



Multinational Workplaces: War of Culturally Seasoned Minds: Dynamics of level of comfort among team members with different cultural backgrounds (Cross Cultural Management Book 1)

Vijesh Jain, Susana Costa e Silva

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Multi-cultural workplaces in multinational enterprises (MNEs) have been found to be the providers of best team performances. Most multinational firms focus on strategies to bring cultural diversity at workplaces to improve performance. However cultural diversity at multinational workplaces also poses new challenges especially relating to friction and discomfort between team members having diverse cultural backgrounds. It calls for management of multi-cultural workforce by the team managers in such ways as to reduce such friction or discomfort. Aim should be to improve 'interpersonal comfort' among multicultural team members. In order to achieve this effectively and to smoothly face day to day cultural glitches of managing such teams, it may be helpful to understand the structure of 'cross cultural comfort' among team members and also to identify the variables influencing such comfort, particularly the level of comfort of local cultures with foreign cultures (CFC) at workplaces. Such intercultural comfort is likely to originate or be influenced by several implicit factors and dimensions which may vary among team members having different cultural backgrounds.

Therefore this book focuses on understanding this variation in 'level of comfort' of local dominant cultural groups with other foreign cultural groups at multinational workplaces. The book also refers to a set of studies done by the authors of the book, to identify the role of different observed and latent variables having a significant bearing on the variation of 'level of CFC. These studies had also identified a few important and logical 'control variables' which may significantly control this variation. Authors also studied the significance and nature of the impact of these 'control variables' on 'level of CFC' and have described them in this book. Impacts of these control variables such as country of residence, city of residence, income group, age group, education level and gender have been discussed. However 'country' had been treated in this book as the chief control variable and has been discussed in more detail.

The book starts with describing theoretical foundations of the cross cultural management, multinational workplaces, global cultures, workplace cultural management and similar topics. Latest concepts of cross cultural management, management of multicultural teams, dealing with people's issues and others have been discussed in detail. Importance and process of effective leadership for inspiring multicultural teams have also been highlighted. A path of understanding world cultures has been discussed which can be very helpful for international team managers to understand cultural ethos and lifestyles of employees with diverse cultural backgrounds. Methods of understanding of cultural differences through the concepts of cultural dimensions have been described too.

Later in the book, studies done by the authors for the primary theme of this book and their results are described. The first study is a preliminary study and relates to devising of a theoretical framework of 'level of comfort' of local cultures with foreign cultures (CFC) using a plethora of published information available for a set of identified countries.

In order to further confirm findings of this study and to identify the specific observed and latent factors or variables affecting the intra-group comfort level, two primary data based studies were also done and are described in this book. First was a 'pilot study' and the second was a 'comprehensive study' on a two sets of selected countries. In the later part of the book, a research done by the authors to study the concepts from country to country perspective, has also been described, i.e. study of CFC among 'country pairs'.

Finally results from these studies have been analyzed and interpreted at the end of this book. The book is a humble attempt to familiarize team leaders and managers to people's issues in MNE teams.

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