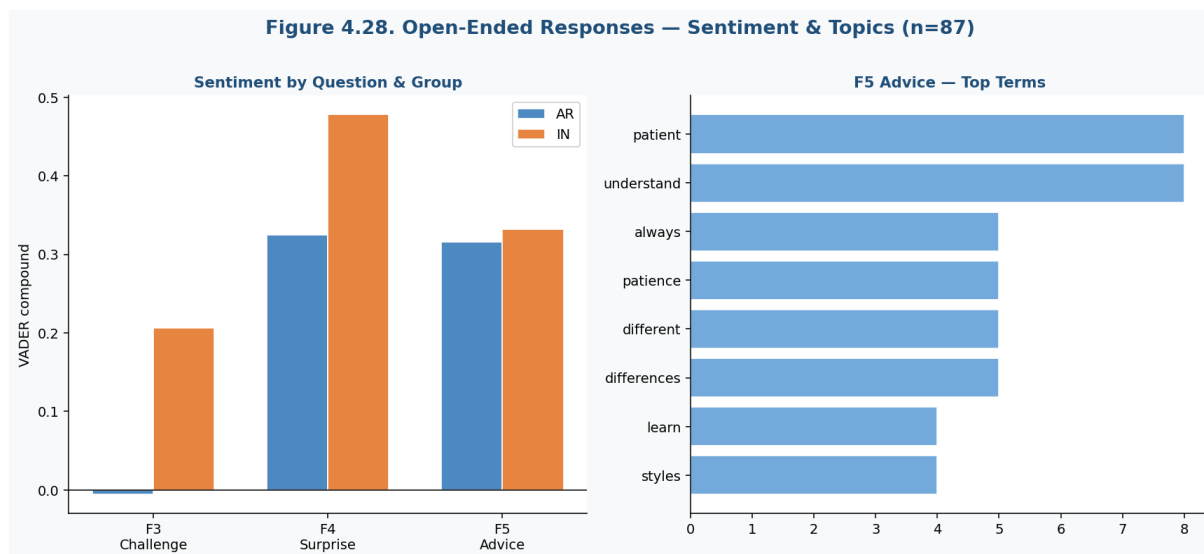


Figure 4.28. Open-ended responses — sentiment and topic distribution across F3, F4 and F5.

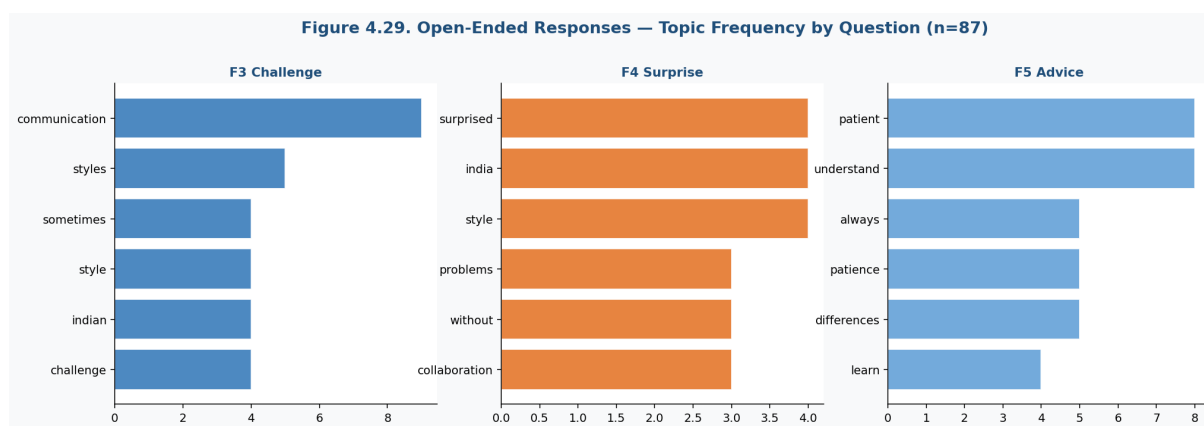


Figure 4.29. Open-ended responses — topic frequency by question (F3, F4, F5).

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