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**A NOTIONAL STUDY ON EMPLOYEE  
MOTIVATION IN CROSS-CULTURAL  
COMPANIES**

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# A National Study on Employee Motivation in Cross-Cultural Companies

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**Abstract – With the fast growing economic and globalization, there is a growth in the multinational companies and cross-cultural business communication is getting increasingly significant. Nowadays, it is quite common to see employees from different cultures or different countries working in the same company, even in the same office. Cross-cultural corporations are compelled to work hard in order to improve their core competence as well as develop their competitive advantages due to severe global competition. As a matter of fact, in a cross cultural organization, there could be so many problems, such as culture collision, communication disorder etc., which might make big troubles for the human resource department, and even worse affect the working efficiency of a company in the long run. Hence, for the human resource management department, a motivated working group is urgently required. Keywords: Motivational Factors, Dimension of Culture, Coping strategy.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Diversity is a great challenge in front of the HR people in the companies, due to the new technology adaption in the business and to meet the quality work force is the main reason behind the formation of the multi cultured companies .Cross - culture have an influence in HR functions, in a company it involves the type of people who come from different cultures become the members of an organisation. There are sub cultures within a culture, For example, people have their own habit and are heredity, cultural experiences, Sub – cultural experiences and unique personal experiences.

The attitude of employees towards work is also a result of their cultural background. Cross-culture is defined as the shared motives, values, beliefs and identities of members from different backgrounds. Factors motivating followers in organisations often differ from culture to culture and do not only differ from different organisational cultures (ibid). There is no proof that motives like need for achievement, intrinsic needs for competence and self-efficacy can be generalized across cultures as the specific factors which drive such motives vary across cultures (Gelfand,Erez,Aycan:2007, ). This leads to the area of cross-cultural organisational behaviour. It can be said as the conflict management should necessarily should understand the cross-cultural interaction .Employees in the cross cultural and the dynamic organisation often face problems in their interpersonal relationships , and often have the issues among themselves and face the uncertainty and conflict. It can be said as the

changing demographics of the global society provide an increasing opportunity for cross-cultural contacts within the community at work place and give a scope for intercultural communication among them. The purpose of this study is to explore the most important motivation factors, and to analyze the cross cultural effects on motivation factors of the employees in companies. Thus a descriptive survey method is done to gather information. Cross culture refers to the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by an individual as a member of society or as a group Review of Literature Motivation is generally considered as a fundamental basis of human behaviour. The term motivation describes the willingness of a human being to act in order to achieve a specific goal. Consequently, any behaviour - with the exception of completely aimless acting - is driven by a certain motivation. However, the way in which this kind of motivation has developed, differs from person to person and from situation to situation (Hungenberg, Wulf: 2007). However, researchers have started focusing “on cultural differences in career development” (Aycan, Fikret-Pasa: 2003, p.129) only three decades ago. This new focus has arisen due to globalization and the increase of multiculturalism in societies and their organisations (Yang et al.:2002). Hence, when studying culture, both, the economic impact on culture as well as its interdependence with processes of economic or real-life origin need to be considered (Treven, Mulej, Lynn:2008).

## CULTURE

Mayer (2000) has defined the culture as “....the enduring norms, values, customs and behavioural patterns common to a particular group of people.” This shared knowledge makes communication possible.

## CROSS- CULTURE

The term cross-cultural can be said as intercultural, multicultural also Samovar, et al (1981) has stated cross-culture as “Intercultural communication is the Overall encompassing term that refers to communication between people from different cultural backgrounds Although all companies have to deal with more or less similar core HRM issues, the task for the culturally diverse in characters in the company is more complex and challenging than for their single-culture counterparts. In order to develop a motivated working group in a cross cultural company, having a good understanding of some basic motivation factors is not nearly enough. It is extremely essential to explore how employees who are from different cultural backgrounds react diversely to the same motivation factors, as culture has a profound effect on human beings attitude and behaviour.

## DIMENSION OF CULTURE

Hofstede (2001) stated —Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another. Based on his research in a large multi-national corporation IBM, Hofstede developed a 4-D model of culture which provides an effective framework for the measurement and description of culture value. Basically, about 50 countries all over the world have been scored on the cultural scale. The original 4-D model includes these dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and masculinity which will be discussed in detail.

- **Power Distance**

Power, as a complex concept, has a firm root in culture, and it is enormously affected by situational factors, as power is distributed unequally in societies. Power inequality is clearly reflected in any superior-subordinate relationships, such as boss-employer, parent-child, and teacher-student and so on. There are also other factors including sex, race, age, nationality, education background and wealth which would exert profound influences on power. Power would change as the situation, where people are different, for instance a man would be as a boss in a work place, and also a father in a family. (Hofstede, 2001)

- **Uncertainty avoidance**

In a high uncertainty avoidance culture, people try to avoid uncertainty and ambiguity, seek for consensus and believe in absolute truths. Additionally, they are

also characterized by a higher level of anxiety and stress and there is a strong need for written rules, planning, regulations, rituals, and ceremonies which add structure to life. On the contrary, for the low uncertainty avoidance culture, it is easier to accept the uncertainty inherent and take risks in life and they are less tense and more relaxed. (Hofstede, 2001).

- **Individualism & Collectivism**

Tayeb (1998,) said in his book —The Management of a Multicultural Workforce that individualism and collectivism refer to the relationships between individuals and the group or groups which they belong to and the extent to which a society attach importance to personal autonomy, independence as well as privacy.

- **Masculinity & Femininity**

Masculinity refers to a society where there is a distinct difference between roles of men and women and masculine traits include assertiveness, materialism or material success, self-centeredness, power, strength, and individual achievements, whereas femininity refers to a society where gender roles somehow overlap and they both ought to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede, 2001)

## MOTIVATION

Definition of motivation the term „motivation” originally is originated from Latin word „motive” which means to move, an inner state that energizes, activates and directs behaviour towards goals. Motive is always internal to use and is externally showed by behaviour, it can be said as one “swillingness or efforts by an individual. Rollin son (2005,) defines that: —Motivation is a state arising in processes that are internal and external to the individual, in which the person perceives that it is appropriate to pursue a certain course of action (or actions) directed at achieving a specified outcomes (or outcomes) and in which the person chooses to pursue those outcomes with a degree of vigor and persistence. Similarly, it is also defined by many experts as “Motivation is the willingness to exert high levels of effort towards organisational goals, conditioned by the effort’s ability to satisfy some individual need”.

### By Stephen P. Robbins

“Motivation is the process of attempting to influence others to do your will through the possibility of reward”.

### By Edwin B. Flippo

## MOTIVATIONAL FACTOR FOR CROSS CULTURE COMPANY

The circumstances where people work is quite complicated and sometimes is annoying, however, people always try to accept their surroundings in a

positive way. They are always trying to make exceptions and adjustments mostly depending upon circumstances to realize their life objectives and social values. In a work context, there is no doubt that good work motivational factor have been the most significant reason for employees to work better. The development of work motivation including cross cultures will add knowledge in the area, to make a differences in sources of motivation, worker personality characteristics and cultural differences have important role to settle an employee in cross cultural environment in the company. It is also useful for organizations setting a healthy working scenario in the cross cultural organization; it can be helpful in selection and recruitment of staff, areas for training and development. On the other hand, this also poses the greatest challenge to a manager in an organisation; it has a direct relation with the job satisfaction.

This equation gives an idea to the HR managers to be concerned to provide motivation to an individual according to their ability to get a desired outcome in a cross cultural company without having any priorities in their mind.

Coping strategy in the Cross cultural companies

- Formulating cross-cultural employee motivation schemes.

By formulating different schemes, the company can play an important role to support the new employee from cross culture environment. Making cross cultural teams, planning for get together among cross culture employees can help them and motivate them to learn and to be get adapted to the company's working scenario.

- **Different Cultural Adaption by the company**

The company should be ready to adapt different cultures, Coping with cultural differences and by recognizing how and when these differences are relevant, the company should culturally adapt keeping all this in attention.

- **Training**

In today's scenario where workforce is more culturally diverse and the multicultural workforce is more in demand so to maintain the balance of cross cultural it's mandatory to give the formalized cross cultural training to manage the cultural differences. Language is the most important part for any organization, without communication we can't even think of a healthy environment in the organization so, training regarding languages should also be provided to the employees. Multicultural training programmes should be there in every company. Cross cultural training can reduce the

chances of new employees de motivation. Employees need to realize the importance of intercultural understanding and its potential impact upon relocations.

- **Understanding and Positive Perception of different cultures**

Organization should understand the cultural differences and should always be having a positive attitude for the employees from different cultures, they should be made comfortable with the organization norms and policies of the company. These things not only make them feel good but also a positive attitude will be seen among the employees.

- **Equal Respect to all Cultures**

Almost everyone in business these days is working in some type of multi-cultural environment - at the office or with customers & colleagues around the world, and it is most important factor that the company should respect all the cultures, religions, languages, etiquettes etc. Everybody should be seen with the same eye and no partiality for anyone particular should be there.

- **Mentoring and Counseling**

The workforces are dynamic and with continuous change and growing number of multicultural employees it is necessary to provide counselling to them. Many successful organizations have recognized the strategic benefits of mentoring. The mentoring tasks in organizations are having the two motives one is for career related mentoring and the other is for psychological mentoring. For the cross cultural organization it is needed for those employees who found difficulties to settle in the new environment or cannot adapt to the cultural changes, they should be given proper guidance through mentoring which will be helpful for them. If proper training is not administered to coach the employee and/or the family the whole experience can turn sour leading to failure.

- **Work Life Balance**

Cross cultural differences can have a remarkable impact on the performance of the employee ,that is they would not be able to adjust to or understand the new environment working conditions or mindsets, or they cannot have a proper balance in their personal life .In this scenario the company should help them to cop up this situations, they should be provided help by giving permissions to work from home, flexi timings ,which help them not only to perform better but also help in their work and life balance.



## • Cultural Intelligence

Employee from different culture should adapt the "cultural intelligence" – which is good at spotting cultural differences, and they should adapt their behaviour accordingly. This is a very important skill when working with culturally diverse groups. It's very much possible to develop cultural intelligence. Common sense and sensitivity play an important role here. They may not immediately understand the reasons for a colleague's behaviour, but understand slowly by watching their behaviors; it can build a great relationship if you keep a friendly manner and an open mind. The employees need to learn the cultural practices of the new place and should be prepared to operate in a new environment which requires- cultural adaptability, diplomacy, language ability, positive attitude, emotional stability and maturity. The attitude of employees towards work is also a result of their cultural background.

Cross culture is defined as the shared motives, values, beliefs and identities of members from different backgrounds. Factors motivating followers in organizations often differ from culture to culture and do not only differ from different organizational cultures (ibid). There is no proof that motives like need for achievement, intrinsic needs for competence and self-efficacy can be generalized across cultures as the specific factors which drive such motives vary across cultures (Gelfand, Erez, Aycan:2007, ). This leads to the area of cross-cultural organizational behaviour. It can be said as the conflict management should necessarily should understand the cross-cultural interaction. Employees in the cross cultural and the dynamic organization often face problems in their interpersonal relationships, and often have the issues among themselves and face the uncertainty and conflict. It can be said as the changing demographics of the global society provide an increasing opportunity for cross-cultural contacts within the community at work place and give a scope for intercultural communication among them. The purpose of this study is to explore the most important motivation factors, and to analyze the cross cultural effects on motivation factors of the employees in companies. Thus a descriptive survey method is done to gather information.

Cross culture refers to the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by an individual as a member of society or as a group. "The formal process of character education is a direct and purposeful intent to affect character development" (Stoll & Beller, 1999, p. 2). Individuals are challenged to reflect upon moral issues, values, and principles in relationship to others and society, translating those reflections into good moral action. This process involves three parts: knowing and valuing the right which should lead to doing the moral right (Lickona, 1989). Knowing involves moral awareness, moral values, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, decision-making, and self-knowledge. Moral feeling involves

self-esteem, empathy, loving the good, self-control, and humility. Moral action involves competence, will, and habit. The three processes work in concert since what athletes and coaches know and feel affect their behavior and their behavior affects what they know and feel. Formal character education can involve extensive study whereby athletes are challenged by peers, instructors, and themselves through reading, writing, discussion, and reflection on issues of honesty, fair play responsibility and decency towards others (Stoll & Herman, 2002). The goal is to develop a consistent and impartial set of moral principles to live by. A workbook program, *Winning in life: A Team Life Skills Program*, challenges athletes to reason morally by examining moral and social issues in sport in discussion sessions (Stoll & Herman, 2002).

This program is based on the belief that an ultimate right exists. Teaching moral reasoning is not easy, but in the hands of skilled, well-educated moral development specialists this type of methodology is highly effective (Stoll & Beller, 2000). Less time-intensive programs, with empirical research support, involve education through training videos. The *Fair Play Every day* video, using three commonly occurring sport scenarios, challenges athletes and coaches to answer three questions of right conduct when addressing fair play issues on the field: Is it honest?, and Does it promote cooperation (Hansen, Stoll, & Beller, 1999; Hansen, Stoll, & Beller, 2000). The National Federation of High School Activity Association's video, *Sport, Ethics & Integrity*, involves athlete, coach, and administrator discussions about what makes a sportsmanship practice acceptable or unacceptable ([http:// www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)). Other research-based programs use Haan's (1978) morality model in sport camp situations, involving moral balance, moral dialogue, and moral truth (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, & Shewchuck, 1986; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Moral balance, an explicit or non-explicit agreement about rights and privileges, means that individuals are basically in agreement. When out of agreement, moral dialogue (direct or indirect, verbal or nonverbal) is used to help restore moral balance. Studies using these programs have been effective, especially in youth sport populations (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995).

In contrast to informal programs, formal moral education programs are more difficult and time intensive to implement. These programs require personnel who are educated in theories of moral development and ethics and able to challenge student's personal values and beliefs as they relate to principles and societal views (Stoll, 1995). Studies using formal moral education strategies have demonstrated success in fostering and improving athlete's moral reasoning (Beller & Stoll, 1992; Beller & Stoll, 2000; Hansen, Stoll, & Beller, 2000; shields & Bredemeier, 1995).

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