



## Cross Cultural Sensitivity of IT Professionals – A Research Study

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**Abstract :** -This article includes the present scenario of globalization, understanding of cultural diversity, need and importance of Cross Cultural Sensitivity skills supported by review of research and the study concerning Perception of cross cultural sensitivity skill of IT Personnel of different hierarchy ( lower, middle and higher mgmt level ) existing level of the mastery level on this skill and training requirement for CCSS of IT Personnel working in MNC's in India . The study revealed that Perception level for importance of CCSS seemed to be higher than existing mastery level of Personnel of all three levels means the Sr. Manager, Deputy Manager, Project Directors; executives all have higher perception level on importance of CCSS in their job. Since the mastery level on CCSS is less than the Perception level so they require training on this skill as revealed by the results. Personnel of lower mgmt level require more training needs on this skill.

**Keywords:-** Globalization, Cultural Diversity, IT Personnel, Cross Cultural Sensitivity Skill, Different Hierarchy level, Lower management, Middle management level, Higher management level.

### I. Introduction

With the growing significance of developing economies in the global business environment, Human Resource Management is facing increased difficulty in managing cross-border cultural relationships and this becomes acute when the economy is witnessing the inevitable phenomenon of change, which prominently manifests itself in expansion and growth, stretching across geographical and political barriers and frontiers . (Bhatti, 2006) When dealing with people, we need to take care that we are not dealing with creatures of logic, we are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity. Emotions, prejudices and pride are the products of the Individual's culture and if the cultures of team members vary, the task of managing such people becomes more complex. (Carnegie, 1936).The relationship between culture and management of remote work has become an unavoidable issue which needs to be addressed .Globalization of software projects has increased demographic and cultural diversity obstructing smooth team functioning as geographic and temporal distance limits opportunities for direct contact and cooperation .Culture is termed as the centrifugal issue in global software development and cultural diversity is often stated as a barrier within distributed teams . This diversity appears in different forms such as language and ethnic differences, national and political differences, individual perceptions and motivation, and work ethics .Cultural distance is assumed to increase with the degree of cultural differences between geographically distributed teams and consequently negatively impact on the level of understanding and appreciation of the activities and efforts of remote colleagues and teams. Linguistic distance limits the ability for coherent communication to take place and can impact on the development of trust amongst teams .Thus, managing virtual teams whose members are geographically and linguistically dispersed is seen as a daunting task due to the numerous constraints .

Global managers have realized that HRM strategies differ significantly across different countries with varying cross-cultural settings and that the strategies used to manage human resources in one country cannot be applied in another country (Budhwar & Debrah, 2001). The employee relations practices within the organizations in most developing nations are influenced by factors such as cultural values, religious beliefs, and caste/ethnic classification resulting in decreased organizational performance .Cultural sensitivity plays an important role in inter-organizations relationships across cultural boundaries. Given the increasingly dynamic global business environment, organizations need culturally skilled workers if they are to succeed in the international business arena (Earley & Peterson, 2004).The development and evolution of cultural sensitivity as it interacts with trusts and development of international business relationship (Shapiro, et.al., 2007).Globalization has increased the pressure on their employees to identify and adjust to the cultural differences when doing business (Kanungo, 2006). Indian HR practices deeply embedded in its socio-cultural aspect that's why the cross-cultural challenges are being faced by MNCs in India (Munuswamy, 2008). Importance of cross cultural training in international business by analyzing major contributions to the field, while providing a few examples of cross cultural blunders (Ozana and Manvela-2010).Interpretation of the barriers to and facilitators of

effective cross cultural relationships in multinational corporations (MNC's) (Malgorzata, 2013). Various techniques initiated by Project managers to deal with cultural differences that exists within geographically distributed global software development teams. (Casey,et.al.2010). Above business studies reflect importance, barriers, strategies to develop cross cultural sensitivity in global workforce to succeed in global market.

IT sector is one of the most important sectors of global business. MNCs need most cultural sensitive skilled workers as research revealed. Most of the cultural studies associated with western management were concerned with cultural differences encountered in non-western markets. India is one among the non-western markets. That is why researcher has taken this study which presents cross-cultural sensitivity of Indian Personnel in IT sectors in MNC's in India as well as abroad who face cross cultural issues due to diversified workforce. In each IT industry Personnel working may be differentiated into three levels of mgmt. Lower mgmt level, Middle mgmt level and Higher mgmt level. As researcher observed that Personnel of lower mgmt level have to face the cross cultural sensitivity issues more than their senior managers. Following Research Questions were formulated:-

- a. To what extent the IT Personnel of different hierarchy i.e. Lower Management, Middle Management and Higher Management percept cross cultural sensitivity skill in their Job?
- b. What is their existing level of mastery on cross cultural sensitivity skill?
- c. Do they require training for cross cultural sensitivity skill?

## **II. Conceptualization**

Cross cultural management is a process of transferring modern management of knowledge to a cross cultural environment. According to Earley & Mosakowski & Peterson (2004) Cultural Intelligence(CQ) refers to person's ability to observe, interpret and act upon unfamiliar and ambiguous social and cultural cues, and function effectively in a novel cultural setting. Successful cross cultural dyadic relationships require the development and nourishment of these intertwined cognitive, motivational and behavioral skills and capabilities through adequate managerial training.

Labahn and Harich (1997) define Sensitivity to national business culture as the organization's understanding of adaptation to its exchange partners domestic business practices as perceived by its partner.

Researchers define Cultural sensitivity as the awareness of cross cultural business practices and the ability to deal with and manage these differences (Johnson Cullen, Sakano & Takenouchi, 1996: Skarmeas, Katsikeas & Schlegelmilch, 2002)Despite the varying terminology some common constructs perform together to develop cross cultural sensitivity skills and the knowledge repertoire needed to function effectively in foreign culture.Finally Culture Sensitivity involves limiting the bias of one's own culture.

## **III. Objectives of the Study**

- To study the Perception level on Importance of Cross Culture Sensitivity Skill of the IT Personnel of different hierarchy i.e. Lower Management, Middle Management and Higher Management
- To study the Mastery Level on Cross Cultural Sensitivity Skill
- To study whether they require Training in Cross Culture Sensitivity skill.

**Hypothesis: The hypotheses was stated as under.** There is no significant difference in IT Personnel of different hierarchy i.e. Lower Management, Middle Management and Higher Management on Perception level of Importance of Cross Cultural Sensitivity skill, Existing Mastery level and training requirement in their skills.

**Sample:** About 150 IT Personnel working in MNC's in India of various hierarchy levels i.e Lower Management level, Middle Management Level and Higher Management level who were working in Indian IT companies and MNC's were randomly selected.

- **Lower Management level:** IT professional who are Fresher's, Executives having experience of 1-3 years
- **Middle Management Level:** IT professional who belongs to different culture, are working in IT companies with experience of 4 to 8years.
- **Higher Management Level:** IT professional who belongs to different culture, are working in IT companies with the experience of more than 8years.

**Tools & Techniques:** `Cross Cultural Sensitivity Skill Inventory' was utilized to collect data. Five point rating scale was used to get responses and measure the Cross culture sensitivity of IT Personnel.

Cross Cultural Sensitivity Skill Inventory has the questions on three aspects i.e. Perception level of the importance of Cross Culture sensitivity Skills in their job, Existing Mastery level on this skill and Whether training required.

**Statistical Technique:** Mean, One way ANOVA and Scheffe tests were used to analyze the data.

**Analysis & Interpretation-**To study the Significance difference among IT Personnel on Perception level on Importance of Cross Cultural Sensitivity skill, Mastery level and Training requirement, results of the analysis were presented in the following tables—

### **Interpretation:**

Table 1, F value revealed that the significance difference existed only in training requirement for Cross Cultural Sensitivity skill among IT Personnel of different hierarchy.No Significant difference was found on Perception level of Importance of Cross Cultural Sensitivity Skill and Existing mastery level of this skill among IT Personnel of different hierarchy.

Table1: Perception level on Importance of Cross Cultural Sensitivity skill, Mastery level and Training requirement

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Perception level of Importance of CCSS	Between Groups	0.6	2	0.3	0.448	0.641
	Within Groups	58.3	87	0.67		
	Total	58.9	89			
Mastery level of Cross cultural sensitivity skill	Between Groups	1.689	2	0.844	1.085	0.342
	Within Groups	67.7	87	0.778		
	Total	69.389	89			
Training Requirement for Cross Cultural Sensitivity skill	Between Groups	1.356	2	0.678	3.862	0.025
	Within Groups	15.267	87	0.175		
	Total	16.622	89			

**Interpretation :**

Table 2 revealed that significant difference existed only in training requirement of Cross Cultural Sensitivity skill between IT Personnel of lower management and higher management level (P value .025<.05) . On Perception level of Importance of Cross Cultural Sensitivity skill and Existing Mastery level on CCSS, no significant difference were revealed between Personnel's of any management level. For graphical presentations mean scores of IT Personnel of Lower, Middle and Higher Management level on Perception level of importance of CCSS, existing mastery level and training requirement in CCSS are presented in following table .

Table 2: Multiple Comparisons on Perception level on Importance of Cross Cultural Sensitivity skill, Mastery level and Training requirement

Dependent Variable	(I) Hierarchy of IT Personnel	(J) Hierarchy of IT Personnel	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Perception level of Cross cultural sensitivity skill		Middle mgmt	-0.1	0.211	0.894
	Lower mgmt	Higher mgmt	-0.2	0.211	0.641
	Middle mgmt	Higher mgmt	-0.1	0.211	0.894
Mastery level of Cross cultural sensitivity skill	Lower mgmt	Higher mgmt	0.2	0.228	0.681
	Middle mgmt	Higher mgmt	0.333	0.228	0.347
	Middle mgmt	Lower mgmt	-0.2	0.228	0.681
Training Requirement of CCSS	Lower mgmt	Higher mgmt	.300*	0.108	0.025
	Middle mgmt	Lower mgmt	-0.167	0.108	0.311
	Middle mgmt	Higher mgmt	0.133	0.108	0.471

Table no.3:Mean scores

Hierarchy Level	N	Perception Importance level	Mastery level	Training required
1 ( Lower Management)	50	3.87	3.63	1.4
2 ( Middle Management)	50	3.97	3.77	1.23
3 ( Lower Management)	50	4.07	3.43	1.1
Total	150	3.97	3.61	1.24

Graph no.1

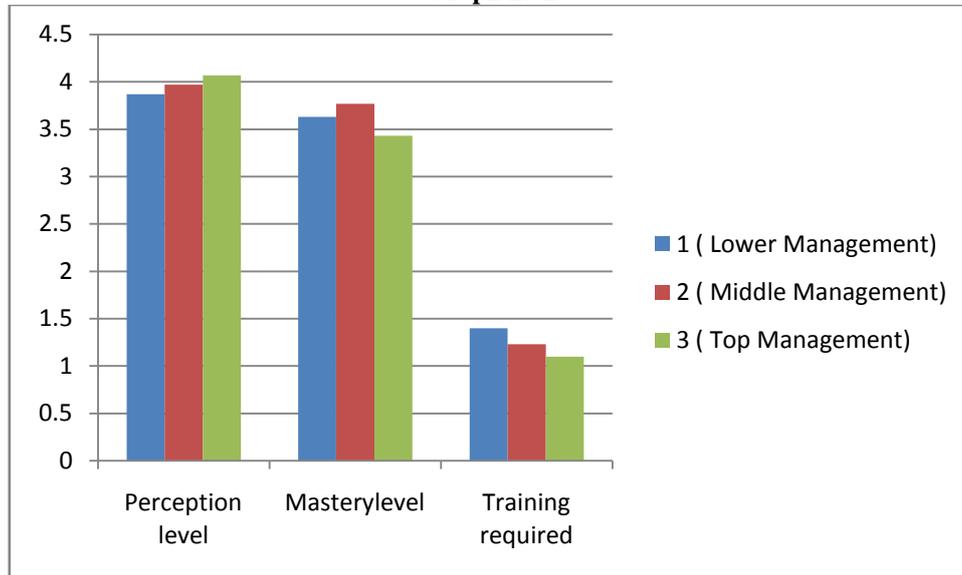


Table 2: Multiple Comparisons on Perception level on Importance of Cross Cultural Sensitivity skill, Mastery level and Training requirement

#### IV. Perception level of importance of Cross Cultural Sensitivity Skill (CCSS)

The study revealed that IT Personnel working in MNC's in India and Abroad of different hierarchy level did not differ significantly on Perception level of Importance of CCSS but the Personnel of higher management level were higher on this than middle & lower mgmt level and the Personnel of middle mgmt level were higher than that of Lower Management level.

Personnel working in MNC's in India and Abroad of different hierarchy level did not differ significantly on Existing mastery level on CCSS. Personnel of Middle Mgmt level were higher than that of lower and higher mgmt level on mastery level on CCSS and the Personnel of lower mgmt level have higher mean scores on mastery level on CCSS than that of Higher Management Level

Personnel working in MNC's in India and Abroad of different hierarchy level differ significantly on training requirement on CCSS. According to the results of the study the Personnel of lower mgmt level have more requirement of Training on CCSS than that of middle & higher mgmt level and Personnel of middle mgmt level have requirement of training more than that of Personnel of higher mgmt level.

#### V. Conclusion

Perception level for importance of CCSS seemed to be higher than existing mastery level of Personnel of all three levels means the Sr. Manager, Deputy Manager, Project Directors; executives all have higher perception level on importance of CCSS in their job. Since the mastery level on CCSS is less than the Perception level so they require training on this skill as revealed by the results. Personnel of lower mgmt level require more training needs on this skill.

Implication : The study highlights towards urgent need of training requirement for Personnel working especially in IT industries as MNC in India as well as abroad as to meet the challenges of globalization in business and economy.

Suggested Research: The study may be taken on IT Personnel working in Indian IT industries in India as well as abroad. More studies about training interventions for CCSS may be taken for the Personnel of different type of Industries.

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