

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT

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CROSS CULTURAL MANAGEMENT IN INDIAN SOFTWARE COMPANIES: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION ON JAPANESE & INDIAN MANAGERS

H. RAHAMATHSULTHANA
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
BHARATHIAR UNIVERSITY
COIMBATORE

ABSTRACT

Globalization & Liberalization together have helped many developing countries to become a part of globalized world. The incremental globalization of the world economy has brought the researchers to scrutinize the cross-cultural aspects of the companies. Research has specially focused on the changes of the global economy on the multinationals from developed economies going into developed or emerging economies. Thus many questions about the management culture practiced in foreign subsidiaries of emerging countries' multinationals remain confused rather unanswered. However, the speed of globalization, it is important for the foreign Managers to understand the business and management culture in India and on the same platform how Indian employees working in these MNC's adapt to the foreign management styles to deliver the best of organizational performance. The research explored Japanese and Indian Managers' differences in perception of the diversity management practices in Indian software companies to understand the context in which they manage their human resources.

KEYWORDS

Globalisation, Liberalisation, cross culture.

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, there was a notable increase in Japanese organizations expanding their business operations to the Indian sub-continent and response to the liberalization policy of the Indian Government that supports foreign direct investment in India. Japan now is India's fifth ranked trade partner and this trade gap points to untapped business opportunities. This research aims to investigate cross cultural and diversity management practices of Indian companies in order to assist Managers in international and multinational corporations to understand the context in which they manage their human resources.

Cross cultural management has an impact on human resource (HR) plans or business strategy. In the context of increasing internationalization of businesses and expansion where interactions among socially & culturally differing people occurs, HR Managers have to forcefully increase individual and group commitment to organizational goals by creating a conducive cultural yet diversified climate.

In the case of diversity management practices, there is no standardized term or procedure to accomplish the workforce. As a result 'Workforce diversity' evolved out of the cross cultural practices of the cross border nations.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the cross cultural climate prevailing in Indian Software Companies.
2. To study the differences in organizational behavior pattern of Japanese & Indian Managers in Indian Software Companies.
3. To study the perception of diversity climate of Indian Software Companies among Indian & Japanese Managers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Aubrey (2007) focuses on the concepts of vertical and horizontal diversity. Vertical diversity evaluates difference as superior or inferior, whereas horizontal diversity treats difference as variation.

There are two problems of vertical diversity namely assimilation and separation. Assimilation solves it by submergence of difference and separation by isolating difference. He argues that for a relational workforce in cross cultural set up, diversity paradigms should be integrated with work perspectives, levels of self-representation, uncertainty and certainty orientations.

One view of strategic human resource management acknowledges people as strategic resources and confirms that the 'objective of SHRM are governed by business strategy and corporate strategy is the driver of cross cultural HR strategy' (Erwee 2003).

Kramer (1998) identifies four nations of cross cultural management namely managing differences and similarities individuals, managing differences and similarities within a group, the process of managing 'inclusion' rather than assimilation of differences in a dominant culture, specifying the dimensions of diversity. Race, gender and age are defined as primary dimensions of cross culture whereas secondary dimensions refer to human factors that can change, for example, religious belief or educational level. Building the desired organizational culture, improving management systems and developing leadership competencies are described as actions taken at a system of cross-cultural HRM level.

To be successful and to sustain competitiveness, multinational organizations have to gain strategic control over various cross cultural diversified operations. Multinational firms need to integrate their strategic activities and SHRM policies & practices to overcome cross-cultural problems and conflicts arising in HR arena. (Schuler, Dowling, Decieri 1993). It is strategic human resource domain and the HR department has the prime responsibility for formulating cross cultural diversity-related management policies and also inducting line Managers to ensure effective implementation. Acknowledging the advantages of human diversity, and creating and upholding diversity awareness among the workforce through various intervention, are critical success factors for multicultural organizations. (D'Netto, Smith and Da Gama Pinto 2000).

Diversity programmes and cross-cultural exchange awareness about cross-cultural insensitivity will manage to help cross-cultural management for the expatriates who work in foreign multinational companies. (Erwee 2003).

Cross-cultural work awareness programs aimed at increasing representations of minorities and groups based on personal characteristics, coupled with adherence to diversity legislation and affirmative action will help the process of transformation from monocultural to multicultural entities (Cox 1991; 1993).

Visible involvement, dedicated commitment, strong support from leaders and senior management pertaining to diversity issues could impart credibility to diversity policies and practices. Finally, as the globalization forces facilitate the blending of people from distinct cultures, organizations will have to more intensively address the impacts of national and organizational culture (Nankerues et.al 2002).

Hofstede's (1993) earlier assessment depicted India as high on power distance; low on uncertainty avoidance; more masculine with strong affiliation to collectivism. Companies in India have established personal and hierarchal corporate cultures, incorporating the values and traits of their workforce.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Cross cultural management is a business process and the realism paradigm is appropriate to describe business constructs to conduct research on International cross cultural HR.

Empirical Research is carried out to bring out the cross- cultural behaviour pattern of Japanese & Indian Managers.

TYPE OF RESEARCH

The research uses predominantly a quantitative survey method but also integrates quantitative information gathered in personal meetings.

TYPE OF DATA

Primary Data was collected from Japanese and Indian Managers' responses to a cross-cultural subject based on questionnaire from twelve IT companies of India. The research was designed to collect data through conventional mailing and the second phase of research was collected through questionnaire cum interview with 16 Japanese Managers and 28 Indian Managers.

SAMPLE SIZE

Out of 16 Japanese Managers, 2 were General Managers, 14 were HR Managers. Out of 28 Indian Managers, 20 were HR Managers, 8 were General Managers. Most of the sampled companies were IT companies or associated IT services companies.

LIMITATIONS

1. As in cross-cultural studies, the language used is critical for reliable results.
2. Japanese were given simple language to understand the meanings of words.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the perceptions of diversity climate of Indian Software Companies among Japanese & Indian Managers?
2. What are the differences in organizational behavior pattern of Japanese & Indian Managers in Indian Software Companies?

FINDINGS I

The questions regarding cross-cultural perception and diversity climate of Indian Software Companies were answered by the sample of managers from the Indian and Japanese perspective. The table of responses is below:

Ho: There is no significant difference in the perceptions.

TABLE 1: MEAN SCORES OF DIVERSITY CLIMATE OF INDIAN SOFTWARE COMPANIES

S.No	Variables	Japanese Respondents N=16 Mean Score	Indian Respondents N=28 Mean Score	Mean Score Difference
1	Diversity in Staff setup	1.22	1.07	0.24
2	Complaints about other languages	2.96	4.26	0.09
3	Racial Ethnic or gender related problems	3.16	2.38	0.20
4	Resistance of Staff to work with other groups	3.98	4.16	0.19
5	Complaints about individuals	4.22	3.30	0.87
6	Conflicts between groups or individuals	4.26	4.14	0.20
7	Difficulties in getting promotions	4.08	3.86	0.80
8	Productivity problems due to conflicts	3.68	3.02	0.09
9	Difficulties in recruiting members of different culture groups	3.86	3.20	0.01
10	Problems resulting from cultural differences between groups	4.20	4.36	0.31

OBSERVATION OF INDIAN MANAGERS

From the above table 1, almost 80% of Indian Managers and 86% of Japanese Managers prove that cultural diversity is reflected in their companies and this reflection is also observed in their work also.

PARTICULAR OBSERVATION

Majority of Indian Managers do not experience resistance to staff in or work with other groups and a major proportion of them consider the occurrence of open conflicts between individuals or groups. Major Indian Managers often face complaints with age or gender related problems and an overall difference in culture does not create a large impact on the motivational level of employees.

OBSERVATION OF JAPANESE MANAGERS

Almost 92% of Japanese Managers definitely observe language constraints and they drop in efficiency level due to misunderstanding of instructions. Japanese Managers on the majority do not see work culture as a major issue as they accommodate with long grueling working hours.

INFERENCE

From the above discussion Ho is accepted which underlines that there is no major significant difference between perceptions of diversity climate among Japanese and Indian Managers in Indian Software Companies.

FINDINGS II

Ho: There is no significant difference in organizational behavior pattern of Japanese & Indian Managers in Indian Software Companies.

To test this research issue chi square test was conducted on various variables of the questionnaire.

Chi square value for variables is presented below:

TABLE 2

S.No.	Variables	Chi square value		Difference
		Japanese	Indian	
1	Dress codes	1.83	9.26	9
2	Punctuality	8.25	9.45	12
3	Flexibility	4.98	9.848	9
4	Recognition	6.87	21.60	10
5	Motivational	12.89	21.26	5
6	Interaction between groups	13.92	16.87	4
7	Leadership	7.07	16.92	6
8	Accountability	4.96	9.87	4

Computed P for Japanese ≤ 0.05

Computed P for Indian ≤ 0.01

Hence Null Hypothesis could be accepted.

On the whole analysis, a source of less difference between Japanese and Indian Managers can be noted in the aspects of Flexibility, Punctuality, Motivational, Leadership roles. So the perceptual differences amongst the Japanese and Indian Managers are not very large but can be viewed / realized on small size.

CONCLUSION

Research on cross cultural diversity in Japanese and Indian Managers is in the miniature level. This study helps to throw light on the assumptions and beliefs, thought process of collaboration work process of Japanese and Indian Manages. Cross Cultural Management is not viewed as a big problem by both groups although their perception about cross cultural diversity differs to some extent. Although it is possible to detect differences in cross cultural climates of Japanese

and Indian firms because of cultural and societal dissimilarities, still this research only examines the outer layer of differences and is not deep rooted intensive research will open up the clarity.

SUGGESTIONS

To understand the cross cultural climate of a firm, the company employees should be dwelled on flexibility norms in order to accommodate the diversity needs and tolerance issues. Furthermore there is a general agreement among the managers about the lack of social interactions between various groups despite various cross cultural diversity promoting norms and policies while employing various cadres of people in firms.

HR Managers and General Managers should not hesitate about the spread of diversity practices. None of the sampled companies have taken initiatives to set separate departments to manage cross cultural diversity issues and this is often an unavoidable recommendation for International HR firms in a MNC scenarios point of view. So both the Japanese and Indian business should also expand their business with other strategic alliances of the world.

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