

CCT: An Important Component of Expatriate Management

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Abstract:

In the present scenario, cross-cultural training is necessary for doing business involving multiple nations and cultures. The need for CCT has increased to work effectively in cross-cultural context. The use of CCT in organizations is to train managers for expatriate assignments as well as to handle cultural diversity. In this study, the line of focus is towards highlighting the role of CCT for expatriates. The research conducts a deep analysis of the importance of cross-cultural training based on survey conducted among various employers and employees focusing on the impact of CCT in terms of efficiency and overall growth of the organization.

Keywords—Cross-cultural Training, Cultural Diversity, Expats, Expatriate Management, Host Country, Home Country

I. INTRODUCTION

In this era of 21st century people are not letting them limit within the boundary of the native country, but the employees travel across the world to get global exposure. For these the employees need the cross-cultural training and this also in very controlled and pre-programmed manner. Today's company includes interactions between cultures. Distinctions pose social difficulties, workplace relationships, and business practices. Lack of cultural research can even lead to many challenges. Organizations need to take advantage of the opportunities that come with cultural diversity to handle these challenges and make the most of opportunities. Cross-cultural training is the basic tool to make the expatriate ready for their foreign assignment and the path of transition becomes easier. How can we express culture in bigger world. It's a surprisingly complex concept, but for our purposes here, culture means common behaviours in a group, norms for communicating with each other, and shared understanding of what is and is not relevant or necessary (Frintner, et al., 2013). The whole concept

includes language, behaviour, acceptance and expression in various situations. When people come from various nations then they come with their own thought process and behaviour. But, to standardise the whole scenario and to curb down the divergence every organisation creates their own culture and this somehow this is directed by the nation from which it is operating. So, there comes the concept of convergence. (Kohls & Knight, 1994)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Solomon (1994) published a 228 multinationals (MNC) study. Her findings indicate that these organizations need well-designed cross-cultural training programs for expatriates conducted before and after individuals leave their home country if their expatriates want to thrive overseas. Customs, history, economics, politics, business and social etiquette are the subjects usually covered in cultural training programs. That type of training, however, is not enough on its own, as all countries have distinctive business practices and specific cultural circumstances. (Sabina & Cerimagic, 2012)

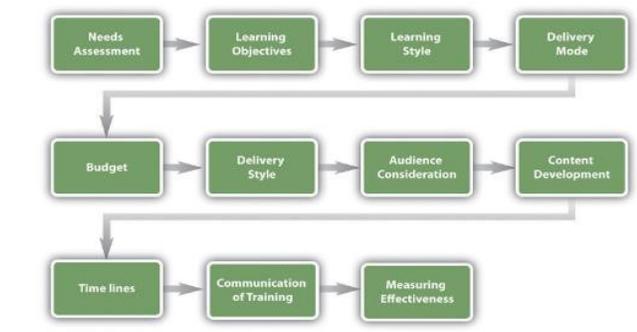


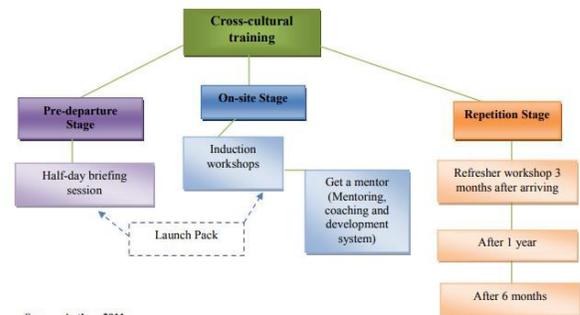
Figure 1 Training process

A major problem is that expatriates without proper cross-cultural learning and preparation will not be able to adapt to a new country and work environment. Moreover, this lack of acclimatization to the new setting is becoming not only detrimental to the person, but also very costly to the company. In many cases, it can harm the reputation of the company and can threaten the company's future in the host country, and therefore; these businesses can lose hundreds of thousands of dollars potentially. Differences in social actions are another potential problem for expatriates. Because there is a cultural difference between Western society and the Middle Eastern society, misunderstandings are very likely to happen. Thus, being unintentionally offensive is simple for an expatriate's conduct. (Booth, et al., 2003)

People move from one nation to other nation in order to experience the global exposure and devote that to the organisational effectiveness. Diversity can become a valuable advantage if it is well handled. This improves understanding of different markets, helps to stimulate innovation, and can lead to better decision making. But, if poorly managed, this can result in needless misunderstanding, conflict, uncertainty and inefficiency. (Okpara & Kabongo, 2011)

When doing business abroad, cultural sophistication and cultural awareness are extremely important qualities to possess, and this is especially important when dealing with the United Arab Emirates. Therefore, Arab culture, beliefs, norms, local customs and standards of behaviour should be

studied extensively in order to avoid offending local people. So CCT is the need of every organisations who send their employees in another country for adding global experience. (Kotsaga, 2015)



Source: Author, 2011

Figure 2 CCT Blueprint

III. OBJECTIVE

- A. To understand the importance of CCT from employees' point of view.
- B. To evaluate the impact of CCT on expatriates.
- C. To understand the effectiveness of CCT in increasing the organizational efficiency.
- D. To understand the role of emerging technologies in supporting CCT.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology is a method or process to solve the research problem in a systematic manner. It includes the processes of data collection, usage of statistical techniques, making interpretations and drawing conclusions out of them.

Data is collected from various sources depending on the objective of the study.

Data sources

Broadly, there are 2 major data collection sources-

1. Primary Data
2. Secondary Data

Primary Data: Primary data refers to the data which is collected first handed through tools like questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observations, etc.

Secondary Data: Secondary data refers to the data which has already been collected by someone else previously as a primary data for their own purposes, and now is being used by you for your purposes as a source.

This study is done on the basis of Primary data collection source with the help of questionnaire technique i.e., a detailed questionnaire was prepared in order to analyse the outcomes for the objective of the study.

Sample Size

A sample of 100 employees and 50 employers is taken and has been studied upon for this research.

Sampling Method

Random sampling method with the help of questionnaire have been used for this study.

Limitations of the Study

- The sample area and sample size has been limited due to time constraint.
- The limited no. of respondents acted as a barrier for detailed study.

V. HOW WILL TECHNOLOGY HELP THE PURPOSE OF CCT

The importance of the technological interface in providing the CCT to the employees are becoming important day by day.

A. *Simulation Workshops:*

- VR players can be used to make the employee understand the road signs and signals, directions, transportation facilities, socially accepted behaviour virtually i.e. Do's and don'ts in a social setting.
- Language training that not only include the vocabulary and grammar used in a foreign country but much more than that such as intonation, voice modulation, sarcasm, idioms and phrases, etc.

B. *AI: Sentiment Analysis*

- The stats based on the sentiment analysis done on the viewpoints of the UAE public on their current government could help the expatriate in

relationship building with colleagues and other natives.

- It can also help the expatriate in understanding the accepted/appreciated and non-acceptable/disparaged fashion sense i.e. clothing, etc.

C. *Humanoid Robots:*

An award-winning team of Johnson and his mates at Alelo, awarded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), has developed a wide range of products using virtual worlds for teaching cross-cultural communication lessons, which were initially used for military training, but now widely used in multi-national corporations too.

1) *Alelo® Workplace Coach*

A Virtual Role-Play simulation of life-like situations, interactive in nature, which teaches us the best way to communicate and collaborate effectively through various cultures, generations, people's mindsets and different organizational levels.

2) *Enskill®*

A product conducting a simulation process between artificially intelligent avatars and the trainee in order to help the trainee to build self-confidence and practice and learn as much as they can. Moreover, instant feedbacks help the trainee to analyse his/her shortcomings and personalized suggestions on the areas they should improve on.

3) *RALL-E*

It is a prototype to investigate the simulation-based language learning experiences via a lifelike robot which helps in optimization of learner's motivation and promotion of conversational skills. The basic work of this product is to engage the learner in conversations and interactions in foreign language with a robot/virtual characters.

4) *Tactical Interaction Simulator*

It is one of the major products invented by Johnson and his team at Alelo for the sole purpose of language and cultural training.

Initially, it was used in defence training for the practicing of communication skills in serious situational simulations which helps the learner to

experience situations with different difficulty levels.

5) *Virtual Cultural Awareness Trainer (VCAT)*

This product of Alelo allows the learners to understand, participate and demonstrate their own understanding of host country's culture in virtual scenarios provided and apply their decision-making abilities in those contextualized environments.

D. Social Networking sites and apps

- Social Networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc. have become one of the most easily accessible and approachable means for cross-cultural training as inputs such as mindsets of host country natives through their profiles, likes, dislikes, interests, etc. showcases a part of the cultural diversity in the host country which would help the expatriate understand and pre-accept the culture and native's behaviour of the host country.

- Such platforms also give an opportunity to the expatriate to socially connect to the natives of the host country and understand them deeply. Moreover, it would help the expatriate to build up healthy and long-lasting relationships with them.

E. Video Conferencing

The active participation of the expatriate into the various decision-making process and activities beforehand via video conferencing with the help of Skype, etc. would largely help the expatriate to analyse and understand the things he/she requires to learn for easy management in the host country.

F. E-Learning

Online courses and virtual classrooms would not only help the expatriate, but also her children to understand and adjust beforehand the way in which the host country works.

These all techniques will be applicable to train the lady who is travelling to a country holding a huge cultural difference than the home country.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

We have performed a survey on employees and employers, to understand their view on the CCT and its effectiveness. The data we have collected is summarised below.

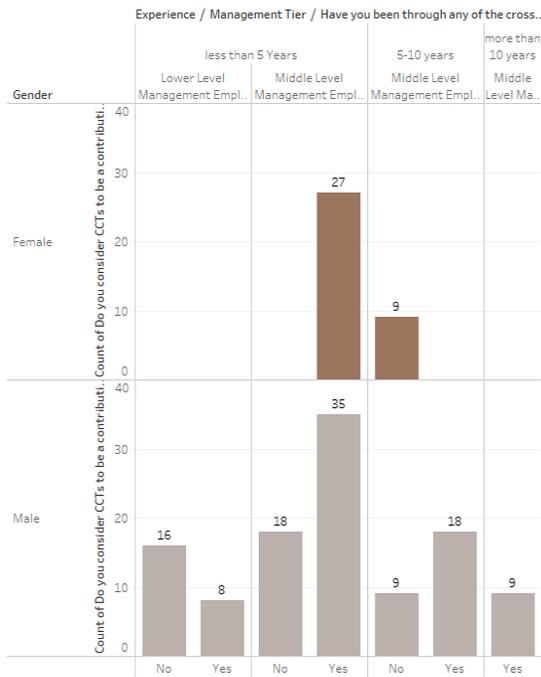
The parameters based on which the employees as respondents portrayed their views are :

- Management Tier
- Gender
- Experience
- What is your view on CCT?
- Have you been through any of the cross-cultural trainings?
- What Style of trainings you consider to be effective?
- Are you offered with any self-directed online tools to have blended learning programs?
- How much do you feel that virtual training through advanced technology has proved to be a better addition to CCT?
- How much do you find learnings from such trainings actually applicable in real-life situations/scenarios?
- Do you consider CCTs to be a contributing factor in personality development too?
- Mention the technology used for CCT in your organization

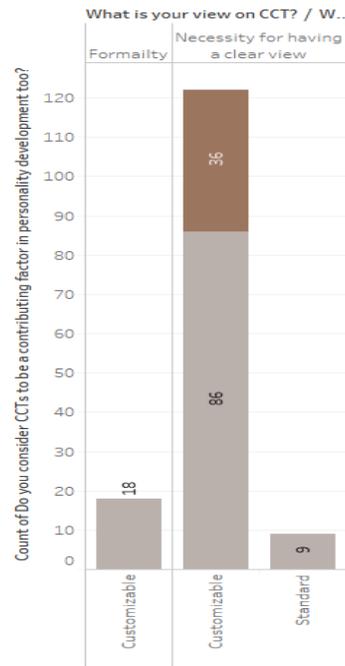
The analysis has been done with Tableau Analytical Software.

Plot 1: This is very clear that the employees from the lower experience strata finds the CCT to be more important than those from the higher experience group.

There is no specific gender dependency on the result.



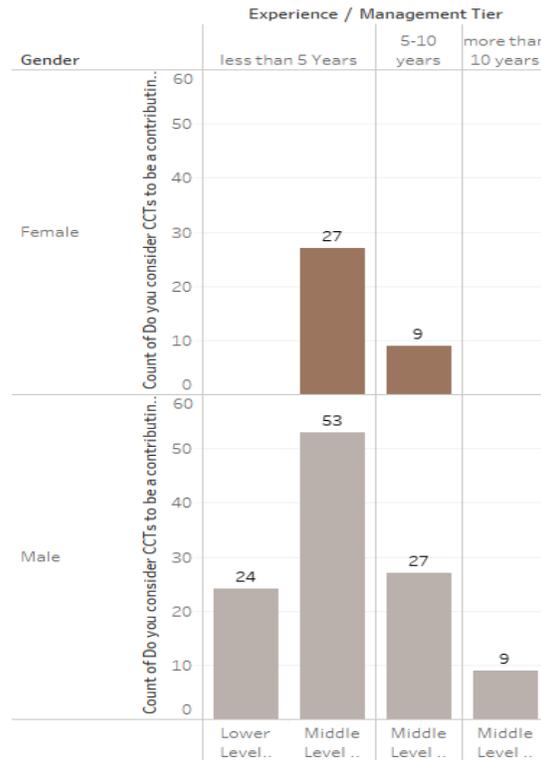
Plot 1 Importance of CCT gender wise



Plot 2 View of the employees for the CCT process and the individual count

Plot 2 explains: Adding one more parameter to the previous set of defining parameters we see, though the people with high experience finds the process of CCT less important than those who are relatively freshers, they have undergone the training process more than that of the juniors. The possibility also there that the organisations find the middle management tier to more fitted for the foreign ventures.

All the female associates find the CCT to be a necessity and clearly prefers the process to be a customised one. The male sample pool we interviewed, 18 from them finds the process to be a mere formality though prefers the customised process, 86 of them voted for the necessity of the process and prefers the customised one. Rest of the 9 male candidates claimed the standard process to be sufficient.



Plot 3 Differentiating further with the Experience level

Plot 4 explains: Amongst those who have been went through the training most of the organisations have performed Awareness programmes, physical training or relied on Zoom application to make the employees familiar with the foreign culture.

This describes how the majority of male candidates find the emerging technologies to be helpful who are having experience less than 5 years. The width of the graph defines the belief on the technology interventions in CCT process. The overall analysis proves to be important for extracting the core value of the data we have collected and the final interpretation from the sample size of 150 we understand that, the freshers and the employees with lower experience embraces the CCT process more that the employees with high experience and exposure. We can interpret this, as the employees with higher experience have already much exposure that they are adaptive enough to the widely varying foreign culture and the freshers are not that compliant for the expatriation do to give them a seamless experience the process of training is mandatory.

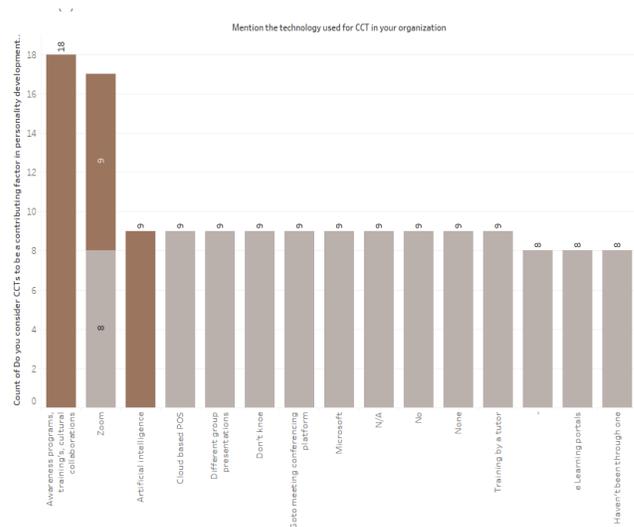
Though the training should be practices for all the levels to give them a good knowledge about the country of expatriation if the employee has no prior experience int hat very country and if he has so then the impact of CCT is not that important.

For analysing the responses from the employers we have created below parameters.

- Management Tier
- Gender
- Experience
- How beneficial has CCT proved towards overall organizational efficiency?
- Do trained expats have better performance in the host country than the untrained expats?
- To what extent has advancement in technology helped in organizing CCTs?
- How far has technology proved to be a boon for CCT in terms of its efficiency and effectiveness?

- How far does CCT impact cultural intelligence of employees?
- Does CCT proves to be major factor behind successful international assignments?
- How difficult is it convince the employees for such trainings?
- Mention the technology used for CCT in your organization.

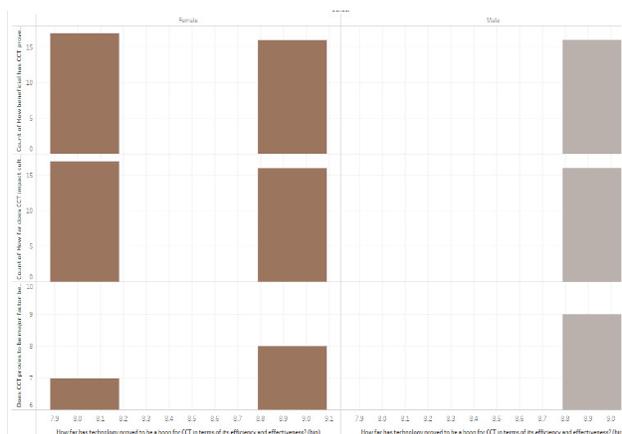
All the responses received are from employees having more than 10 years of experience and initially analysing the below factors and the responses recorded.



Plot 4 Preference of the process of training and their count

Analysing the faactor “Does CCT proves to be major factor behind successful international assignments?” based on gende and thhe number of responses.

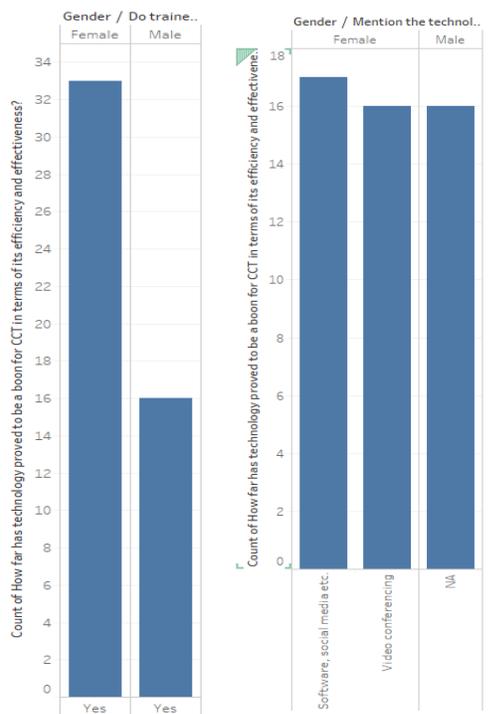
Most of the female associates have graded the CCT as a factor of rating 7 to 8 and male associates have rated this as 9.



Plot 6 Views for the Employers on the importance of CCT

Plot 7 explains:

Analysing the factor “How far does CCT impact cultural intelligence of employees?” we can get the idea as female candidates finds it more impactful than the male employers and the impression is same for the adding efficiency to the employees. When we divided the responses, we have received for the question, “Does CCT proves to be major factor behind successful international assignments?” we can see the response graph. Every male and female associates are claiming that the employees with the training of CCT performs better in the expatriation project than the employees who are not trained.



Plot 7 Gender wise view for CCT and its cultural impact and Plot 8 Technology and CCT for distant training and the view of the employers, simultaneously

VII. IMPACT OF CCT ON THE EXPATRIATE

Cultural Training will facilitate the expatriate in cross-cultural adjustment as cultural differences is one of the major factors to be considered for an expatriate as it is an implication of work behaviour of colleagues and other people too.

Pre-conceived cultural awareness about the host country will help the expatriate to overcome the barriers which are basic in nature and has to be faced on day-to-day basis.

Language Training is one of the most important and powerful tools in cross-cultural training as it will facilitate the expatriate in communication with not only her colleagues but also with the local people, client and staff.

Moreover, Language Training will allow the expatriate to understand and communicate more

fluently, which will in turn allow her to avoid misunderstandings as well as express her thoughts and convey others easily.

The Cross-cultural Training will also help the expatriate a lot in terms of the local norms and regulations practiced and to be followed in the host country as being unaware about the local norms can land up the expatriate into some serious big troubles.

The cross-cultural training to the expatriate and her family in the home country as well as the host country is very beneficial and crucially important as it will act as then pre-guidance or the survival kit for the expatriate and her family, till they become used to the host country. (Qin & Baruch, 2010)

VIII. CONCLUSION

The value of intercultural education is greatly influenced by the extent of the prior international experience of the expatriate. The aim of the training is not only to help the expat in adapting the host culture but also to retain the talent within the organisation. The language, intonation and the gesture while verbal and non-verbal communication being a huge factor in the expatriate's journey influence the organisation in arranging more impactful training method. A proper cross-cultural training is not only effective for organisational growth, but the employees too feel its necessity for their personal growth. Moreover, the inclusion of the high-end emerging technology has also proved to be a boon in trainings.

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