ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

Peer Reviewed Referred and
UGC Listed Journal
(Journal No. 47100)

GENIUS

PART - I

Volume - VI, Issue - II
February - July - 2018

IMPACT FACTOR / INDEXING
2017 - 4.954
www.sjifactor.com

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AJANTA PRAKASHAN
ISO 9001 : 2008 QMS.
ISBN / ISSN
Jaisingpura, Aurangabad
www.ajantaprakashan.com

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Volume - VI - Issue - II - February - July - 2018
GENIUS - ISSN - 2279 - 0489 - IMPACT FACTOR - 4.954 (www.sjifactor.com)

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6. People Management - Cross Culture Management at Workplace

Prof. Abhradita Chatterjee Nahvi
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Abstract

This article reviews the areas of comparative and cross-cultural management and discusses the impact of cultural diversity on international organizational behaviour. With the growing shift of business from the Atlantic to the Pacific Basin, East-West cultural differences are becoming increasingly significant. Research in developmental psychology, sociology, and anthropology shows that there are major differences among the cognitive processes of people from different cultures.

In the era of the global corporation, cultural diversity has to be recognized, understood, and appropriately used in organizations. It is suggested that cross-cultural management would greatly benefit from comparative studies considering the impact of the cognitive aspects of culture on managerial practice.

Key words: Cross-cultural management, culture, global, cultural diversity

Introduction

Today's manager increasingly has to work in international and cross-cultural environments. In addition to the normal pressures of man-management, managers are now required to deal with challenges, friction and misunderstandings emanating from cross cultural differences.

Effective management in the modern environment necessitates cross cultural competency in order to get the best out of a multicultural team.

Objective

- To have a clear understanding of what is CROSS-CULTURE management.
- The main focus of cross-cultural management is on the management of workforce diversity and how this diversity could be used as a means of obtaining a competitive edge.

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Research Methodology

This research paper is completely conceptual and basic foundation comes from various secondary sources like research articles in Journals, magazines, speeches, newspapers and websites. It gives an insight to the importance is CROSS-CULTURE management in today's corporate world and Secondary data helped in supporting these facts.

What Is Culture?

The growing importance of world business has created a demand for managers sophisticated in global management skills and working with people from other countries.

To comprehend the contrasts amongst residential and worldwide administration, it is important to comprehend the essential manners by which societies around the globe fluctuate.

Culture has been derived from the latin word 'cultura'.

It can be defined as the body of learned behaviors that are characteristics of a given human society. Cultures evolve a set of rules for communication and behavior. One has to be aware of the implicit and explicit rules of a particular culture before interacting with people rom that culture.

In nutshell culture is 'what' of a nation and 'how' of a nation.

It has also been defined in several ways by different people. Culture is

- Something that is shared by ali or almost all members of some social group.
- Something that the more seasoned individuals from the gathering attempt to pass on to the more youthful individuals.
- Something that shapes conduct or structures one's impression of the world.

From the above definitions one can see that culture evolves a set of rules for communication and behaviour, on the basis of the common values and historical experiences of the people within that cultural group.

People are usually expected to follow the guidelines of the culture in which they are transacting business. This is why many globally focused companies and organizations considercultural awareness to be an essential ingredient to success.

Before we go into the depth of it let us distinguish the terms

- **Multicultural Awareness**-It refers to the promotion of open-mindedness to different races, religion, ethnic backgrounds etc., within a country.
- **Inter-cultural Awareness** refers to a focus on two or more natipns.

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- **Cross-culture Awareness** is a similar term, but is more frequently used in a business context. For example, cross cultural training is suggested for people planning to work overseas, and more for those who have an international focus to their work.

What Is Cross Culture?

Cross–cultural management describes organizational behaviour and compares organizational behaviour across countries and cultures; and seeks to understand how to improve the interaction of co–workers, managers, executives, clients, suppliers, and alliance partners from around the world.

Cross Culture Orientation

The cultural orientation of the society reflects the complex interaction of values, attitudes, and behaviours displayed by its members.

Individuals express culture and its normative qualities through the values that they hold about life and the world around them (Adler 1997)

How Do Cultures Vary

As shown in Table 1, six basic dimensions describe the cultural orientation of societies: people's qualities as individuals, their relationship to nature and the world, their relationship to other people, their primary type of activity, and their orientation in space and time.

Table 1. Values Orientation Dimensions

Perception of	Dimensions		
Individual	Good	Good and Evil	Evil
World	Dominant	Harmony	Subjugation
Human Relations	Individual	Laterally Extended Groups	Hierarchical Groups
Activity	Doing	Controlling	Being
Time	Future	Present	Past
Space	Private	Mixed	Public

The six dimensions answer the questions

- Who am I?
- How do I see the world?
- How do I relate to other people?
- What do I do?
- How do I use space and time?
- How People See Themselves

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- What is a person's relationship to the world? Are people dominant over their environment, in harmony with it, or subjugated by it?

In another international study of management–performance appraisals in the U.S.A., Saudi Arabia, and Japan conducted by Harris and Moran (1991), it was found that performance appraisal differed significantly across cultures.

A seminal research by Hofstede (1980) went further in showing how the underlying values of the cultures across the world permeate through to affect relationships, work, and social values.

Hofstede (1980) undertook a comprehensive study on worldwide sociocultural factors influencing management. Hofstede's Research compared work–related attitudes across a range of cultures. From his survey of 116,000 employees in 40 countries, Hofstede isolated 4 major dimensions which were congruent with different cultural values of specific countries. These socio–cultural factors were:

1. Collectivism vs. Individualism
2. Small vs. Large Power Distance
3. Weak vs. Strong Uncertainty Avoidance
4. Femininity vs. Masculinity

Fifth Cultural Dimension

Hofstede, in collaboration with Bond (1984), identified an additional cultural dimension by which nations can be classified: Confucian Dynamism. Confucian Dynamism is also referred to as Long Term Orientation vs. Short Term Orientation.

Confucianism is not a religion, but a system of practical ethics prevalent in China.

The five basic relationships are:

- Ruler–subject
- Father–son
- Older brother–younger brother
- Husband–wife
- Older friend–younger friend.

The junior owes the senior respect, and the senior owes the junior protection and consideration. The prototype for all social institutions is the family. A person is mainly a member of a family, as opposed to being just an individual.

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Harmony in the family must be preserved, and harmony is the maintenance of one's *face*, that is, one's dignity, self-respect, and prestige. Treating others as one would like to be treated oneself is virtuous behaviour.

Cultural Effects On Behavior

- Human behaviour is affected both by genetic inheritance and by experience. The ways in which people develop are shaped by social experience and circumstances within the context of their inherited genetic potential. The logical inquiry is exactly how encounter and inherited potential co-operate in delivering human conduct.
- Each person is born into a social and cultural setting—family, community, social class, language, religion—and eventually develops many social connections. the qualities of a child's social setting influence how he or she figures out how to think and act, by methods for guideline, prizes and discipline, and case. This setting includes home, school, neighbourhood, and also, perhaps, local religious and law enforcement agencies. Then there are also the child's mostly informal interactions with friends, other peers, relatives, and the entertainment and news media.
- How people will react to every one of these impacts, or even which impact will be the most powerful, tends not to be unsurprising. There is, nonetheless, some generous closeness in how people react to a similar example of impacts—that is, to being brought up in a similar culture. Moreover, socially incited conduct designs, for example, discourse designs, non-verbal communication, and types of diversion, turn out to be so profoundly imbedded in the human personality that they frequently work without the people themselves being completely mindful of them.
- Every culture incorporates a fairly unique web of examples and implications: methods for gaining a living, frameworks of exchange and government, social parts, religions, customs in attire and nourishments and expressions, desires for conduct, states of mind toward different societies, and convictions and qualities about these exercises.
- Inside an expansive society, there might be many gatherings, with unmistakably extraordinary subcultures related with area, ethnic cause, or social class. In the event that a solitary culture is predominant in an extensive district, its esteems might be viewed as right and might be advanced—by families and religious gatherings as well as by schools and governments. A few subcultures may emerge among exceptional social classes (suc

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as business executives and criminals), some of which may cross national boundaries (such as musicians and scientists).

- Fair or out of line, attractive or unwanted, social refinements are a striking piece of relatively every culture. The type of the qualifications fluctuates with place and time, now and then including unbending positions, in some cases innate or family progressive systems, some of the time a more adaptable social class. Class qualifications are made mainly based on riches, instruction, and occupation, however they are additionally prone to be related with other subcultural contrasts, for example, dress, lingo, and states of mind toward school and work. These economic, political, and cultural distinctions are recognized by almost all members of a society—and resented by some of them.
- The class into which individuals are conceived influences what dialect, eating routine, tastes, and interests they will have as youngsters, and accordingly impacts how they will see the social world. Besides, class influences what weights and openings individuals will understanding and in this way influences what ways their lives are probably going to take—including tutoring, occupation, marriage, and way of life. All things considered, many individuals lead lives altogether different from the standard for their class.
- The ease with which someone can change social class varies greatly with time and place. Throughout most of human history, people have been almost certain to live and die in the class into which they were born. The times of greatest upward mobility have occurred when a society has been undertaking new enterprises (for example, in territory or technology) and thus has needed more people in higher-class occupations. In some parts of the world today, increasing numbers of people are escaping from poverty through economic or educational opportunity, while in other parts, increasing numbers are being impoverished.
- What is considered to be acceptable human behaviour varies from culture to culture and from time period to time period. Every social group has generally accepted ranges of behaviour for its members, with perhaps some specific standards for subgroups, such as adults and children, females and males, artists and athletes. Unusual behaviour may be considered either merely amusing, or distasteful, or punishably criminal. Some normal behaviour in one culture may be considered unacceptable in another. For example, aggressively competitive behaviour is considered rude in highly cooperative cultures.

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Conversely, in some subcultures of a highly competitive society, such as that of the United States, a lack of interest in competition may be regarded as being out of step. Although the world has a wide diversity of cultural traditions, there are some kinds of behaviour (such as incest, violence against kin, theft, and rape) that are considered unacceptable in almost all of them.

- The social consequences considered appropriate for unacceptable behaviour also vary widely between, and even within, different societies. Punishment of criminals ranges from fines or humiliation to imprisonment or exile, from beatings or mutilation to execution. The form of appropriate punishment is affected by theories of its purpose to prevent or deter the individual from repeating the crime, or to deter others from committing the crime, or simply to cause suffering for its own sake in retribution. The success of punishment in deterring crime is difficult to study, in part because of ethical limitations on experiments assigning different punishments to similar criminals, and in part because of the difficulty of holding other factors constant.
- Technology has long played a major role in human behaviour. The high value placed on new technological invention in many parts of the world has led to increasingly rapid and inexpensive communication and travel, which in turn has led to the rapid spread of fashions and ideas in clothing, food, music, and forms of recreation. Books, magazines, radio, and television describe ways to dress, raise children, make money, find happiness, get married, cook, and make love. They also implicitly promote values, aspirations, and priorities by the way they portray the behaviour of people such as children, parents, teachers, politicians, and athletes, and the attitudes they display toward violence, sex, minorities, the roles of men and women, and lawfulness.

Global Interdependence

- Nations and cultures are increasingly dependent on one another through international economic systems and shared environmental problems (such as the global effects of nuclear warfare, deforestation, and acid rain). They also learn more about one another through international travel and use of mass media. More and more, the global system is becoming a tightly knit web in which a change in any one part of the web has significant effects on the others. For instance, local conflicts spread beyond their borders to involve other nations; fluctuating oil supplies affect economic productivity, trade balances, interest rates, and employment throughout the world. The wealth, security, and general

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welfare of almost all nations are interrelated. There is a growing consensus among the leaders of most nations that isolationist policies are no longer sustainable and that such global issues as controlling the spread of nuclear weapons and protecting the world's monetary system from wild fluctuations can be accomplished only by all nations acting in concert.

- Nations interact through a wide variety of formal and informal arrangements.
- The wealth of a nation depends on the effort and skills of its workers, its natural resources, and the capital and technology available to it for making the most of those skills and resources.
- There are, however, many practical influences that distort the economic reality of international trade. For instance, such trade may be thwarted by fear of exploitation by economically or politically more powerful nations, by the desire to protect special groups of workers who would lose out to foreign economic competition, and by the unwillingness to become dependent on foreign countries for certain products that could become unavailable in the case of future conflicts.

Case Study - 1

- Work Behaviour Varies Across Cultures
- Worldwide Differences in Managerial Style

Andre Laurent (INSEAD, France) studied the philosophies and behaviour of managers in nine Western European countries, the U.S., and three Asian countries (Indonesia, Japan, and the People's Republic of China). He found distinct patterns for managers in each of the countries.

- Task and Relationship —The main reasons for a hierarchical structure is so that everybody
- knows who has authority over whom
- So as to have proficient work connections it is regularly important to sidestep the progressive line
- Managers: Experts or Problem Solvers?

Laurent found little agreement across national borders on the nature of the managerial role.

Case Study - 2

Another related study by England (1986) found that employee's work goals/motivation varied across cultures.

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Table 2: Comparative Work Goals: German, Japanese, and American Respondents' Rankings

Work goals	Germany	Japan	USA
Interesting work	3	2	1
Good pay	1	5	2
Good interpersonal Relations	4	6	7
Good job security	2	4	3
A good match between you and your job	5	1	4
A lot of autonomy	8	3	8
A good match between you and your job	8	3	8
Opportunity to learn	9	7	5
A lot variety	6	9	6
Convenient work hours	6	8	9
Good physical working conditions	11	10	11
Promotion	10	11	10

Source: England (1986, P. 181)

Conclusion

The growing interdependence of world social, economic, and ecological systems makes it difficult to predict the consequences of social decisions. Changes anywhere in the world can have amplified effects elsewhere, with increased benefits to some people and increased costs to others. There is also the possibility of some changes producing instability and uncertainty that are to the disadvantage of all. Worldwide stability may depend on nations establishing more reliable systems of doing business and exchanging information, developing monitoring mechanisms to warn of global catastrophes (such as famine and nuclear war), and reducing the large gap in the standard of living between the richest and the poorest nations. Nations, like all participants in social systems, sometimes find it to their advantage to suffer some short-term losses to achieve the longer-term benefits of a stable world economy.

To overcome the barriers certain Skills for Effective Cross-Cultural Management which needs to be worked on are as follows :

- Respect.
- Tolerating ambiguity.
- Relating to people
- Being non-judgmental.
- Personalizing one's observations

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- Empathy—the ability to ---put yourself in another's shoes
- Persistence.

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UGC Approved Journal No-49284

ISSN 0975-6248

Literary Insight

A Refereed International Journal

VOLUME-9 • ISSUE-2 • JULY-2018

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