**The Influence of Cultural Differences on Diversity Training Practices**

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**Abstract**

*Although, diversity training one of the most frequently used strategies to manage workplace diversity, little research has utilized the cross-culture theories to study the purposes, processes and outcomes of diversity training. Cross-cultural theories provide us with insights concerning how organisations may have different diversity training practices. It suggests that diversity and diversity training will be defined differently. It also suggests that organisations will differ in terms of what should be included in diversity training, how diversity training should be implemented, and the outcomes of diversity training practices. We also identified further area for improvement.*

Diversity has emerged as a major topic in human resource management in recent years. The pressures of globalisation have resulted in significant demographic shifts in the workforce. Increasingly organisations hire employees that come from different racial and ethnic minorities. There is also increased participation by women and older workers in the workforce. (Richard et al., 2000, Pendry et al., 2007, Syed and Ozbilgin, 2009). The increasingly diverse workforce presents organisations with significant challenges including enhancing cross cultural understanding, reducing diversity related conflicts, accommodating differences in thinking and behaviour and creating a climate and culture that understands and values diversity (Gröschl and Doherty, 1999, Friday and Friday, 2003, Bagshaw, 2004).

One of the most frequently used strategies to manage workplace diversity is diversity training (Holladay et al., 2003). A large number of multinational corporations located in the United State have developed diversity initiatives on a global scale (Hofstede, 2001). The fact that organisations approach to diversity training will be influenced by the national cultural context within which the training takes place. The diversity training practices that have evolved in a western cultural context may have limited applicability in a non-western culture. (Aycan et al, 2000). There is however a significant gap in the literature in terms of understanding diversity training from a cross cultural perspective

This paper will review the literature on the cross-cultural perspective and explore how this perspective informs us as to the purposes, processes and outcomes of diversity training. It will engage with the notion that the concepts of diversity and diversity training are culturally situated and may have meanings that are unique to that cultural context. It will identify propositions for further research and explore the practical implications of the cross-cultural perspectives for the design of diversity training programmes. This theoretical lens helps us to understand two complimentary questions: how does the cultural context explain the purposes, content and outcomes of diversity training practices? Do cross-cultural factors explain variation rather than similarity in diversity training practices?

1. ***Literature Review***

In the last decade, the term “diversity” has been growing substantially in business magazine, trade books, media and apparently in academic journals and papers. For example, Roosevelt Thomas published six books in the area of diversity including the most popular trade book, beyond Race and Gender, in which he mentioned that “diversity include everyone” (Thomas, 1991, p.10). In 1998, The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) conducted a survey which indicated that among Fortune 500 firms; around three out of four provide some diversity programs (Stockdale and Crosby, 2004). Researchers have drawn upon psychological theories to understand the impact of a diverse workforce in the organizational outcomes (Konrad et al., 2006). A number of studies on the effects of diversity into the workplace inequality and discrimination showed a dramatic increase in the management literature (Collins, 2011). Not surprisingly perhaps, a great interest in diversity can now be found across different culture around the world.

1. ***Managing Diversity***

Difference on the organizational culture and national culture make it difficult to establish a single definition of diversity (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999). There is a lack of data regarding how organizations conceptualize diversity (Green et al., 2009). A recent study conducted by Klarsfeld (2010) found that diversity has not been emerged as a concept in all 16 countries that involved in their study, and even if it has, there is a major distinct between equality at work and diversity management. Taylor Cox (1991) emphasizes the need of “conceptual clarity” to build upon diversity literature, and the “confusion and ambiguity in terminology” might lead to undermine the value of the previous work (Larkey, 1996, p.51). On the other hand, Jones et al (2000, p.365) argue that in cross culture study the “confusion and ambiguity are inevitable aspect” and “there can be no grand meta-language of diversity that transcends or comprehends all differences”.

1. ***Diversity Training***

The concepts of diversity training are culturally situated and may have meanings that are unique to that cultural context. There is no doubt that values, beliefs, attitudes, historical experiences are vary between societies which affect the way that organizations perceive and interpret the manning of diversity training (Gerhart and Fang, 2005, Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012). It is also generally understood that training practices, include diversity training, differ based on some factors include size, goal, industry type and so forth (Gerhart and Fang, 2005). So, it is a fundamentally important to make manages aware of the fact that such differences provide an interpretation which emphasize that diversity training practices will not work well in every culture.

Although, organizations in cross-countries utilize diversity training for different purposes, the literature identified three common goals. The first goal focuses on improving the workplace environment by increasing awareness of individual in the workplace. The second goal focus on developing specific skills among employees, such as conflict management, and use these skills to improve the work relationships among all individuals level. To achieve this goal, trainee must be aware of their own biases and prejudices and then allocate strategies to deal with these bases (Holladay and Quiñones, 2005). The third goal is to improve the performance of individual, as this will lead to a positive workplace relationship.

There also a major argument around the issue of diversity training designs (Roberson et al., 2003). The globalization of business and its implications for human resources management practices and theories have drawn attention around the issue of cultural differences. “In fact, national culture almost seems at times to be deterministic of management practice” (Gerhart and Fang, 2005, p.973). National culture differences can be critical and that insensitivity to these differences can and does result in training failure. A single universal model of diversity training does not exist. Thus, diversity training practices that have evolved in a western cultural context may have limited applicability in a non-western culture. (Aycan et al, 2000). There is however a significant gap in the literature in terms of understanding diversity training from a cross cultural perspective.

1. ***The Concept of Culture***

Before advancing further, it is very important to draw attention around the concept of culture. Culture has also been defined in a diverse way. One of the most cited conceptualization of culture is that “culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values“ (Kluckhohn, 1951, p.86). Bartlett and Ghoshal (1998) also suggest that the infrastructure, history, experience and culture of a nation state permeate all aspects of life within a specific country, including the attitude and assumptions of managers. Accordingly, the managerial process and organizational behaviour will be influenced by traditional national cultural values (Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012), which in turn, affect diversity training practices.

The culture theories indicate that there is a clear country differences that can be understood and explained in the context of each national culture and its manifestations in history, laws, institutions, and employee organizations. Sparrow & Hiltrop (1994) noted that differences between societies can be explained by cultural factors and must be modified to consider the interaction between the cultural norms, legal institutions, and underlying economic factors.

According to the cross culture studies, it appears that there is difference across countries in culture (Trompenaars, 1993, Hofstede, 1980). Cross-cultural perspectives assume that societies or countries will vary in the types of institutions and approaches to diversity training and those variations reflect different traditions, values, attitudes and experiences. It also assumes that culture and values act as boundaries that allow interaction and socialisation within them. This means that all participants within the organization are carriers of the culture (Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012).

1. ***Cultural Frameworks in Understanding Diversity Practices***

The literature has developed different frameworks to analyse how different national cultures can influence diversity training. The cross-cultural perspective has generally focused attention on the cultural distinctiveness of practices, beliefs and values shared by a country. It assumes that culture and values act as boundaries that allow interaction and socialisation within them. Cross-cultural perspectives assume that societies or countries will vary in the types of institutions and approaches to diversity training and those variations reflect different traditions, values, attitudes and experiences. Culture is typically measured through various value dimensions. Examples of such value dimensions are suggested by Hofstede, (1980); Schwartz, (1994) and Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1998), the GLOBE-project by House et al. (2004), and Hall (1976). The Hofstede (1980, 2001) conceptualisation is by far the most popular.

**5.1 Hofstede Frameworks**

Hofstede distinguishes cultures according to four dimensions, power, distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism / collectivism and masculinity / femininity, are considered valuable in understanding diversity training practices and outcomes. These four dimensions can be used to study diversity training. Hofstede (1996) argued that people residing in the same culture share the same value, attitude, behaviour with other members of their region. Based on this argument, individuals’ culture may interpret the meaning and the goal of diversity training constraining their actions differently, and to use some techniques to deliver diversity training differently (Holladay and Quiñones, 2005). We will explain each dimensions in depth, and its implication on the goal, design and evaluation of diversity training practices.

***5.1.1) Power distance***, the degree to which members of an organization or society expect and agree that power should be distributed unequally. It suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality both are a fundamental fact for any society, researchers should be aware that the design and the implementation of diversity training practices vary in high and low power distances cultures. In high power distance culture, research indicates that interpersonal relations and loyalty are more important in determine the training needs than work outcomes (Kovach and Robert, 1994). For example, Korean companies, emphasize more on developing managers’ skills to fit corporate culture: loyalty, dedication and team spirit, rather than current job skills. In these cultures employees often provided training as reward if they maintain a good relation with their managers, whereas, in lower power distance contexts, the employees determine training needs (Aycan 2005).

**Proposition 1.** In high power distance culture, the goal of diversity training is more likely to ensure loyalty to the firm.

**Proposition 2.** In high power distances cultures, interpersonal competencies is emphasize more than task-related competencies and outcomes when organizations determine the diversity training needs. The reverse order of priority applies in low power distances cultures.

The cross-culture differences in the role of trainer should also be taken into account when organizations tend to design their training programs (Giangreco et al., 2009). For example, in high-power distance cultures, participations in training programs perceived the instructor or the trainers as someone that have sufficient authority (Aycan, 2005). Within a Chinese high power distance society, like Hong Kong and Taiwan, “the elders embody the collective wisdom of age and experience” (Auyeung and Sands, 1996, p.265), and others are encourage to learn from them through listening and observing. Similarly, Branine (2005) found that Chines employees prefer to learn from the experts’ experiences and following the advice of previous leaders and managers more important than attempting to develop one’s own leaning abilities through self-development, Organizations in these culture usually tend to employ individual from the managerial positions as an instructor in order to maximize learning that require a high level of trust among participants (Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012). On the other hand, in Australia, low power distance society, adult learners are free from their

Table 1: Cultural dimensions, their descriptions and implication on diversity training.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cultural dimension | Description | Implication on Diversity Training |
| Power distance  Collectivism  Uncertainty avoidance | The degree to which members of an organization or society expect and agree that power should be distributed unequally.  The degree to which organizational and societal institutional norms and practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.  The extent to which people in an organization or society consider uncertainty inherent in life as a continuous threat that must be fought. There is high avoidance of deviant and different persons and ideas. | * In high power distance culture, the goal of diversity training is to ensure loyalty to the firm * The instructor of diversity training practices has a direct influence on the design and implementation * In high power distance cultures, participation in the decision making process is not an important role in evaluating the success of diversity training. * In individualistic cultures, organizational members view diversity training as a way to improve their knowledge and to achieve personal goals. On the other hand, organizational member from collectivism cultures participate in diversity training to be acceptable group member * Person’s level of individualism and collectivism will impact on the way in which information will be used in the diversity training programs. * Organizations form the individuals’ culture are expected to design, implement and evaluated their diversity training in a similar way. * Despite that most participants in diversity training are volunteers; people from individualistic countries had more interest to participate in diversity training program. * In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, organizations tend to invest in diversity training to respond to uncertainty, whereas, managers from low uncertainty avoidance cultures do not prefer to invest in diversity training at times of labour uncertainty. * In low uncertainty avoidances cultures, group discussion and case studies can maximize the outcomes of diversity training. One-way lectures and rote learning is preferred in high uncertainty avoidance culture. |

Table 1: (continued)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cultural dimension | Description | Implication on Diversity Training |
| Femininity    Performance orientation  Future orientation | Refers to the distribution of roles between the genders, and to what extent the women's values differ among societies than men's values.  The degree to which an organization or society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence.  The degree to which individuals in organizations or societies engage in future-oriented behaviours such as planning, investing in the future and delaying gratification. | * People from femininity cultures participate in diversity training in order to maintain good interpersonal relationships with others. * In performance-oriented diversity training delivered to employees who are most in need of skill development, and who are in positions where improved skills in the training domain would be of greatest benefit to the organization, whereas in low performance-oriented, employees provided training as reward if they maintain a good relation with their managers * In future oriented, organizations establish diversity training in order to train their employees about diversity and how it is important to the organizations in the future marketplace. |

Table 1: (continued)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cultural dimension | Description | Implication on Diversity Training |
| Paternalism  Fatalism | The extent to which an organization or society encourages and accepts that people in authority provide care, guidance and protection to their subordinates.  The extent to which people in an organization or society believe that it is not possible to control fully the outcomes of one’s actions | The paternalistic cultures share the similar view with performance oriented regarding the diversity training  Cultural fatalism tends to have low level of investment in diversity training. |

**Manifestation for Diversity Training**

**Goals**

- Change trainee workplace behaviour

- Promoting organizational change

- Understand the need for and meaning and valuing diversity

- Increasing trainee awareness of discrimination issues and cultural differences

- Attracting and retaining customers and top talent

- Maintaining high employee moral

**Design**

- Awareness training, skills building training or both.

- Narrow definition or broad definition of diversity.

- Learning style (exercise, role playing, simulations, group discussion, brief lecture).

- Homogeneous versus heterogeneous training groups.

- Trainer demographic

**Evaluation**

- Attitudinal, behavioural, and cognitive changes

- Reaction to diversity

- Calculating turnover and absenteeism costs related to underrepresented workers

**Factors**

**Individual characteristic**

Value

Beliefs

Attitude

Behaviours

**Socio-political environment**

Traditions

Historical

Legal

Political

Economy

Managerial system

**Institutional (context)**

-National training agencies

-Regulative environment

-Size and type of industry

**Cultural Dimensions**

Power distance

Collectivisms

Future orientation

Performance orientation

Universalism

Particularism

Specificity

Diffuseness

Ascription (orientation towards ascribed status)

Paternalism

Fatalism

Uncertainty avoidance

Femininity

High and low context

Figure 1: Cultural frameworks in understanding diversity training: adopted by MCF (Aycan, Sinha &Kanungo, 1999)

overpowering elders. Hayes and Allison (1998) found that managers from Anglo, Northen and Latin Europeans countries were are more likely to questions different norms and assumptions and hence undermine the power distance between the trainer and the trainee, whereas, mangers in developing countries seek certainty.

**Proposition 3.**In high-power distance culture, the instructor of diversity training practices has a direct influence on the design and implementation of diversity training practices.

Kochan et al (2003) stated that one goal of diversity training is to encourage participants to value a wide range of cultural and interpersonal differences as this lead to enhance decision making and problem solving. Other argue that diversity training should be linked to other types of training (e.g. employee empowerment) in order to increase its effectiveness (Wentling and Palma‐Rivas, 1998). Hofstede (1980) power distances analysis suggests that high power distance cultures tend to be negatively associated with employees’ empowerment. In hierarchical cultures the empowerment aspects of HR practices are generally not accepted by either managers or subordinates (Kirkman and Shapiro, 1997) because power create a psychological barriers that separates superiors from subordinates by nurturing perceptions of participation in decision making (Varela and Premeaux, 2008). Thus, employees are less likely to have the requisite sense of self-efficacy to act independently because of their fear and distrust (Bae and Rowley, 2001). Combs (2002), speaking from a low power distance country, emphasized the focus on diversity self-efficacy in order to maximise the benefits of diversity training programs. Despite this argument,

To summarize, the cross–cultural differences might have a great influence upon feedback accuracy (Varela and Premeaux, 2008). Power inequalities are affecting the relationship between superiors and their subordinates. Employees in high power distance cultures might evaluate the trainer or instructor (properly supervisors) in way that can exert efforts in maintaining good relationship and gain acceptance from supervisor. On the other hand, organizational member from low power distance cultures feel free to express their ideas and thought without any power asymmetry disturbance (Bracken et al., 2001).

**Proposition 4**. In high power distance cultures, participation in the decision making process is not an important role in evaluating the success of diversity training.

***5.1.2) Uncertainty avoidance***, deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man's search for Truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures.

Goff (1997) stems that organizations tend to invest in training and development to counteract uncertainty in labour supply. Even in tight labour market organizations emphasize more in employee training in order to attract workers who are interesting in developing their skills (Fields et al., 2006). For example, in Japan and Korea, training practices tends to be planned and executed in a diligent and disciplined manner at all level in the organization (Drost et al., 2002). In Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, three strong uncertainty avoidance countries, the education system is stratified and qualifications are standardised at every levels (Heinz et al., 1998). In these cultures, vocational certificates are very important for employment and career development. Thus, the institution of training programs guide and control, in a highly bureaucratised way, the high level of investment in training and development (Trampusch, 2009). Managers in US companies may be unwilling to increase investments in training of existing workers at times of labor uncertainty, since the workers may take advantage of a tight labor market and use new skills to find a better position elsewhere. Walsh (2001) also found that the majority of foreign corporations invest more formal training than Australian local firms.

**Proposition 5**. In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, organizations tend to invest in diversity training to respond to uncertainty, whereas, managers from low uncertainty avoidance cultures do not prefer to invest in diversity training at times of labour uncertainty.

National cultural may determine the way that training designed and delivered (Hofstede, 1980). In high uncertainty avoidance countries, employees have a feeling of anxiety or fear when facing unfamiliar risks, or new practice in their work place. Those individuals tend to take time for action until they acquire the necessary information to reduce uncertainty. On the other hand, organizational members from low uncertainty avoidance cultures, tend to feel less uncomfortable in unclear and unstructured circumstances and are more likely to take risks in unfamiliar situations where encountering deviant and innovative ideas and behaviour with no rules. Indicate that there is a different in leaning style across culture. Managers and diversity practitioners have to acknowledge these differences in order to maximize the benefits and avoid conflict. For example, learning method in America (low uncertainty avoidance cultures) tend to be based on group discussion, case studies and cooperative learning, whereas, in most Arab countries, high uncertainty avoidance cultures, (specially Gulf region, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, United Arab Emirate, Oman and Bahrain) prefer one-way lecture and rote learning (Hamza, 2010). According to Towler and Dipboye (2001) the majority of people from high uncertainty avoidances cultures prefer one-way lecturing to learn in order to ensure the success of training programs and to reduce the risk of failure.

**Proposition 6.** In low uncertainty avoidances cultures, group discussion and case studies can maximize the outcomes of diversity training. One-way lectures and rote learning is preferred in high uncertainty avoidance cultures.

To summarize, Hofstede (1980) analysis of uncertainty avoidance cultures stems that teaching and training programs are inductive. The management structure is more likely to be formalized. The training programs may be imposed by the hierarchy (mandatory). For example, Korea and Japan, supervisors are responsible for guiding employees for developing their knowledge and skills (Drost et al., 2002). In Germany and Austria, there is a high degree of employer involvement in training and development (Trampusch, 2009). Yet, there is a limited research that offers guidance to human resources professional vis-à-vis diversity training evaluations that is most likely to measure change in cultural awareness (Anderson, 2004). In UK, for example, there is some ambivalence that assessments are required in cultural diversity” (Dogra et al., 2010, p.166). There is also an agreement that single method cannot measure the impact of such training (Assemi et al., 2004). Furthermore, in North-America, medical students’ subjective evaluation of diversity training is capture with annual Graduate Questioners in which they indicate whether they feel positive toward the training programs; however the concept may be outdated.

***5.1.3) Individualism and collectivism,*** Individualism on the one side versus its opposite, collectivism, that is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. In individualistic countries the relationship between the employer and the employee is a business deal. On the other hand, in collectivist countries the relationship between the employer and the employee is tend to be moral. People from the collectivist side tend to express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families. Collectivism from the institutional perspectives refers to the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.

People from individualistic culture look to their personal actions to understand who they are, and these actions are independent of others. People from in a collectivistic culture tend to base their self-understanding on the reactions of some people around them (Earley, 1994). Organizational member from an individualistic culture find it difficult to improve organizational performance because of the recognition he or she may receive, whereas organizational member from a collectivistic culture seeks improvement because of the gains his or her group may receive. Hofstede (1991) argue that the purpose of training is perceived differently in both the individualism-collectivism societies. In individualistic society, organizational member prefer to cope with new, unknown, unpredicted situation, whereas, in collectivistic society, there is a tendency to adapt skills and virtues necessary to be an acceptable group members. Further research indicates that people from cultures that are individualistic focus mostly on individual goals, and their successes or achievements, and aim to climb up the hierarchical ladder. People from collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, become so highly interdependent with the organization that the organization becomes a part of the employee’s self-identity.

* **Proposition 8.** In individualistic cultures, organizational members view diversity training as a way to improve their knowledge and to achieve personal goals. On the other hand, organizational member from collectivism cultures participate in diversity training to be acceptable group member.

The social cognition theory also offers a great explanation of how individual cognition is influenced by person’s cultural background (Lievens et al., 2003).As the increasing awareness of individual in relations to others is one of the primary goals of diversity training practices, so it is important to study the person’s level of individualism and collectivism in the implementation process. Some researchers argue that person’s level of individualism or collectivism is assuming by knowing his or her country (Bond, 2002). A study conducted by Earley (1994) stated that individualism/collectivism impact on the way in which information was used in the training session. In addition, a number of study propose that people form the individuals culture are expected to react to HR practices in a similar way, which means that the culture of the county will influence the individual perception toward diversity training practices (Holladay and Quiñones, 2005).

A study in Japanese multinational corporations operated in the US conducted by Yamazaki and Kayes (2005) examined cultural differences in learning styles between Japanese (high uncertainty avoidance) managers and American (low uncertainty avoidance) mangers. The results reveal that, Japanese managers are more concretive and reflective, whereas managers from US tend to be more abstractive and active. In addition, 160 Japanese undergraduate students with different majors in Economics and Science had examined in their learning style (McMurray, 1998). The result showed that the learning preferences of Japanese subjects were very stable during two semesters and highly skewed toward the concrete experience and the reflective observation. Auyeung and Sands (1996) used accounting students studying in Australia, Hong Kong and Taiwan to investigate whether the cultural factor of individualism/ collectivism is reflected in their learning styles. The study provided evidence that the learning styles of accounting students in these three countries are reflected in their individualism/collectivism cultural construct

* **Proposition 9.** Person’s level of individualism and collectivism will impact on the way in which information will be used in the diversity training programs.
* **Proposition 10.** Organizations form the individuals’ culture are expected to design, implement and evaluated their diversity training in a similar way.

To summarize, pervious study shows that national culture had a great impact on individual reactions to diversity training. For example, a study has compared reaction to diversity training across individualistic cultural context (include Australia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, and United State), and collectivistic cultural context (include India, Japan and Singapore) (Holladay and Quiñones, 2005). The content of diversity training program presented in the study includes a wide range of topics, such as sensitivity training, legal awareness and cultural awareness. Their results indicate that people from individualistic countries had more interest to participate in such courses. It is also important to mention that most diversity training programs delivered to volunteer participated (Kulik et al., 2007, Agócs and Burr, 1996).

* **Proposition 11.** Despite that most participants in diversity training are volunteers; people from individualistic countries had more interest to participate in diversity training programs

***5.1.4) Masculinity versus femininity***, femininity refers to the distribution of roles between the genders, and to what extent the women's values differ among societies than men's values. The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values. Hofested (1980) argue that people in a femininity value interpersonal harmony more than money and achievement; gender roles are fluid. As improving communications between different groups of people is one of the most important goal of diversity training (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999), people from femininity cultural context might be more interesting to join and participate in diversity training programs.

* **Propositions 12.** People from femininity cultures participate in diversity training in order to maintain good interpersonal relationships with others.

Applying Hofstede dimensions to understand how individual’s exposure to messages and practices diversity training is a powerful way; however, they are not without faults; they have been criticised by Baskerville because they do not capture the richness of national culture and they are viewed in a static rather than a dynamic way. This approach is not, however, without criticism and it is acknowledged that culture is highly elusive, difficult to operationalised and measure.

**5.2 High- and low-context Communication**

Culture has also been conceptualised in terms of context – low and high context cultures. Hall (1976) suggests that the degree of non-verbal context used in communication can be a great classification of culture. According to Hal (1976, p.101) ‘HC transactions feature pre-programmed information that is in the receiver and in the setting, with only minimal information in the transmitted message. LC transactions are the reverse’; i.e. in LC communication most of the information is vested in the explicit code. Furthermore, low-context cultures as ones that value clear, explicit and written forms of communication. Anglo-Saxon and Northern European countries fall into this category. In high context cultures, the external environment and non-verbal cues are considered important to communication. Japan and Arab countries are example of the high context cultures. Kittler et al (2011) argue that the use of context is varying across culture, which limited the number of countries in Hall’s study. Also the list of countries classified in this study remains unclear. There are however few studies that have used this categorisation to study diversity training practices.

**5.3 Trompenaars Frameworks**

Both Trompenaars (1993) and Schwartz (1994) provide another framework to understand and study cultural differences. They adopt similar conceptual view of culture with Hofstede in that countries in the same region share the same values, attitudes and norms. However, their frameworks differ in term of which values they believe capture these national differences . Trompenaars framework suggests that national cultures vary in how their members solve problems. It identifies five major cultural differences in how relationships with other people are handled. Although, this framework is useful in helping research to link the dimensions of culture to other aspects of organisational behaviour, the adaptation of this framework is limited in cross-cultural study due to concerns of conceptual and methodological ambiguities (Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012).

**5.4 The GLOBE-project**

The development of cross-cultural frameworks continues. A very recent example is the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004). GLOBE project deals with three major topics leadership, organizational culture, and national culture. It examined nine cultural and six leadership dimensions in 62 different countries. In addition to the four dimensions examined in the Hofstede study that included power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity, it also included the cultural dimensions of performance orientation, future orientation, gender egalitarianism, collectivism, and humane orientation. This project sets out to develop a multi-dimensional framework to explain cultural similarities and differences. It makes an important distinction between values ‘as it is’ and ‘as it should be’. This framework has not yet been integrated into diversity training research; however, it has the potential to prove valuable in exploring differences and similarities in diversity training across countries. A recent study conducted by Herrera et al (2011) investigate how countries value diversity management as it relates to the GLOBE study cultural preferences. They found that collectivism was a strong predictor of how positively participants rated their organizations support for diversity, include diversity training. Despite the limitations of their study, the results provide significant theoretical and practical contributions to understand how cultural differences influence the diversity training practices.

**5.4.1) Performance orientation**, refers to the degree to which an organization or society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence. Organizations also design their diversity training programs based on how they determine their needs within a particular culture (Holladay et al., 2003). The question of what should be included in diversity training practices is receiving a great attention in the literature (see for example, Roberson et al., 2003). Training theory argues that training needs begin with a need assessment (King et al., 2010). Information that gathered in this assessment help organizations discover sources of bias and identify ways in which the organizational work environment are not meeting the needs of a diverse workforce (Cox, 1993). In performance-oriented or universalistic culture, training needs is determined based on the performance outcomes. This means that in performance –oriented cultures diversity training delivered to workers in order to increase their performance.

**• Proposition 13**. In performance-oriented diversity training delivered to employees who are most in need of skill development, and who are in positions where improved skills in the training domain would be of greatest benefit to the organization, whereas in low performance-oriented, employees provided training as reward if they maintain a good relation with their managers.

**5.4.2) Future orientation,** refers to the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies engage in future-oriented behaviours such as planning, investing in the future and delaying gratification. Training and development are perceived to be relevant to the job as well as predictive of future performance. Therefore, organizations invest in training activates; include diversity training, in order to catch up with other successful industry in different countries. Others plan and invest in diversity training in order to prepare their employees to a high number of divers’ workforces.

**• Proposition 14**. In future oriented, organizations establish diversity training in order to train their employees about diversity and how it is important to the organizations in the future marketplace.

**5.5 Socio-cultural Dimensions**

A recent study has offers additional cultural dimensions for studying how culture influences the design and implementation of HRM practices (Aycan et al., 2000). The two additional cultural dimensions called socio-cultural dimensions: paternalism and fatalism. In a paternalistic relationship, the role of the manager is to provide guidance, protection, nurturing and care to the subordinate, and the role of the subordinate, in return, is to be loyal and deferential to the manager. Fatalism is the belief that it is not possible to fully control the outcomes of one’s actions and, therefore, trying too hard to achieve something and making long-term plans are not worthwhile exercises.

**5.5.1) Paternalism**, refers to the extent to which an organization or society encourages and accepts that people in authority provide care, guidance and protection to their subordinates, just as they would do to their own children. In return, subordinates are expected to show loyalty and deference to the superiors. The paternalistic cultures share the similar view with performance oriented.

**• Proposition 15**. The paternalistic cultures share the similar view with performance oriented regarding the diversity training.

**5.5.2) Fatalism**, refers to the extent to which people in an organization or society believe that it is not possible to control fully the outcomes of one’s actions. The fatalistic culture and low performance are both sharing the same view regarding to invest in training and development. For example, manager from fatalistic culture assume that employees, by nature, have limited ability to improve their knowledge (Aycan et al., 2000).

**• Proposition 16**. Cultural fatalism tends to have low level of investment in diversity training.

Although, these frameworks explained how national culture can influence the diversity training practices, a number of important questions are suggested for diversity training by these cultural frameworks:

• How do cultural values explain the importance that is attached to diversity training, the content of training practices and the types of training methods that are utilised?

• What impact does culture have on individual learning styles? Do HRD specialists need to approach the design and delivery of training differently to account for cultural differences?

• How does culture influence the way in which individuals assess diversity training outcomes? It is possible that some cultures have short versus long-term orientations in assessing the value of diversity training.

• Is diversity training more culture bound than other HRM practices? Given that many development practices focus in interpersonal, relationships it is likely that they will be more embedded in the local culture.

• It is likely that culture will influence the way diversity training is conducted. Given that many training processes are relational-based, the extent and type of feedback may be influenced by the nature of the culture. In this context, individualist cultures may be more amenable to direct feedback; whereas in collectivist cultures, the emphasis may be on more indirect and informal feedback processes.

• Culture will likely influence what is discussed in diversity training activities. It is possible that individualist cultures will show a preference for discussing potential and performance issues whereas in collectivist cultures, these issues are less likely to be considered.

The questions are indicative and do not in any way capture what we do or do not know about cross-culture in a diversity training context. However, it is appropriate to point out some of the difficulties associated with the cross-cultural perspective on diversity training. Three particular difficulties should be highlighted. The cross-cultural perspective may over-simplify national cultures and their influence on diversity training. It is difficult to make a clear distinction between cultural values and institutions. It is generally acknowledged that institutions include cultural attitudes and values. The cross-cultural perspective is a difficult one to operationalize in methodological terms. The robustness of measures and the over-reliance on dimensional models of culture may reduce the potential to reach strong conclusions about the influence of culture on diversity training. We have not yet encountered studies that use multi-level models to investigate the impact of culture on diversity training policies and practices.

**Institutions/Contingency Factor and Diversity Training**

Institutional theory can be used to explain how institutional processes influence organizational practices (Scott, 1987). The theory proposes that managerial decisions are influenced by three institutional mechanisms – coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism suggests that organisations will adopt diversity training practices because they are required to do so by statutory and regulatory frameworks. These may include affirmative action, equality and discrimination legislation. Mimetic isomorphism suggests that organisations will adopt diversity training practices similar to their competitors in order to manage uncertainty, whereas normative isomorphism will adopt diversity training because of normative pressures in the institutional environment. These normative pressures may arise from the view that diversity training is a good thing for organisations to do. Culture is embedded in institutions such as Diversity training. An organization’s diversity training practice is its responses to demands and pressures generated within the organization’s socially constructed environment. Institutional pressures and demands shape diversity training through legal compulsion, normative regulations, and mimetic forces (Yang and Konrad, 2011). Organizations conform to these pressures not only to improve organizational efficiency but to acquire and maintain legitimacy (Scott, 1987).

A large number of cross-national and comparative researches have indicated a firm’s training practices are influenced by country’s national institution (and national culture) (Aycan, 2005). Different institutional factors embedded in different political, economic, cultural and societal configurations across countries (Kim and Gao, 2010) significantly influence training practices. Thus, national culture guides individual’s perception and behaviour towards appropriation of diversity training practices. for example, organizations that operate in Asian countries tend to adopt diversity training practices that are consistent with the national embedded values and behavioural norms (House et al., 1999).

**Size and Type of Industry**

It has traditionally been argued that a variety of contextual or contingency factors effects human resources practices (Gerhart and Fang, 2005). Such factors include size, nature of industry, organizational strategy, business strategy and operations strategy (Aycan et al., 2000, Gerhart and Fang, 2005). Both organizational size and type of industry are considered to be the most important institutional factors that influence the training practices (Kim and Gao, 2010). According to Aycan (2005) large firms tend to invest more in training and development than small firms. Storey (2004) found that small firms in United Kingdom offer little formal training to their managers and employees than large firms, Walsh (2001) proposed that the majority of MNCs in Australia typically differ from local organisations in their approach towards employee management, with foreign companies generally more likely to utilize the policies and practices associated with human resource management. Such an investment in training practice is considered to result from strong financial resources and technical expertise of multinational corporations.

**Proposition 18**. Organizational size is positively related to the level of investment in diversity training practices.

***Conclusion***

The way in which organisations approach diversity training will be influenced by the national cultural context within which the training takes place. There is however a significant gap in the literature in terms of understanding diversity training from a cross cultural perspective. This paper reviewed the literature on the cross cultural perspective and explores how this perspective informs us as to the purposes, processes and outcomes of diversity training. It engaged with the notion that the concepts of diversity and diversity training are culturally situated and may have meanings that are unique to that cultural context. It also identified propositions for further research and explores the practical implications of the cross cultural perspective for the design of diversity training programmes.

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