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Dr. Saurabh Kant
Assistant Professor,
Department of Business
Management, Chaudhary
Ranbir Singh University,
Jind, Haryana, India

Dr. Kavetri Yadav
Corporate-HR, Amneal
Pharmaceuticals Pvt. Ltd.,
Ahmadabad, Gujarat, India

Effect of cultural attitude on technical and managerial competence of aspiring managers

Dr. Saurabh Kant and Dr. Kavetri Yadav

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between cultural attitude, technical and managerial competence of aspiring managers at a sample size of 1096 MBA final year students. The analysis part determines the relationship between cultural attitude, technical and managerial competence of aspiring managers with the help of correlation analysis and effect of cultural attitude on technical and managerial competence of aspiring managers with the help of regression analysis. The findings suggested that when individuals are ready to take more risk their technical and managerial competence increases automatically and if a person works in group than he/she will be conscious for becoming more technically and managerially competent. If a person wants more power than there will be direct enhancement in his technical competencies and if he want more masculine culture than he will be more technically competent. Power distance and masculine v/s feminine culture have no impact on managerial competence.

Keywords: Culture, cultural attitude, technical competence, managerial competence, uncertainty avoidance, individualism v/s collectivism, power distance, masculinity v/s femininity

Introduction

Prologue

Technical Competencies

Technical competence is the ability to perform the activities within an occupation to a defined standard, consistently and over time. To define technical competence it can be said that it is the ability of a person to do their job comparatively and on the same level as other professionals in their field.

Managerial Competencies

Managerial Competencies are the opportunity to manage the contribution of others from across an organization to achieve results. Managerial competence anchor, point out the willingness to integrate and coordinate other individuals' activities. People with this anchor have a tendency to be accountable and responsible for the results of a process or function.

Why We Use Competencies

Adopting a competency approach helps leaders achieve business goals, increase organizational productivity and improve employee job satisfaction by:

- Ensuring future leaders have the skills and capability to deliver the organization's vision and mission.
- Identifying and developing candidates for senior management roles without negatively impacting morale.
- Addressing the issue of similarity in age profiles and gaps in managerial capabilities.
- Competencies are behaviors that directly related to exercise effective control.
- Competency on a task requires a match between the operator's competencies and the competencies required to safely and effectively perform that task.

Culture

Culture has a huge influence on every individual. There are a lot of differences in the individuals who belongs to the different cultures while a number of differences can be seen in similar culture individuals also.

Correspondence
Dr. Saurabh Kant
Assistant Professor,
Department of Business
Management, Chaudhary
Ranbir Singh University,
Jind, Haryana, India

Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another". Geert Hofstede has led to four dimensions of culture as:

Power distance

Power distance reflects a culture’s attitude towards human inequality. In business organization, it can be explain with the help of manager subordinate relationship. Power distance is the degree to which less powerful parts of a society "accept and expect that power is distributed unequally." The organizations which support low power distance, there managers and subordinates have unrestricted relationships and possess near equal levels of power. Whereas the organizations which are in the favor of high power distance they will follow autocratic style of leadership and there will be high difference in the power and authorities of manager and the subordinates. India’s culture prefers high power distance inside its hierarchical organizations where decisions are made by high level management and assign to the lower level management for the completion.

Individualism vs. collectivism

The concept of individualism vs. collectivism deals with how individuals live their lives socially; whether they think more as themselves or collectively as a member of groups.

Individualism, as the name indeed suggests, describes the human characteristic of on a deep level thinking in a way where the individual self is prioritized rather than a social institution such as a family, workplace or society when compared to an individual who is more collectivistic. It is typical of an individual who is relatively individualistic to prioritize individual ambitions to a higher degree and strive to fulfill such ambitions. A more collectivistic individual would like to live in the group and always think about the betterment of all the other members of the group. The United States is one of the best examples of a country with culture in which individuals often are regarded more individualistic.

Masculinity vs. femininity

“Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct. Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.” “Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap. Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. From Hofstede (2001) ^[10], *Culture’s Consequences*, 2nd ed. p 297.

Traits of Masculinity / Femininity

	High Masculine	Low Masculine
social norms	ego oriented	relationship oriented
	money and things are important	quality of life and people are important
	live in order to work	work in order to live
politics and economics	economic growth high priority	environment protection high priority
	conflict solved through force	conflict solved through negotiation
religion	most important in life	less important in life
	only men can be priests	both men and women as priests
work	larger gender wage gap	smaller gender wage gap
	fewer women in management	more women in management
	preference for higher pay	preference for fewer working hours
family and school	traditional family structure	flexible family structure
	girls cry, boys don’t; boys fight, girls don’t	both boys and girls cry; neither fight
	failing is a disaster	failing a minor accident

Source: Hofstede (2001) ^[10], *Culture’s Consequences*, 2nd ed. p 297.

Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance deals with a society’s tolerance for uncertainty. It indicates to what extent a culture programs and its members feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security. Uncertainty Avoidance reflects the level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within the society. High uncertainty avoidance shows a low tolerance for uncertainty and vice versa.

Literature review

There are a number of studies which are related to the cultural attitude. A large number of researches have been done by a number of researchers for showing the relationship of cultural attitude and various types of skills and competencies. The researchers can refer the study of Luo *et al.* (2013) ^[11] who examined how collectivism vs. individualism form of cultural background affects motor

skill learning in a dyadic cooperative learning environment. Twenty college students from a Midwestern university participated in the study. Among all the respondents half were from an individualistic culture (USA) and the other half were from a collectivistic culture (China). In the study, the participants from these two backgrounds established different interaction levels and behavioral predispositions in the cooperative learning of motor skills. Both participants of individualistic background as well as collectivistic background had made significant progress in the post-exercise as compared to the pre-exercise, which confirmed the benefits of cooperative learning on motor skill learning. Nevertheless, the progress made by the participants of individualistic background was statistically larger than that made by the participants of collectivistic background. In the same concern Pietersen (2005) ^[13] investigated that comparison of Western (WH) and African humanism (AH) is overlapping and complementary approaches to human nature in work organizations. The extant literature is theoretically, empirically and methodologically not enough, and fails to consider 21st century employment realities.

Shortcomings of WH and AH are still presented. A dynamic and mutuality approach to human nature, that includes both self-assertive (individualist) and self transcending (collectivist) tendencies, is briefly outlined. It provides a more comprehensive approach to humanism, for better understanding of human behavior at work. Further proceeding by the study of Mukherjee *et al.* (2012) [12] provided a model of organizational identification for virtual team workers and inspected the role of cultural dimensions in a virtual setting. Specifically, it poses individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance as potential situational contingencies that may affect the determinants of an organizational identification relationship in a virtual work setting. The proposed research framework delineates how cultural dimensions relate to virtual work-associated individual (interpersonal trust, need for affiliation) and environmental (spatial and cultural dispersion, ICT-enabled communication) factors and organizational identification. Several testable propositions emerge. They provided a foundation for empirical studies that examined the linkages among organizational identification, virtual work, and environment-related factors and cultural variables. This study has particular implications for managing virtual teams, as well as specific suggestions for a typology of virtual team members. The typology supports a consideration of expected levels of organizational identification, depending on virtual team member types.

Fock *et al.* (2013) [15] evaluated the effects of power distance on these three types of empowerment as discretion empowerment, psychological empowerment, and leadership empowerment. This survey was conducted in Canada (a society low in power distance) and in China (a society high in power distance). Results showed that the effect of discretion empowerment on employee satisfaction was less pronounced in China. However, the effect of the leadership empowerment on employee satisfaction via the competence aspect of psychological empowerment was found to be more pronounced in Canada, a society lower in power distance. These conclusions at the cultural level were also confirmed at the psychological level. We thus advocate that empowerment remains an advantageous strategy to organizations in both societies and individuals high and low in power distance, depending on the type of empowerment involved. In the same direction Simpson (2004) [16] presented the findings of a research project on the implications of men's nontraditional career choices for their experiences within the organization and for gender identity. The research is based on 40 in-depth interviews with male workers from four occupational groups: librarian-ship, cabin crew, nurses and primary school teachers. Results suggest a typology of male workers in female dominated occupations: seekers (who actively seek the career), finders (who find the occupation in the process of making general career decisions) and settlers (who settle into the career after periods of time in mainly male dominated occupations). Men benefit from their minority status through assumptions of enhanced leadership (the assumed authority effect), by being given differential treatment (the special consideration effect) and being associated with a more careerist attitude to work (the career effect). At the same time, they feel comfortable working with women (the zone of comfort effect). Despite this comfort, men adopt a variety of strategies to re-establish a masculinity that has been undermined by the 'feminine' nature of their work. These

include re-labeling, status enhancement and distancing from the feminine. The dynamics of maintaining and reproducing masculinities within the non-traditional work setting are discussed in the light of recent theorizing around gender, masculinity and work.

Research plan

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to examine whether dimensions of cultural attitude (Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism v/s Collectivism, Power Distance and Masculinity v/s Femininity) have any effect on technical and managerial competence of aspiring managers or not. The major objectives of the study were as under:

1. To study the relationship between dimensions of cultural attitude and technical competence of aspiring managers.
2. To examine the effect of dimensions of cultural attitude on technical competence of aspiring managers.
3. To study the relationship between dimensions of cultural attitude and managerial competence of aspiring managers.
4. To examine the effect of dimensions of cultural attitude on managerial competence of aspiring managers.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The sample consisted of 1096 management students from Northern India who were at the last stage (year) of a two-year full time MBA programme. In the present study simple random sampling technique is used for data collection.

Data Collection Instruments

The present research was based on primary data which was collected with the help of well-structured questionnaires. Two different structured tools were used for achieving the objectives of this research. First tool used was Career Orientation Inventory (COI) developed by Delong (1982) [4] which was based up on 44 statements representing eight types of career anchors i.e. technical competence, autonomy, service, identity, variety, managerial competence, security and creativity (the focus of this research is based up on only two career anchors that are technical and managerial competence). Second tool used was developed by Hofstede (1980) [6] which consisting of 25 statements representing four dimensions of cultural attitude as uncertainty avoidance, individualism v/s collectivism, power distance and masculinity v/s femininity.

Analysis of Data

The data collected firstly coded and analyzed with the help of SPSS which is most useful statistical package. Tables and various statistical tools were used for analysis in accordance to the objectives of the study. This research is based up on various statistical tools such as Mean, SD, correlation and regression.

Results & discussion

Analysis for Measuring the Relationship between Dimensions of Cultural Attitude and Technical Competence of Aspiring Managers

Table-1 explains the relationship between technical competence and the dimensions of cultural attitude that are uncertainty avoidance, individualism v/s collectivism, power distance and masculinity v/s femininity with the help

of correlation. It is very clear from Table-1 that the pearson correlation value of technical competence with uncertainty avoidance comes out to be 0.45 at a significant value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. This further implies that if there will be any change whether positive or negative in uncertainty avoidance of any individual there will be a same change occur in technical competence. This further implies that if there will be any change whether positive or negative in technical competence of any individual there will be a same

change occur in uncertainty avoidance. It can be seen in Table-1 that the pearson correlation value of technical competence with individualism v/s collectivism comes out to be 0.36 at a significant value of 0.00. It means that there is a positive relationship between technical competence and individualism v/s collectivism. Which further means that if there will be any change whether positive or negative occur in technical competence of any individual there will be a same change occur in individualism v/s collectivism.

Table 1: Relationship between Dimensions of Cultural Attitude and Technical Competence of Aspiring Managers

Correlations		Uncertainty Avoidance	Individualism v/s Collectivism	Power Distance	Masculinity v/s Femininity
Technical Competence	Pearson Correlation	0.45	0.36	0.17	0.20
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*

*Significance Level at 0.05

It is clearly stated in Table-1 that the pearson correlation value of technical competence with power distance comes out to be 0.17 at a significant value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. It explains that there is a positive relationship between technical competence and power distance. This further stated that if there will be any change whether positive or negative in technical competence of any individual there will be a same change occur in power distance. It can be seen in Table-1 that the pearson correlation value of technical competence with masculinity v/s femininity comes out to be 0.20 at a significant value of 0.00. It means that there is a positive relationship between technical competence and masculinity v/s femininity. Which further means that if there will be any change whether positive or negative occur in technical competence of any individual there will be a same change occur in masculinity v/s femininity.

Analysis for Measuring the Relationship between Dimensions of Cultural Attitude and Managerial Competence of Aspiring Managers

Table-2 explains the relationship between managerial competence and the dimensions of cultural attitude that are uncertainty avoidance, individualism v/s collectivism, power distance and masculinity v/s femininity with the help of correlation. It is very clear from Table-2 that the pearson correlation value of managerial competence with uncertainty avoidance comes out to be 0.53 at a significant value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. It implies that there is a positive relationship between managerial competence and uncertainty avoidance. This further implies that if there will be any change whether positive or negative in uncertainty avoidance of any individual there will be a same change occur in managerial competence. It can be seen in Table-2 that the pearson correlation value of managerial competence with individualism v/s collectivism comes out to be 0.36 at a significant value of 0.00. It means that there is a positive relationship between managerial competence and individualism v/s collectivism. Which further means that if there will be any change whether positive or negative occur in individualism v/s collectivism of any individual there will be a same change occur in technical competence.

Table 2: Relationship between Dimensions of Cultural Attitude and Managerial Competence of Aspiring Managers

Correlations		Uncertainty Avoidance	Individualism v/s Collectivism	Power Distance	Masculinity v/s Femininity
Technical Competence	Pearson Correlation	0.53	0.37	0.04	0.08
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00*	0.00*	0.17	0.01*

*Significance Level at 0.05

It is clearly stated in Table-2 that the pearson correlation value of managerial competence with power distance comes out to be 0.17 at a significant value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. It explains that there is a positive relationship between managerial competence and power distance. This further stated that if there will be any change whether positive or negative in power distance of any individual there will be a same change occur in technical competence. It can be seen in Table-2 that the pearson correlation value of managerial competence with masculinity v/s femininity comes out to be 0.20 at a significant value of 0.00. It means that there is a positive relationship between managerial competence and masculinity v/s femininity. Which further means that if there will be any change whether positive or negative occur in masculinity v/s femininity of any individual there will be a same change occur in technical competence.

Analysis for Measuring the Effect of Dimensions of Cultural Attitude on Technical Competence of Aspiring Managers

Further, Table-3 rendered by model summary of multiple regression analysis showing impact of independent variables (i.e. Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism v/s Collectivism, Power Distance and Masculinity v/s Femininity) on dependent variable (i.e. Technical Competence). The examination has been carried out at 5% significance level. To better understand the impact following model has been derived.

Estimated Regression Models are:

$$y_1 = b_0 + b_1 \text{ Uncertainty Avoidance} + b_2 \text{ Individualism v/s Collectivism} + b_3 \text{ Power Distance} + b_4 \text{ Masculinity v/s Femininity}$$

Where, y_1 - Dependant Variables (i.e. Technical Competence).

b_0 - y Intercept

b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4 . Slopes of corresponding independent variables i.e. Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism v/s Collectivism, Power Distance and Masculinity v/s Femininity.

For measuring the interaction between technical competence and dimensions of cultural attitude of aspiring managers the ‘Stepwise’ method of regression has been used. The stepwise method adds predictor variables to the regression that best correlate with the dependent variable, and subtracts predictor variables that least correlate. In this way the researcher generate a regression equation using only the predictor variables that make a significant contribution to the prediction.

Regression Model

Table-3, explains regression models of dependent variable with the independent variables with the help of ‘Stepwise’ method of regression. The value of R indicates the coefficient of correlation between the dependent variable and independent variables and technical competence with independent variables are found to be uncertainty avoidance=0.45, masculinity v/s femininity=0.36, individualism v/s collectivism=0.20, power distance=0.17. Furthermore, value of R Square (coefficient of determination) shows the effect of independent variables (Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism v/s Collectivism, Power Distance and Masculinity v/s Femininity) on

dependent variable (Technical Competence). The value of R Square is also considered as a goodness of fit for multiple regression equation (Anderson *et al.*, 2011)^[1] and is noted as 0.20 in case of uncertainty avoidance which means that 20% variance in ‘technical competence’ is explained by uncertainty avoidance, 0.24 in case of masculinity v/s femininity which means that 24% variance in ‘technical competence’ is explained by masculinity v/s femininity, 0.25 in case of individualism v/s collectivism which means that 25% variance in ‘technical competence’ is explained by individualism v/s collectivism and 0.26 in case of power distance which means that 26% variance in ‘technical competence’ is explained by power distance. The value of error term (standard error of estimate) has been noted as uncertainty avoidance=0.42, masculinity v/s femininity=0.41, individualism v/s collectivism=0.41 and power distance=0.40. In addition to regression analysis, overall ANOVA results indicates that $F_{.05}$ (Uncertainty Avoidance) =280.08 with a p-value of 0.00, $F_{.05}$ (Masculinity v/s Femininity) =170.78 with a p-value of 0.00, $F_{.05}$ (Individualism v/s Collectivism) =122.13 with a p-value of 0.00 and $F_{.05}$ (Power Distance) =93.74 with a p-value of 0.01 which shows that a significant effect of independent variables on dependant variable i.e. ‘technical competence’.

Table 3: Effect of Cultural Attitude on Technical Competence of Aspiring Managers

Model	R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error	ANOVA		Un-Standardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
					F	Sig.	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Technical Competence	Uncertainty Avoidance	0.45	0.20	0.20	0.42	280.08	0.00*	0.22	0.02	0.39	12.68	0.00*
	Masculinity v/s Femininity	0.49	0.24	0.24	0.41	170.78	0.00*	0.07	0.02	0.12	3.74	0.00*
	Individualism v/s Collectivism	0.50	0.25	0.25	0.41	122.13	0.00*	0.08	0.02	0.12	3.83	0.00*
	Power Distance	0.51	0.26	0.25	0.40	93.74	0.00*	0.05	0.02	0.08	2.58	0.01*

*Significance Level at 0.05

With the help of Table-3 models of the multiple regression analysis for ‘uncertainty avoidance, individualism v/s collectivism, power distance and masculinity v/s femininity’ as independent variables and ‘technical competence’ as dependent variables can be expressed as follow:

$$y_1 = 1.34 + 0.22 \text{ Uncertainty Avoidance} + 0.07 \text{ Masculinity v/s Femininity} + 0.08 \text{ Individualism v/s Collectivism} + 0.05 \text{ Power Distance}$$

The slope of the regression model (y_1) for uncertainty avoidance, individualism v/s collectivism, power distance and masculinity v/s femininity is positive, implying that these four independent variables have positive impact on the career anchor ‘technical competence’. Furthermore, p-value in all the case is less than 0.05 so we can say that independent variables affect dependent variable significantly.

Analysis for Measuring the Effect of Dimensions of Cultural Attitude on Managerial Competence of Aspiring Managers

Further, Table-4 rendered by model summary of multiple regression analysis showing impact of independent variables

(i.e. Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism v/s Collectivism, Power Distance and Masculinity v/s Femininity) on dependent variable (i.e. Managerial Competence). The examination has been carried out at 5% significance level. To better understand the impact following model has been derived.

Estimated Regression Models are:

$$y_2 = b_0 + b_1 \text{ Uncertainty Avoidance} + b_2 \text{ Individualism v/s Collectivism} + b_3 \text{ Power Distance} + b_4 \text{ Masculinity v/s Femininity}$$

Where, y_2 - Dependant Variables (i.e. Managerial Competence).

b_0 - y Intercept

b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4 . Slopes of corresponding independent variables i.e. Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism v/s Collectivism, Power Distance and Masculinity v/s Femininity.

Table 4: Effect of Cultural Attitude on Managerial Competence of Aspiring Managers

Model		R	R Square	Adj. R Square	Std. Error	ANOVA		Un-Standardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
						F	Sig.	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Managerial Competence	Uncertainty Avoidance	0.53	0.28	0.28	0.43	426.91	0.00*	0.29	0.02	0.46	15.58	0.00*
	Individualism v/s Collectivism	0.54	0.30	0.30	0.43	230.08	0.00*	0.10	0.02	0.14	4.92	0.00*

*Significance Level at 0.05

Regression Model

The value of R for second dependent variable i.e. managerial competence with independent variables are found to be as uncertainty avoidance=0.53 and individualism v/s collectivism=0.37. In this the third and fourth independent variable (power distance and masculinity v/s femininity) excluded automatically by stepwise method of regression because power distance has no significant relationship with managerial competence and not has any significant effect but masculinity v/s femininity has significant relationship with managerial competence and not has any significant effect. Furthermore, value of R Square (coefficient of determination) shows the effect of independent variables (Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism v/s Collectivism and Masculinity v/s Femininity) on dependent variable (managerial competence). The value of R Square is noted as 0.28 in case of uncertainty avoidance which means that 28% variance in 'managerial competence' is explained by uncertainty avoidance and 0.30 in case of individualism v/s collectivism which means that 30% variance in 'managerial competence' is explained by individualism v/s collectivism. The value of error term (standard error of estimate) has been noted as uncertainty avoidance=0.43 and individualism v/s collectivism=0.43. In addition to regression analysis, overall ANOVA results indicates that $F_{0.05}$ (Uncertainty Avoidance) =426.91 with a p-value of 0.00 and $F_{0.05}$ (Individualism v/s Collectivism) =230.08 with a p-value of 0.00 which shows that a significant effect of independent variables on dependant variable i.e. 'managerial competence'.

The multiple regression analysis for 'uncertainty avoidance and individualism v/s collectivism' as independent variables and 'managerial competence' as dependent variables can be expressed as follow:

$$y_6 = 1.59 + 0.29 \text{ Uncertainty Avoidance} + 0.10 \text{ Individualism v/s Collectivism}$$

The slope of the regression model (y_6) for uncertainty avoidance and individualism v/s collectivism is positive, implying that these two independent variables have positive impact on the career anchor 'managerial competence'. Furthermore, p-value in all the cases is 0.00 which is less than 0.05 so we can say that independent variables significantly affect dependent variable.

Conclusion & discussion

This research explains that all the independent variables directly affect the dependent variable. On the basis of correlation analysis and regression analysis it is observed by the researcher that all the independent variables that are uncertainty avoidance, individualism v/s collectivism, power distance and masculinity v/s femininity significantly affect technical competence or vice versa as far as this

sample is concerned. On the basis of results of the study following findings can be drawn:

- When the respondents become more risk taker than their technical and managerial competencies goes higher.
- In the case of masculine and feminine culture, when there will be more masculine culture in the organization the respondents will become technically competent.
- When their will be high power distance in the organization then the technical competence of the respondents take a positive move and goes higher. Then there will be proper gap between the supervisor and the subordinate that can be good for positive move in technical competencies.

In the case of individualistic and collectivist culture, when there will be more collectivist culture in the organization the respondents will become technically as well as managerially competent.

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