



Intercultural HRM: Challenges for effective Business Practice

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Abstract

With the dawn of globalization, the ventures in our country are increasingly diverse and multicultural. This paper analysis the various challenges which are emerging in the field of intercultural HRM. The managers today face a whole new array of changes like globalization, technological advances and changes in political and legal environment along with changes in Information technology. This has lead to a paradigm shift in the of roles professional personnel. The great challenge to the professionals of this field is to attract, retain and nurture talented employees. These challenges can overcome through cross cultural training, technological and informational training of HR people and motivation of employees through various techniques. Cross- Cultural Communication among the systems, employees have a vital role in it.

Keywords: intercultural HRM, challenges, globalization, cross-cultural communication.

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Introduction

Cultural and environmental multiplicity is a key concern in intercultural HRM. Haley (1999) in his study remarked, "In cultures where people are emphasized, it is the quality of interpersonal relationships which is important. In cultures where ideologies are emphasized, sharing common beliefs is more important than group membership. In cultures where action is emphasized, what is done is more important than what is said". In international organizations, effective cross-cultural communication enables businesses to run more effectively and successfully. Now days in this high-spirited world, communication is essential for the successful performance. Understanding cultural differences are some of the considerations employees of the organization should have while dealing with individuals of various cultures. Often, business agreements are failures because the parties involved either did not take the time to learn about each other's cultures or they are short of time to understand and interact.

As far as managers of the organizations are concerned, effective communication is essential for better performance of the important and basic functions of management: planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling. It helps to perform the managers' jobs and responsibilities and serves as a foundation for planning. The essential information is communicated to the managers who in-turn communicates to employees so as to implement it. Organizing requires valuable communication with others to learn about their job tasks. Similarly managers, who are leaders, must communicate efficiently with their subordinates so as to achieve the team goals. Finally, the function of controlling is not possible without clear written and oral communication of actions. The importance of communication in an organization could be beneficial to promote motivation, help in decision-making, alter individual's attitude, help in socializing and assist in controlling the process of one's behaviour

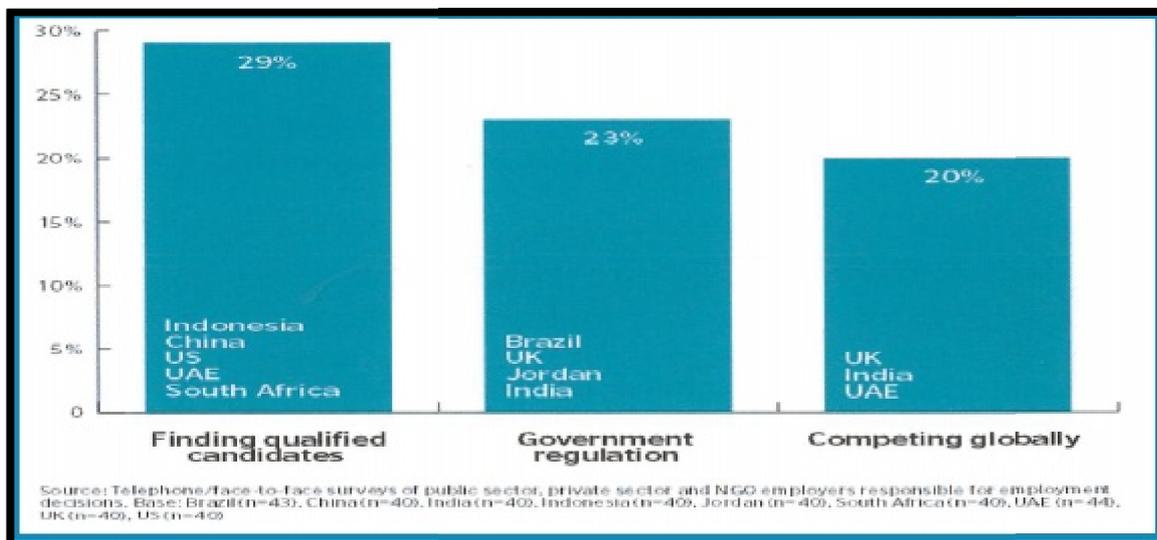
Owing to international economic authenticities which are pouring continuous change in the workplace, employers' needs and demands are constantly shifting. While formal qualifications and traditional skills remain important, for positions that require interaction with individuals of different cultural backgrounds, employees need to have the capacity of dealing that transcends national and cultural borders.

Challenges to Intercultural HRM:

Competing with globalization: Globalization is the process of denationalization of markets, politics and legal systems i.e. the use of the so -called global economy. Globalization refers to an extension beyond national borders of the same market forces that have operated for centuries at all levels of human economic activity (village markets, urban industries, or financial centers). It means that world trade and financial markets are becoming more integrated. Growing internationalization of business has its impact on inter cultural HRM in terms of problems of unfamiliar laws, languages, practices, competitions, attitudes, management styles, work ethics etc. HR managers have a challenge to deal with more functions, more heterogeneous functions and more involvement in employee's personal life.

Managing the workforce diversity: According to Thomas (1992), dimensions of workplace diversity include, but are not limited to: age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, religious beliefs, parental status, and work experience. The future success of any organizations relies on the ability to manage a diverse body of talent that can bring innovative ideas, perspectives and views to their work. The challenge and problems faced of workplace diversity can be turned into a strategic organizational asset if an organization is able to capitalize on this melting pot of diverse talents. With the mixture of talents of diverse

cultural backgrounds, genders, ages and lifestyles, an organization can respond to business opportunities more rapidly and creatively, especially in the global arena, which must be one of the important organizational goals to be attained. More importantly, if the organizational environment does not support diversity broadly, one risks losing talent to competitors. This is especially true for multinational companies (MNCs) who have operations on a global scale and employ people of different countries, ethical and cultural backgrounds. Thus, a HR manager needs to be mindful and may employ a Think Global, Act Local approach in most circumstances. With a population of only four million people and the nations strive towards high technology and knowledge-based economy; foreign talents are lured to share their expertise in these areas. Thus, many local HR managers have to undergo cultural-based Human Resource Management training to further their abilities to motivate a group of professional that are highly qualified but culturally diverse. Furthermore, the HR professional must assure the local professionals that these foreign talents are not a threat to their career advancement. In many ways, the effectiveness of workplace diversity management is dependent on the skilful balancing act of the HR manager. According to the survey, as shown in Figure below the most pressing business challenges by human resource professionals are mainly finding appropriate qualified candidates, government regulation and competing globally.



Source: <https://www.britishcouncil.org>

Intercultural Communication: As Richard W. Brislin (1993) indicates that “not only are we socialized into a cultural context but culture continues to influence our interaction, our work, our gender expectation, and even our health”. When cultural variables play a primary part in the communication process, the result is intercultural

communication which involves skills that facilitate relationships, breaks down barriers, and creates foundations for new visions. Personal style affects our first impression, which influences intercultural communication. Intercultural communication involves fundamental attitudes toward groups and relationships. Positive intercultural attitudes lead to adaptive, functional outcomes such as friendship, peace, increased understanding, and lasting bonds. The attitudes and accompanying communication behaviours emerge as openness, affirmation, questioning, supporting, listening, offering feedback, asserting, and suggesting. Intercultural communication skills at the workplace are nevertheless an inevitable skill for an employee in an organisation. It provides business value and helps to rule out risk. Communication is a symbolic process by which people create shared meanings. Intercultural communication occurs when the people with different cultural perspectives and values creates shared resources. It helps to build trust with each other and develop relationships with new clients that carry significant monetary value for employers. Figure 3 below from British Council research studies on culture at work explains the business value of intercultural skills by sector. Undoubtedly, employees with intercultural skills bring not only the positive impact on brand and reputation but also add the value to these skills in terms of efficiency and in winning new clients.

Technological advances: The biggest challenge for HR professionals is that in order for being adaptive workplace to hasty technological transformation which persuade the nature of work and generate obsolescence advanced technology has tended to reduce the number of jobs that require little skill and to increase the number of jobs that require considerable skill, a shift we refer to as moving from touch labor to knowledge work. There is new-new working technology. In this situation organizations have to change it technology. New technology creates unemployment and in other hand, there comes scarcity of skilled manpower. Like this, technological change brings difficulties and challenges in organization.

Conclusion

Intercultural HRM reflects the past and shapes the future. The key to success is through selecting the way that best fits the organization's culture. Comprehending a culture can help businesses anticipate potential challenges or barriers while adoption of new policies and processes before efforts break down. HR 's involvement in organizational communication is very important. Cultural differences among people while interacting may cause communication problems, which would be a hindrance to the development of organizations. However, it can be ruled out if the culture of others is understood. It is perhaps most important for HR and employees to realize that a basic understanding of cultural diversity is the key to effective cross-cultural communication that is an inevitable tool to reach the goal of the organization. Not only



that, but for an effective organizational climate, recognizing the importance of cultural differences helps managers to understand their subordinates, international partners, competitors and stakeholders, to ultimately help improve their managerial skills and also the advancement of the organization.

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