

"CROSS CULTURAL COMPETENCE AN ESSENTIAL SKILL FOR EMPLOYEES IN TODAY'S MNC"

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ABSTRACT

Organizations global wide expect their employees to acquire a certain degree of cross cultural competence. Each and every employee is considered as an asset to the organization, they should be globally competent consistent leaders. Today the employer is not happy with the employee who cannot adapt to a cross cultural setting. Most of the organizations focus on cross cultural training and hence improve the cross-cultural competence of their employees. Cross culturally trained employees easily adapt to cross cultural setting; they can handle the so called 'culture shock', and work happily. Employees who lack cross cultural training, experience culture shock and slowly they develop a misunderstanding which ends up in conflict. Cross cultural competence impacts the job performance of the employees. Culturally competent employee tends to be outstanding in a multi-cultural setting

KEYWORDS: Cross Cultural Communication, Cross Cultural Competence, Cultural Competence, Communication

INTRODUCTION

Multinational organizations are increasing their business to sustain in the global competitive market. In this scenario organizations are updating themselves according to the changing needs of the global market. Globalization of the world economy promotes the rapid development and exchange not only of technology, technical innovation, and human resources. The processes of globalization expand opportunities to increase staff skills and staff that have passed training or training abroad, are internal factors in the growth of business value Zaitseva, N. A., Larionova, A. A., Yumatov, K. V., Korsunova, N. M., & Dmitrieva, N. V. (2016). The trend towards globalization and internationalization has increased the importance of being competent in communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds. Abe, H., & Wiseman, R. L. (1983). Today most of the leading multinational organizations focus on cross cultural training to its employees and allocate a certain percentage of budgets for this training. Crosscultural training is a kind of investment of the organization, as employees are assets of the organization, cross cultural training adds value to the human assets of the organization. Cross cultural competence is

"A set of cognitive, behavioural, and affective/motivational components that enable individuals to adapt effectively in intercultural environments" (Abbe et al., 2007). Cross cultural competence is a key factor which impacts the performance of the employee and the organization. An Organization which focuses on improving the cross-cultural competence of employees facilitate cross cultural training to employees. A global mindset, in its simplest form will allow a manager from one part of the world to be comfortable in another on account of knowledge and skills that are based on

understanding and awareness. To cope with global competition, businesses are in need of employees who are able to work effectively with people from a diversity of countries and cultures.

THEORY

Misunderstandings in Cross Cultural Settings

A person's perceptions, attitudes, motivations, values, learning experiences and personality are all to a very large extent shaped by culture Forster, N. (2000). However, work related cross cultural interactions are not always successful Black, J. S., & Mendenhall, M. (1990) Negative perception of an employee often leads to the state of culture shock. Employees unaware of the new culture perceive in a negative manner. For example, many IT companies send their employees to an international assignment to other country. An employee posted in china for an assignment faces certain culture shock during his assignment. He initially enjoys the new country, new places and later when he involves with his work his negative perception regarding the new culture increases the misunderstanding with the new culture.

Causes of Negative Perception about New Culture

In a cultural competence terminology, a culture is any characteristic of an individual that tends to influence their identity, perceptions, attitudes and behavior Egan, M. L., & Bendick, M. (2008). Lack of knowledge of the beliefs, values and awareness of the new culture often leads to misunderstandings and negative perceptions. Cultural awareness can be understood as the degree of knowledge about the way of thinking and behaving of people from a different culture Buckley, P. J., Clegg, J., & Tan, H. (2006). Language barrier adds fuel to the fire of miss understandings. "I think I can communicate freely with any culture personality, language is not a barrier. "This statement cannot be fully agreed because in case of cross cultural communication with a common language one can express by words. There is a lot of communication happens without words. Our mind perceives so many things and it comes to a conclusion without analyzing the facts

Ethnocentrism and ethno Relativism

"My native culture is the best way of understanding people in the world". This statement describes what ethnocentrism is. Bennett, M. J. (2004) used the term "ethnocentrism" to refer to the experience of one's own culture as "central to reality. Ethnocentrism starts with initially denying the cultural differences and then defending, with a mindset of cultural shock and finally a stage of minimization of difference. In the adaptation stage individuals tend to mix with all cultures. In Ethno relativism the first stage is adaptation truly acknowledging cultural difference Next come's adaptation, when individuals change themselves to cope up. At Last, integration occurs when individuals move freely between cultures Gray, S. (2012). In Ethnocentrism is the thought about one's culture as the superior most and the right way to understand the world. Ethnocentrism is one of the reasons for lower levels of cross cultural competence in employees. Judging other culture by own culture, thinking one own culture is superior to other culture; new culture's value is underestimated. Employees who are ethnocentric fail to accept the values of other culture. Cross cultural competence is coming out from ethnocentric thinking and accepting and understanding the new culture. Cultural relativism is viewing none of the culture is superior to any culture i.e. valuing a culture by terms of behavior, language, religion, morality etc. Giving equal importance to the beliefs of very culture.

Transforming Ethnocentric Employees into Culturally Relative

Ethnocentric employees when transformed into culturally relative employees they grow in their levels of cultural competence. Acquiring the cross-cultural competence is a gradual process. Once an employee stops judging other culture based on his cultural values he can very well overcome the conflict which arise in cross cultural communication. For e.g. an Employee posted overseas for an assignment without cross cultural training often will judge the other culture based on his cultural values. This causes a misunderstanding and misperception about the new culture. When the same employee undergoes a cross cultural training he understand and accepts the values of the new culture and stops judging the new culture based on his culture's belief

Cross Cultural Training Transforms Ethnocentric Employees into Culturally Relative

Employees working in multicultural environment are in the process of adapting the new culture, their beliefs values. Cross cultural training smoothens and makes the employee to adapt the new culture in a stress-free manner. It gives an understanding about the other culture's values and beliefs and gradually transforms the ethnocentric employee into culture relative. Essentially, CCT creates adaptable people by teaching global skills that can be adapted to more specific situations Littrell, L. N., & Salas, E. (2005).

IMPACT OF CULTURALLY COMPETENT EMPLOYEES

Creative Teams

Culturally competent employees form a creative team. Each member of a global business team brings a unique cognitive lens to the group. If harnessed effectively, the resulting diversity can yield significant synergies and produce a collective wisdom superior to that of any individual Govindarajan, V., & Gupta, A. K. (2001). Differences are explicitly recognized and accepted, even nurtured and their implications are incorporated into every facet of the group process DiStefano, J. J., & Maznevski, M. L. (2000). An inclusive team creates a positive environment. When the workplace is filled with positive energy and has a common culture it gives birth to creativity. Because cultural differences are associated with differences in mental models, modes of perception, and approaches to problems, they are likely to provide strong inputs for creativity Stahl, G. K., Maznevski, M. L., Voigt, A., & Jonsen, K. (2010). Organization needs highly creative employees. Stress free employees without conflicts are creativities brain storming sessions come out with successful creative ideas accepted by the whole team. Each employee appreciates the idea of his colleague.

Globally Competent Workforce

Culturally competent employees become globally competent. Globally competent citizens know they have an impact on the world and that the world influences them Hunter, W. D. (2004). Cultural competency involves determining what strengths an individual draw upon, when functioning in cross-cultural circumstances Helms, S. M. (2003). Changing business needs urge the organization to compete in the global market in order to withstand. To effectively compete in the market- place, companies develop a unique set of skills for market positioning, combinations of resources, technologies, and personnel that provide competitive differentiation Harvey, M. G., & Buckley, M. R. (1997). Higher levels of communication and strategies for effective communication are created by globally competent employees.

Outstanding Organizational Performance

As organizations become more multicultural, they begin value diversity and continue attempts to accommodate ongoing cultural change Sue, D. W. (2001). This accommodation to ongoing cultural change Enriches the employee needs and enhancing the employee to compete in the global market makes the employee global competent and in turn the organizational performance reaches its higher level. In the process of enhancing the employee cross cultural training plays a prime role. Culturally competent employees contribute to overall organizational performance. Cross cultural performance, in turn, is expected to lead to overall job performance, and to the more distal, and ultimate, criterion of mission success Thornson, C. A. (2010). Performance is another popular outcome of 3C Training, related to work performance and achieving company goals Feinberg, E. G. (2013).

Learning Organization

Culturally competent employees accept the view point of the team mate and try to implement in his job. They have acquired the ability to continually learn from the global environment and to support the virtual third cultures necessary for effective multicultural communication. Bennett, M. J. (2007). This acceptance of the cross culture makes the employee to learn new concepts. It creates a positive atmosphere of new idea generation. Ultimately the entire organization becomes a learning organization which is consistent and able to tackle the competitive business needs

Higher Profit Levels

Upgrading the employees according to the global market need may lead to allocation of budget for training and analysis; in the long run it fetches higher profit levels to the organization. Culturally competent employees always focus on the organization's vision, mission and goal; their positive approach in the team always leads to success in the competitive business world

RESEARCH METHOD

For the present study, the published cross-cultural competence literature from 1980 to 2017 has been reviewed. The literature search included studies published in journals, conference papers, dissertations and thesis that were related to cross cultural competence or cultural training or those that explained the instruments of cross cultural competence. The literature search was extensively conducted to identify empirical studies that involved study of cross cultural competence or cross-cultural training or measures the cross-cultural competence of employees were reviewed. The search process has been done with computer databases such as Google scholar, Educational Resources Information centre, Springer link, EBSCO Host Research Data base, using the following key words: Cross cultural communication, cross cultural competence, cultural competence, and communication

DISCUSSIONS

Cross cultural competence of employees is an important skill needed by the employer in today's competitive market. With the increased reliance on cross-cultural managerial assignments, and growing implementation of multinational teams, organizations, and joint ventures, it is critical that we gain better understanding of the factors that enable employees and managers to perform effectively in culturally diverse contexts Kim, K. (2008). Cultural competence along with the broader concept of multiculturalism is the belief that people should not only appreciate and recognize other

cultural groups but also able to effectively work with them Sue, S. (1998). Diversity brings with it new perspectives and new possibilities. An intercultural team working on a performance improvement intervention, or even just engaged in sustaining existing business practices, will gain from the expanded possibilities seen by members of a diverse team Levacy, W. (2012). Organizations which focus on cross cultural training renew their employees culturally competent culturally competent employees form a diversified team which comes out with innovative solutions and excellent creative ideas. Here diversity adds advantage to the organization in term of generation of new ideas accepted and valued by fellow co-worker. Cross cultural competence of employees is one of the key skills of an employee in improving the performance of the employee. Cross cultural competence of an employee should be developed by the organization in order to improve itself as globally developed and competent organization. Moreover, cultural competence empowers individuals and organizations with the requisite knowledge, skills, attitude, behaviour, awareness, values, abilities, and adaptability to bridge the gap between making policing more efficient, effective, and equitable Egan, M. L., & Bendick, M. (2008).

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