

CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING AS CRITICAL FACTOR OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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This study analyses cultural awareness in the workplace. It is important for employees to be cultural aware because they may have to interact with people from other countries. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) examines individuals' abilities to interact with people with different cultural backgrounds. Cross-cultural training is examined as a factor that may affect individuals' CQ. Hospitality industry was chosen because of the diversity of employees, customers or owners. Because of the lack of research on this area, the paper contributes to the emerging need for cultural awareness in the workplace by examining cross-cultural training as a critical factor of CQ.

Keywords: Cultural Intelligence; cross-cultural training; hospitality.

JEL Classification: *L83, M1, O1*

INTRODUCTION

Cross-Cultural Training and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) in the Tourism Industry

Studies on cross-cultural training increased in the 1990s. During 70s and 80s, cross-cultural training in organisations was scarce because it was considered ineffective and there was no intention to invest on it and international management was in early stage that time (Black and Mendenhall, 1990:114). In 1990, Black and Mendenhall proposed a cross-cultural training framework that offered opportunities for further research. Since then, scholars have proposed models of cultural diversity training (Sue, 1991; Landis and Bhagat, 1996), the effects of cross-



cultural training to adjustment (Eschbach et al, 2001; Caligiuri et al., 2001; Takeuchi et al., 2002; Waxin and Pannaccio, 2005; Puck et al., 2008; Sobre-Denton and Hart, 2008), pre-departure training (Celaya and Swift, 2006; Hurn, 2007), pre-departure and post-arrival training (Selmer et al., 1998), the effectiveness of cross-cultural training for expatriates (Kealey and Protheroe, 1996; Vance and Paik, 2002; Waxin, 2004).

There are few studies in cross-cultural training in the hotel industry. Dewald and Self (2008) examined the effects of cross-cultural training in expatriate hotel managers in China. Another study conducted by Gamio and Sneed (1992) proposed a model of factors that affect cross-cultural training practices in the hotel industry. The factors are diversity in ownership, employees and clients. Because of the culturally diversity in the hotel industry there are different customer needs (Welch et al., 1988 as cited in Gamio and Sneed, 1992:14). Therefore, it is essential for hospitality employees to be culturally intelligent.

Individuals' cultural awareness can be measured by Cultural Intelligence (CQ) which is a contemporary topic in cross-cultural studies (De Cieli, 2006). CQ analyses individuals' ability in cross-cultural situations at metacognitive, cognitive, behavioural and motivational level (Ang et al., 2007). CQ can assist in an effective international work because individuals who show high levels of CQ can identify cultural differences and avoid cultural misunderstanding (Earley et al., 2006).

LITERATURE REVIEW - ANALYSIS

Cross-Cultural Training and CQ

Cross-cultural training programmes have been classified in several categories. Tung (1981 as cited in Waxin and Panaccio, 2005:53) classified training programs in five sequential categories: educational, cultural, language, sensitivity training and field experience. The type of the assignment, cultural distance, and interpersonal communication between the manager and the locals determine which of them should be used. Gertsen (1990 as cited in Waxin and Panaccio, 2005:53) identified four categories of training. One way is to train individuals in schools and universities. The other way of training is by simulation. Focus on the notion of a culture is another way of training. Finally, the aim to make individuals competent to one specific culture is another way of cross-cultural training.

According to Kealey and Protheroe (1996:149-159), there are four types of intercultural training. One type of training is the one that

includes information about practical issues such as living conditions. Another type of training is the one which provides information on the area such as economical, political or historical facts. The training about traditions, values or customs of a country focuses on developing interpersonal skills and it is a third way of training. Finally, there is training that educates individuals on how to adjust their professional and personal styles to the local culture. It may include information on how to cope with the stress of relocation, how to deal with people from different countries or how to develop partnership skills.

Baumgarten (2000 as cited in Celaya and Swift, 2006:232) divides pre-departure cultural training in two broad categories. The first category includes experiences or trips in the field, meetings with experienced international staff, training in the job and assignments in a sub-cultural group of one's home country. The second category includes simulations, role playing, cultural assimilators, methods that modify behaviour and classroom activities.

Gugykunst et al. (1996) proposed that cultural training should include two issues. The first is the training methods which were classified as didactic and experimental. Didactic training is a lecture or discussion while experimental training is experiences in a field. The second issue is the content of intercultural training which was classified as culture-general and culture-specific approach. There is no agreement about the definition of culture-general approach but the culture-specific approach is training for a specific culture.

Black and Mendenhall (1990) proposed that cross-cultural training will enhance cross-cultural skill development, adjustment and performance in a foreign country. When individuals attend cross-cultural training, they rehearse behaviours in a cognitive or behavioural way and therefore they have the skills to imitate behaviours. Moreover, if adequate behaviours are executed, the better the cross-cultural adjustment. Cross-cultural training can inform which behaviours are suitable for each occasion. Consequently, cross-culturally trained individuals will have greater ability to imitate appropriate behaviours. Furthermore, individuals' performance will increase because of cross-cultural training.

Black and Mendenhall (1990) after reviewing the existed literature in cross-cultural training, they concluded that cross-cultural training has a positive impact on cross-cultural effectiveness. They proposed a theoretical framework for cross-cultural training using social learning theory. Black et al. (1991) provided a framework for international adjustment by studying both domestic and international adjustment. The conclusions of Black and Mendenhall (1990) and Black et al. (1991) are

that cross-cultural training is linked to: self-confidence and thoughts of well-being, development of behaviours adjusted to the host country and improvement of interactions with locals (Waxin and Panaccio, 2005:54).

Cognitive CQ is about understanding other cultures and adjusting one's behaviour to them. Behavioural CQ measures if the appropriate behaviours are applied in cross-cultural situations (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008: 6-7). Therefore, cross-cultural training will have positive effect on cognitive and behavioural CQ.

Proposition 1: Cross-cultural training will be positively related to cognitive CQ.

Proposition 2: Cross-cultural training will be positively related to behavioural CQ.

Duration of Cross-Cultural training and Cultural Intelligence

Cross-cultural training may last less than a week, one to four weeks or over a month (Eschbach et al., 2001:274). The training that lasts less than a week provides brief information about the area and the culture. It may also include the teaching of some languages phrases. Training that lasts from one week to four weeks makes individuals aware of other culture and it may include moderate language training. Individuals, who receive training over a month, are taught before departure and after their arrival to the host country. According to social learning theory, the last type of training has high rigor (ibid: 274-275).

Blue and Harum (2003:78) noticed that systematic training is not provided to employees in four hotels in Southampton. Celaya and Swift (2006:238) in their research on US managers in Mexico, one of the dimensions they examined was the length of pre-departure training. The majority of US managers were trained only for one day. Gudykunst et al. (1996) argued that the minimum time necessary to conduct an intercultural program is three days.

Puck et al. (2008) examined the impact of pre-departure cross-cultural training on expatriate adjustment. The results failed to confirm that participation in cross-cultural training programmes, the length of the program and the comprehensibility of the program will have an impact on adjustment. However, Black and Mendenhall (1990) have shown that cross-cultural training has a positive impact on adjustment.

Cross-cultural training should start before the departure of the employees and continue after their arrival (Selmer et al., 1998: 835). Pre-departure training should provide information about initial adjustment

problems. Employees therefore will have realistic expectations about the first social difficulties. Gudykunst et al. (1996:77) argued that specific kinds of training should be conducted at specific times. Training for survival needs should be conducted closely prior departure and after arrival. Training for adjusting to a foreign country should be given some months before departure and some months after arrival. If the training starts several months before departure, trainees will not be concerned very much about it. They will start concerning about their communication effectiveness and their social life after arrival when their survival needs are solved in the host country.

The duration of cross-cultural training is critical for CQ. Short-term cross-cultural training can result in alterations at cognitive, affective and behavioural level (Gudykunst et al., 1996 as cited in Caligiuri and Tarique, 2006:313). Individuals who have received short-term intercultural training will show understanding about the social and business perspectives of the foreign country which is related to cognitive aspect of intercultural training. Adaptive behaviour to the foreign culture in order effective communication to be achieved is the behavioural part. On the other hand, long-term cross-cultural training affects adjustment and should be a general goal of international assignments (ibid). Therefore, long-term cross-cultural training will be critical for CQ because it will affect positively all facets of CQ.

Proposition 3: Long-term cross-cultural training will be positively related to metacognitive CQ

Proposition 4: Long-term cross-cultural training will be positively related to cognitive CQ

Proposition 5: Long-term cross-cultural training will be positively related to behavioural CQ

Proposition 6: Long-term cross-cultural training will be positively related to motivational CQ.

Language Training and CQ

Language training is important for communications. Language training can lead to cross-cultural competency (Martin and Harrell, 1996:320). Individuals with knowledge of the local language show interest to learn about the other culture. It also allows them to be polite during their discussions (Eschbach et al., 2001:273). Knowledge of the local language enables individuals to be independent and feel comfortable (Martin and Harrell, 1996:320). The learning of languages strengthens

cognitive flexibility and creativity (Segalowitz, 1980 as cited in Blake et al., 1996:168) and it improves intelligence (Lambert, 1992 as cited in Blake et al., 1996:168).

The importance of foreign languages in the tourism sector has been highlighted by Gamio and Sneed (1992). In their survey in U.S. hotel-motel industry showed that foreign languages are necessary job requirements. They are essential for supervisors, managers and nonsupervisory jobs. Leaders in international environment should be given incentives to learn foreign languages in order to be considered cosmopolitans (Ng et al., 2009). However, the dominant language spoken in the hotel sector is English (Blue and Harum, 2003: 77).

Blue and Harum (2003) name the language used in the hospitality sector as 'hospitality language'. It is formal language and is held between the hotel staff and the guests. In the tourism industry the language skills needed, are necessary for the following reasons: to address a person, to provide information, to answer questions, to use prompts and gestures, to deal with demanding customers and complaints.

Shannon and Begley (2008) treated language acquisition as one of the antecedents of CQ. It was assumed that language skills would be positively related to cognitive CQ and behavioural CQ. Cognitive CQ was chosen because individuals with knowledge of other languages will be able to "...validate assumptions about behaviours that reflect different cultural practices" (Shannon and Begley, 2008:43). Behavioural CQ was selected because multilingual people would be able to apply verbal and nonverbal behaviour. However, the results showed positive relationship between cognitive CQ and language skills but failed to support the positive relationship between behavioural CQ and language skills (ibid). The researchers did not measure motivational CQ though. As mentioned by Ang and Van Dyne (2008:6): "Motivational CQ is a critical component of CQ because it is a source of drive". For example, a Polish employee who has good command of French language will be more likely to initiate a conversation with a French customer in contrast to a Polish employee who does not speak French. Therefore, language skills will affect positively cognitive CQ and motivational CQ.

Proposition 7: Language skills will be positively related to cognitive CQ.

Proposition 8: Language skills will be positively related to motivational CQ.

CONCLUSION

Cross-cultural training can be a critical factor for CQ. Important dimensions that can be examined in identifying the importance of CCT on CQ are about the kind of information provided during cross-cultural training, the duration of training and foreign language training. These dimensions can assist in developing future global leaders and well trained employees who can succeed in a multicultural environment such as hospitality.

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