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H Waseeha Firdose
Research Scholar, Department
of Management, Dravidian
University, Kuppam,
Andhra Pradesh, India

Dr. K Ramachandra
Research Guide, Dravidian
University, Kuppam,
Andhra Pradesh, India

Cross cultural training in modern organisations: An empirical study

H Waseeha Firdose and Dr. K Ramachandra

Abstract
Increasing economic globalization has urged the expansion of multinational corporations (MNCs) and has multiplied the numbers of the human capital moving across the globe. In order to maintain and enhance their global competitiveness, the MNCs rely on finding the right people who can effectively manage and operate their overseas businesses (Dowling & Welch, 2005). However, expatriate assignments are not always successful, and failure ranges from 16% to 40% (Tung, 1981, Black, 1988; Employee Benefit Plan Review, 2001). Working in a culturally different environment is always a challenge, so it is not surprising that the lack of cultural knowledge and language ability, as well as a difficulty to adjust to the local culture, are major factors contributing to expatriate failure (Briscoe & Schuler; 2004; Dowling & Welch, 2005).
The present study is an exploratory study of the Cross Cultural Training in modern organisations by administering sample executive and non-executive respondents.

Keywords: Expatriates, cultural shock, host country

1. Introduction
Culture is what makes them what they are and their cultural backgrounds influence everything they do at all time and in all places (Boakari, 2004). Expatriates learn about and live their local cultures through the processes of socialization and acculturation that begin in childhood. Now, in order to be functional in a different culture, they need to appreciate its values, norms, beliefs, and behavior patterns and learn to adjust to them as much as possible. Proficiency in the language of the host country goes a long way to provide someone with the tools of cultural competence. The more the expatriate knows about the host culture (including speaking the local language), about its values and expectations, and the more proficient he/she is in the local language, the greater his/her chances of a successful job performance. All of this adds to a cross-cultural learning that will greatly facilitate his/her professional life while managing the business of the organization within the parameters of a different culture.

2. Objectives of cross cultural training
In broad terms, Cross cultural Training programs focus on the following broad categories:
* Managing and working with culturally diverse employees and colleagues
* Working and living internationally
* Designing and delivering products/services to culturally diverse customers

3. Cross cultural training tools and resources
The resources available for Cross-Cultural Training range from training games to psychometric cultural competence and adaptability assessments, from extensively researched models of culture to personal anecdotes.
The main tools used by cross-cultural trainers in order of frequency of use, as reported in a recent international study are models for understanding culture and cultural dynamics, case studies, exercises and activities, simulations and role plays, training games, profiles (country and culture), checklists and tip sheets, assessments of intercultural competence/readiness, intensive group sessions. Other resources and tools include field trips, language training,

Correspondence
H. Waseeha Firdose
Research Scholar, Department
of Management, Dravidian
University, Kuppam,
Andhra Pradesh, India

and contact with members of the host culture, storytelling, dance, art, music, journals and the literature of the culture.

4. Cross-cultural training: culture shock and its phases

- Culture shock is a state of disorientation and anxiety about not knowing how to behave in an unfamiliar culture. The cause of culture shock is the trauma people experience in new and different cultures, where they lose the familiar signs and cues that they had used to interact in daily life and where they must learn to cope with a vast array of new cultural cues and expectations.
- Honeymoon– when positive attitudes and expectations, excitement, and a tourist feeling prevail
- Irritation and hostility – the crisis stage when cultural differences result in problems at work, at home, and in daily living.
- Gradual adjustment – a period of recovery in which the "patient" gradually becomes able to understand and predict patterns of behavior, use the language, and deal with daily activities, and the family starts to accept their new life
- Biculturalism – the stage at which the manager and family members grow to accept and appreciate local people and practices and are able to function effectively in two cultures.
- Subculture shock occurs when a manager is transferred to another part of the country where there are cultural differences – essentially from what she or he perceives to be a "majority" culture to a "minority" one.

5. Post-arrival training

Culture-specific training, as well as other general information, is received in a post arrival
Induction Program, organized by the host organization. Contacts with current expatriates, who are already familiar with the country. "The Host Organization is responsible for arranging an induction program for the Assignee and accompanying family members upon arrival and for providing essential information related to working and living conditions in the country of service".

6. Primary data

The primary data for the purpose of the present study have been collected from the executive and non-executive respondents by administering well- structured questionnaires. In addition, personal interviewing of the respondents was undertaken to elicit in-depth information on the working and effects of performance management system.

7. Sample Units

- Expatriates on international assignments in the select MNCs including executive, employee and administrative personnel in the sample organizations working in Automotive, Heavy equipment manufacturing, Information technology, Telecommunication and Corporate Hospital are considered for the study.

The required sample expatriates were identified by using non-probability purposive sampling method.

Table 1: Types of sample MNCs and Response Rate

Sample Firms	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Automobile	42	57.52
Heavy equipment manufacturing	06	8.22
Information technology	06	8.22
Electrical	06	8.22
Corporate hospital	13	17.82
Total	73	100

(*Source*: Primary Data)

The composition of sample respondents is 57.52 percent from automobile, 8.22 percent each from heavy equipment manufacturing, information technology and electrical sector.

The remaining 17.82 percent of the respondent expatriates are from corporate hospital sector. All the organizations are multinational corporations.

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

Age in years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 30 years	34	46.6
30 to 35 years	13	17.8
36 to 40 years	11	15.1
41 to 45 years	04	5.5
Above 45 years	11	15.00
Total	73	100

(*Source*: Primary Data)

The spread of age among the expatriate respondents is towards especially the younger and the middle age brackets. 46.6 percent of them are less than 30 years old. The percentage of the age between 30 and 35 years old is 17.8.It

can be inferred that multinational organizations operating in Bangalore prefer to hire young expatriates or young expatriates are more interested in going abroad.

Table 3: Selection Criteria Used By Organizations

Sector	Values	1	2	3	4	5	6
Automobile	Mean	4.4762	4	3.9024	3.9512	3.6829	3.3
	N	42	41	41	41	41	40
	Std. Deviation	0.74041	1.20416	1.04415	0.8352	1.19246	1.11401

Heavy equipment manufacturing	Mean	4.8333	4.1667	4.3333	3.3333	1.3333	1.3333
	N	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Std. Deviation	0.40825	0.75277	0.8165	0.5164	0.5164	0.5164
Information Technology	Mean	4.3333	3.8333	3.6667	3.8333	3	3.3333
	N	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Std. Deviation	1.63299	0.98319	1.75119	0.75277	1.67332	1.63299
Electrical	Mean	4.8333	4	4.1667	4	3.5	3.6667
	N	6	6	6	6	6	6
	Std. Deviation	0.40825	0.63246	1.16905	1.09545	1.51658	0.8165
Corporate Hospital	Mean	3.1667	3.0909	3.2500	3.500	2.9091	3.4167
	N	13	11	12	10	11	12
	Std. Deviation	1.6967	1.13618	0.86603	1.08012	1.04447	0.79296
Total	Mean	4.3056	3.8571	3.8310	3.8261	3.2857	3.1857
	N	73	70	71	69	70	70
	Std. Deviation	1.12135	1.13298	1.09526	0.87374	1.35286	1.18313

Note
1. Special knowledge and skills required for the job
2. Motivation and willingness to go abroad
3. Personal characteristics including the ability to adopt a new culture
4. Language ability
5. Family situation
6. Cultural awareness

The study results do reveal some variation among the sectors (Automobile, Heavy equipment manufacturing, electrical, information technology, and corporate hospital) in the use of selection criteria. The only exception is "the special knowledge and skills required for the job (technical skills) which emerged as top most and most commonly used criteria. This is understandable, as technical managers have more influence in the selection process.

Proficiency in the language spoken in the destined country emerged as third important factor in only two sectors i.e. Automobile and information technology sectors, while in rest of cases language remained at fourth in rank.

Table 4: Personal characteristics

Fields		1	2	3	4	5
Automobile	MEAN	3.5366	3.875	3.9	3.775	3.6667
	N	41	40	40	40	42
	S.D	1.26684	1.09046	0.92819	0.8912	0.92833
Heavy equipment manufacturing	MEAN	4.8333	4.6667	4.5	3.1667	3.3333
	N	6	6	6	6	6
	S.D	0.40825	0.5164	0.54772	1.16905	0.8165
Information technology	MEAN	4	3.6	3.4	4	3.2
	N	5	5	5	5	5
	S.D	0.70711	0.89443	1.14018	1.41421	0.83666
Electrical	MEAN	4	4.3333	4.5	3.8333	4.1667
	N	6	6	6	6	6
	S.D	1.09545	0.8165	0.54772	0.75277	0.75277
Corporate hospital	MEAN	2.8333	3.1667	3.25	4	3.75
	N	12	12	12	12	12
	S.D	1.74946	1.02986	1.3568	1.12815	1.05529
Total	MEAN	3.6	3.8406	3.8551	3.7826	3.662
	N	70	69	69	69	71
	S.D	1.34488	1.06582	1.03292	0.98324	0.92495

Note
1. Bearing uncertainty and stress
2. Reacting flexibility to new things
3. To be objective and willing to accept recommendation from local
4. Willingness to accept local thoughts, behaviors and customs
5. Social skills

Ranks of these characteristics, in terms of their importance also vary from sector to sector. Variation is evident in Table 4.12 for example, in case of automobile sector, "to be objective and willing to accept recommendation from local", emerged as leading determinant. "Bearing uncertainty and stress" ranked top in case of respondents from heavy equipment manufacturing sector. It is understandable as the heavy equipment manufacturing sector has very difficult and risky work environment. Heavy equipment manufacturing workers have, mostly, to work in open environment and face harsh weathers. Vulnerabilities for the heavy equipment manufacturing workers are high. Secondly, security issues further add to the complexity of issue. Such situation creates stress for the heavy equipment manufacturing workers.

To be objective and willing to accept recommendation from local" has appeared as most important characteristic for the success of expatriates in the electrical sector. It is mainly because getting access to key information on timely basis is a key to their success. Obviously, it is not an easy job, especially when a person is working in any other country. In such situation, the expatriates have to heavily rely on the local recommendations. The same characteristic has also emerged as the leading determinant in case of automobile sector.

ANOVA results presented in the Table indicate that there exists a significant difference among sectors, in the following three characteristics:

- Bearing uncertainty and stress (PerChar1)
- Reacting flexibly to new things (PerChar2)
- Being objective and willing to accept recommendation from locals (PerChar3)

While difference in the importance of the following two characteristics is not significant:

- Willingness to accept local thoughts, behaviors and customs (PerChar4)
- Social skills (PerChar5)

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a complete comparative analysis between the employees who have received these training, and those who have not. Through detailed literature review, as mentioned before, it has been found out that the expatriates, who could get opportunity of having CCT, could be more successful than who have not received. According to the expatriates working in Bangalore and overseas, the effects of CCT are positive as majority of them agreed that expatriates who received CCT would show a higher level of performance than who had not.

Hence it is confirmed in this dissertation that a greatly extensive cross cultural management training program is valuable, if not vital, for effective cross cultural performance. Whereas on the other hand, it is also confirmed that a lack of cross cultural management training and development may contribute ultimately to a lack of international growth, success and performance.

8. Suggestions

During this selection process of expatriates, MNCs especially give importance to expatriates' technical competence not much to other personal characteristics. It discusses that it would be better if MNCs give emphasis not only to technical competence but to the other personal characteristics such as managerial ability, language ability, family factors, and etc. For example, language ability facilitates communication between both expatriates from parent country and expatriates from the host country. It helps them for closer interactions with each other. Family factor is so important that either it helps expatriates to be successful or failure. For instance, Family factor is the main factor for American expatriates to be failure during overseas missions Expatriates' success is one of the most critical issues for the overseas companies. Being objective & willing to accept recommendation from local people, and language ability are so important determinants that they should not be ignored by MNCs

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