

## **Exploring the Competitive Advantage of Cross-Cultural Communication Training: A Conceptual Semantic Study**

**Anurupa Ghatge<sup>1</sup> and Sabyasachi Dasgupta<sup>2</sup>**

**Abstract:** *The aim of this paper is to discuss the theoretical basis on the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication training modules. The paper takes a critical analysis of literature review and discusses major factors on the success of expatriates in various companies, in terms of cross-cultural communication and the effectiveness of cross-cultural training. This research suggests that cross-cultural training directs at making the employees feel comfortable while working on international assignments by enhancing their cross-cultural accommodations and solidifying their acumen to understand and appreciate competing cultural perspectives. The paper finally suggests areas where research needs to happen so that it benefits both the corporate and academicians. The parameters identified and analyzed from a semantic understanding of the concept of cross-cultural corporate communication will enable the companies to create competitive advantage over others in the globalized world.*

**Keywords:** Cross cultural communication, training, intercultural communication, corporate, theories, expatriate

### **Introduction**

The concept and importance of cross-cultural communication training, its role in interpersonal communication is gaining momentum in today's world due to the impact of globalization and its effects. Caligiuri et.al. (2005) suggests cross-cultural communication training aims at enabling employees to have comfortable living and working on international assignment. This process would enhance their cross-cultural adjustment and strengthening their ability to understand and appreciate multiple cultural perspectives. This research tries to understand the present business culture in India and other countries, its related theories, the culture and style of management, and also the factor that affects the cross-cultural communication training. Hence, the study endeavors to understand the literature review with a brief discussion of the objectives of cross-cultural communication training followed by review of the cross-cultural training methods and finally, into the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication training in relation to expatriate assignments while working in Indian MNCs.

It is always argued by the HR managers that the success of expatriates on international assignments depends largely on effective cross-cultural communication. Indian companies working in different countries hire people from varied cultural backgrounds to conduct communication training sessions for staff to ensure success in international assignment. Such

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<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar at Symbiosis International University (SIU) and

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Symbiosis Centre for Corporate Education (SIU)

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication (SIU)

Corresponding author: Anurupa Ghatge can be contacted at:

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training improves cultural awareness that help expatriates to improve relationships with colleagues from other countries. Many companies render services of experts in cross-cultural communication to ensure that employees are comfortable to work in other countries environment. Growing value of global businesses has made companies to invest in cross-cultural communication training for competitive advantage and to understand use of downward and upward flows of communication. Chaney et.al (2011) emphasized the need to understand the culture of other country while interacting with counterparts in order to avoid unintentionally offending them. The literature review divided in subsequent sections critically examines the viewpoints of different scholars in terms of the semantics prevalent of competitive advantage in cross-cultural communication training.

### **Concept and importance of cross-cultural communication training**

Bennett et. al. (2000) put forth specific recommendations designed to enhance the success of expatriate assignments and minimize failure. These scholars point out that cross-cultural training programs should be crafted in such a way that objectives will help assignees to manage change in terms of personal and professional transition, accommodate cultural differences, and lastly accommodate their responsibilities in a different cultural environment.

Cross cultural communication training being a tool helps different foreign cultures to come closer to each other through similar pattern of communication. (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985; Tung, 1981) In these training programs, different training methods are implemented which includes class room session, documentary films, practical tasks etc. (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000; Black & Mendenhall, 1989; Mendenhall & Stahl, 2000) with the course of time changes are observed between traditional training and cross-cultural communication training. Bhagat and Prien (1996) perceived that cross-cultural communication training discourages the receipt of variances among different cultures.

Various reviews showed that culturally diverse preparing is progressively being utilized as a staffing hone in universal HR administration (Sinangil and Ones, 2001). For instance, a survey conducted by Andersen consulting revealed that language training was offered by 94% of the companies and another cross-cultural training to international assignees was offered by 69% of the best 32 of Fortune 500 companies. Sinangil and Ones (2001) quoted another survey of recent time that involved 250 companies, which revealed that cross-cultural training was offered to approximately 63% of their expatriates. On comparing with earlier surveys, these usage percentages were much higher than those already reported, with the usage percentages estimated at around 25% (Black & Gregersen, 1991).

There are number of reasons for expatriates being failing in achieving the anticipated outcomes of a foreign assignment. According to Kealey and Protheroe (1999) not many studies have been attempted on seen learning and adequacy of cross cultural training that would, in the long run, satisfy all criteria for solid exploration. Various studies have stressed on satisfying all criteria and demonstrated solid methodological and experimental backing for the estimation of cross cultural training. (Kealey and Protheroe, 1999)

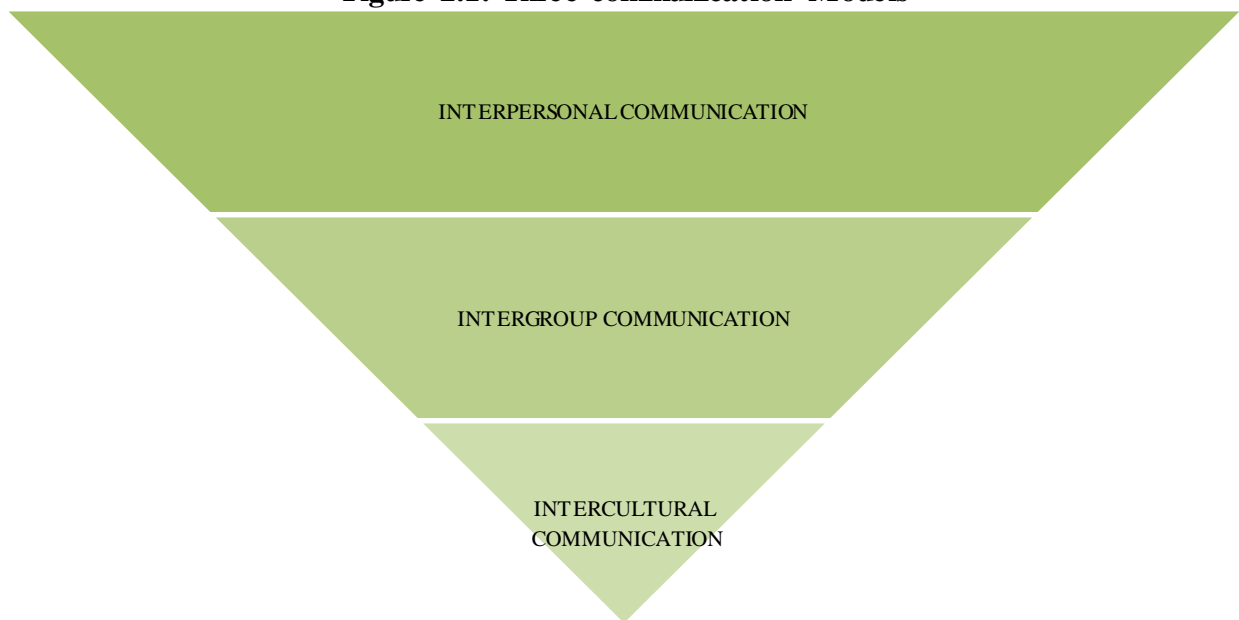
### **Role of cross-cultural training in interpersonal communication**

Interpersonal communication is more important to be presented with intercultural communication. A critical review of literature suggested three important terms, culturally diverse, interpersonal, and intercultural communication which were used to describe people building association with their companion as an individual.

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Borchers (1999) explained interpersonal communication as that happens between individuals who know one another for quite a while and these individuals see one another as exceptional people, not as individuals in social circumstances. According to various researches, inter group communication illuminates numerous ranges of communication, generally for connections at work, between societies, for broad communications wonders, and political communication. Intercultural communications conceptualized as communication between individuals from diverse national societies, and eye to eye communication (Gudykunst and Mody, 2002). Figure 2.1 shows the relation between three communications, as per the announcement of Humphrey (2006).

**Figure 2.1: Three communication Models**



**Source:** Adopted from Humphrey (2006)

Communication can be part into two segments: the substance or message and the channel it is passed on. Ouellet (2003) expressed interpersonal communications as one of the critical foundation of society, and it has a practically identical technique with the business communication model to transmit data or messages yet with a specific foundation.

Economy keeps running over national limits and individual cannot stay in own nation field to work together. To learn basic aptitudes to enhance social business communication, some conceivable wellsprings of training is offered by companies. According to Payne (2004), training system helps to achieve following advantages like, people know themselves, encourage certainty, break hindrances, build trust, motivate, open skylines, develop interpersonal aptitudes, develop listening aptitudes, and career improvement.

### **The methodology of cross-cultural communication training**

Researcher reviewed many literatures and found that the semantics of cross cultural communication has been largely ambiguous or not clearly stated. The early researches on cross-cultural communication described cross cultural communication as the ability to express effectively in another culture, explained in terms of three interdependent dimensions which includes personality traits and attitudes, how individuals acquire and categorize cultural

knowledge, and being an effective communicator. Many researchers have outlined a number of cross cultural communication training methodologies. Major studies were made by many scholars have noted “that skills and abilities required of the expatriates are highly demanding, and these authors use different approaches to integrate them into training programs, which are briefly discussed as the cognitive, the affective, the experiential, and the language learning approach”. (Tung (1981, 1987); Black and Mendenhall (1989))

According to several scholars, “The cognitive or information acquiring approach deals with the learning of information or skills from a lecture type orientation”. The fact orientation, advocated by Brislin et al. (1983), resembles Tung’s Area Studies (1981, 1987) These scholars opine “environmental briefing and culture orientation programs designed to provide trainees with information regarding the history, the geography, the religion, the people, the economy, and the way of life of the target culture”.

Cognitive method was the most popular in cross cultural communication training during the 1960s, and it remains popular with researchers even today. Researchers have recommended the experiential method as better, and this led to the multiplication of experiential exercises and cultural assimilators. (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000)

The learning of information or skills via techniques that improves affective responses on the part of the trainee, which results in cultural insights defines the affective approach. (Mendenhall et al., 1987) Tung’s (1981) cultural assimilation and sensitivity training as well as Brislin et al. (1983) attribution involves “training and cultural awareness are also grouped together with the affective approach in cross cultural communication”.

According to researches, while cultural assimilation training assists members of one culture to interact and adjust successfully with members of another culture, “attribution training enables trainees to make isomorphic attribution and to handle discomfort expectation as well as possible, in order to internalize the values and standards of the host country”. Overseas assignments require that the expatriates establish extensive contact with the nationals of the host country which suggests that cultural assimilation training should be supplemented by language, sensitivity, and field training. (Tung, 1981)

Different scholars suggest, “sensitivity training leads the trainees to understand their own values and culture and to be aware of cultural differences by demonstrating a behavior that may be completely different from that of their own culture”. (Tung, 1981) According to Bennett et al. (2000), the strength of cultural awareness training comes from the fact that the trainees learn to appreciate cultural differences and to apply whatever they learn to enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural interactions. On the other hand, as per Bhawuk & Brislin (2000) cultural awareness training does not necessarily help the trainees learn anything specific about the host culture in which they will be interacting.

The Experiential Approach method evolved as a reaction to the information-acquiring approach, which was inadequate to cross-cultural training. Experiential techniques provide realistic scenario to the trainee (Mendenhall et al., 1987) Brislin et al. experiential learning (1983) and Tung’s interaction learning or field experience (1981) are classified under this approach. The experiential training helps trainees develop the skills necessary for effective performance, for positive interaction with the locals, and for cognitive skills to make correct attributions (Kealey & Protheroe, 1999) which is expected to be proved by empirical research. (Bhawuk & Brislin, 2000)

### **Studies on effectiveness and impact of cross-cultural communication training**

This segment examines the adequacy and effectiveness of cross cultural communication training in India. Researcher found that numerous past examinations concentrates on the adequacy and effectiveness of culturally diverse communication training on variables such as conformity and execution of representatives. Research on culturally diverse communication concentrates on analyzing how individual impact his capacity to speak with others. It is observed that most people grow up inside a solitary society interacting with others from an alternate culture or foundation can speak to a test. (Fink et al. 2006) Fink et al. (2006) suggested that scientists included in diverse studies ought to add to a comprehension of the interrelations between social measurements, social guidelines, and identity attributes. This helps a person to deal with their own particular diverse conduct and in addition that of others. One approach to enhancing conformity is to provide workers with information of proper standards and practices of the other nation through cross cultural training. Puck (2008) explained the effect of pre-takeoff cross cultural training on exile change and concentrated on varieties in commitment, length and the comprehensiveness of training. Apart from past examination, the study accentuations on the viability of pre-takeoff cross cultural training for non-US workers ostracized to a far-reaching scope of host nation settings. Utilizing information from 339 exiles from 20 German Multinational Corporations the study discovers cross cultural training has little if any impact on general, interactional or work-setting ostracizes alteration. Notwithstanding, a huge effect on outside dialect ability was found for each of the three measurements of exile conformity. Interviews with 20 exiles were done to supplement examination and give further ramifications to practice. Different cross-cultural researches have opined that there is successful legitimacy of a wide arrangement of indicators for selecting European supervisors for a culturally diverse preparing program in Japan. The determination strategy evaluated subjective capacity, identity, and measurements measured by appraisal focus practices and a conduct depiction meeting. Results demonstrated that the component openness was fundamentally identified with culturally diverse preparing execution though subjective capacity was altogether connected with dialect procurement. The measurements of flexibility, collaboration, and communication as measured by a gathering exchange exercise gave incremental fluctuation in both criteria, past intellectual capacity and identity.

### **Indian studies**

There were several authors who researched the semantic parameters of cross-cultural communication and its competitive advantage in the Indian context. Bennett et al., (2000) examined whether the culturally diverse training programs expanded the adequacy and accomplishment of appointees in the worldwide commercial center. Morris and Robie (2002) did the Meta-scientific investigation of culturally diverse viability on exile change and execution. The study included the perception of the members and the analysis was done in Northern India through contextual analysis framework. The reasons for this type of analysis and its impact therefore might be an advantage to understanding the nitty-gritties of casual training. However, Waxin and Panaccio (2005) critically analyzed the adequacy of distinctive sorts of diverse training in connection with the alteration of exiles in India before the worldwide experience, and propounded that social separation has direct impact on cross cultural training viability. The study inspected four sorts of cross-cultural training between three features of conformity for French, Korean, German and Scandinavian ignored supervisors. The discoveries highlighted that the

cross cultural training can quicken the change of exclusion, and lead to worldwide experience of social separation directed by the viability of cross- cultural training.

Samere et al. (2007) studied the difficulties with confronting expatriate performance abroad and found that Multinational Corporations appear to be giving careful consideration to global training and administration improvement for new ostracize assignments. Compelling training of ostracizing workers is required for the accomplishment of any Multinational Corporations. However, Nagar and Mishra (2012) studied the common cultural differences among India, China, and America by applying the Hofstede and Bond approach of cultural dimensions. The further study discussed the cultural differences impact on the five management practices like decision-making, motivation system, conflict management, characteristics of the work group and cooperative strategies. This study understood most of the failures occurred due to cultural difference. Therefore, the study analyzed the impact of cultural differences in cooperative strategies, work-group characteristics, conflict management, motivation system and decision making. Results observed that Indian managers make a less risky decision than others as equity principle is widely taken and they use indirect forms of influence to assist the third party. Indians give more attention to creating an interpersonal and social relationship resulting in competitive advantage as part of cooperative strategies.

### **Analysis and discussion**

The review of literature led to certain factors which could provide competitive advantage to different companies in terms of creating effectiveness in cross-cultural communication training. Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) and Okoro (2012) made their study on the viability of diverse by considering variables like affectability, communication, social adaptability, and lessened ethnocentrism. On the other hand, Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) inspected the dynamic, multifaceted skills and worldwide authority adequacy in the US. The study utilized worldwide pioneer review and director evaluation study from three multinational combinations. The study highlighted that the joined impact of the individual characters, for example, extraversion, openness to encounter, and bring down neuroticism, and diverse experience, for example, association started, multifaceted work encounters and non-work diverse encounters, as the indicators of element diverse abilities which incorporates resistance of equivocalness, social adaptability, and decreased ethnocentrism. These capabilities foresee the rating of managers' worldwide initiative adequacy. The study infers that the cross social experience created through business related and non-business related exercises. However researchers concentrated only on the research done on U.S thus the findings can't be summed up to other little nations. Okoro (2012) assessed the multifaceted communication and worldwide behavior for supervisors in universal assignments in USA. The study proposed a key part of associations in order to accomplish the satisfactory profit for speculations and to succeed on assignment worldwide through social mindfulness, affectability, and communication. Okoro (2013) built up the systematic structure and suggestions for adjustment of multinational administration procedures for manageable business aggressiveness in the present globalised scenario.

Caligiuri et al. (2001) studied the effect by considering speculations to figure out if the development of desires influences exiles' modification utilizing an example of seventy three ostracizes who finished polls roughly ten months in the wake of touching base in their host nations. Every one of the exiles had pre-takeoff culturally diverse preparing, yet the preparation fluctuated in saw pertinence. The émigrés were doled out either to nations where their local

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dialect was talked or to nations where their local dialect was not talked. The consequences of the interceded relapse investigation propose that the CD have a mediator impact.

Globalization of business operations has led to broadened essentialness in the context of contemporary business procedure among the developed countries. There has been numerous researches on different parts of exile execution in terms of determination, training, and remuneration of excluded population. All these studies have been conducted in US with their extension and approach being proposed by various researchers in their observational investigation of Singaporean Expatriates in the People's Republic of China. One of the critical findings in the studies suggest disparity between the impression of accomplishment components among the exiles themselves and the human resource executives of multinational partnerships having key role in the task of those ostracized population. Taking previous researches into confidence, this study debates that notwithstanding the learning that constitutes accomplishment in abroad assignments it is imperative to accomplish typical concession for elements deciding such achievements. Zakaria (2000) analyzed the viability of multifaceted training in Malaysia town encouraging the procedure of cultural assimilation procedure of the worldwide workforce. The study concentrated measures of life specifically and society in general pointing out aptitudes which is required by building mental alongside socio cultural changes of sojourners and excluded community while confronting the remote society. The study included the new culturally diverse preparing model by incorporating the preparation viability models and its impact on cultural assimilation. The model points out diverse kind of preparing project (psychological and experiential) before the way of life contact improves the proficiency in adjusting the current culture-general and culture-specific abilities. This model highlights high level of socio-cultural and mental conformity was accomplished. The findings suggested that feeling and behavioral reactions activated by intercultural adequacy aptitudes improve mental change. Hence it can interestingly be inferred that intellectual training concentrated on social mindfulness, interpersonal abilities and upgraded the socio-cultural modification. Thus the difficulties that banished administrators face can be addressed through cross-cultural training.

Ko and Yang (2011) analyzed the impact of cross cultural training on exile assignments in Taiwan ostracized migrated in the US utilizing the subjective as a part of profundity meeting concentrated on the adequacy of cross cultural training in connection with dialect and post-landing culturally diverse training. The study findings highlighted that pre-takeoff cross cultural training or post-landing cross cultural training is compelling and worth the speculation by the MNCs. The study set forth different suggestions in connection with cross cultural training programs, multifaceted abilities and requires aptitudes for the compelling cross social communication to expand the employment execution. However the study utilized just predetermined number of people groups speaking to one culture along these lines the discoveries can't be summed up, and the study concentrated just on the business or association sort. The cross-cultural adaptability and exile execution in the United Arab Emirates was studied by Cerimagic (2011) to see whether the Australian Project Managers, who are working in UAE, get diverse training and if this preparation helps them to adjust to another environment and perform better. The material on which this paper is based is from semi-organized meetings directed with Australian Expatriates who were working in the UAE in 2009. The outcomes demonstrated that by giving exiles diverse preparing, ostracizes will probably adjust to the new culture quicker, which will, thus, help the exiles to perform at their maximum capacity. Various cross-cultural studies on Western exiles in Nigeria uncovered that cross-society training programs given to workers and their families by MNCs have turned out to be significantly vital for fruitful

worldwide operations. Multinational enterprises (MNCs) are experiencing issues holding ostracizes for their worldwide operations. It is evaluated that 10-80% of ostracizes sent on remote assignments return home rashly. One reason for exiles' disappointment has been referred to as the powerlessness of these administrators and/or their mates to adjust to the host nation's way of life. Seaket et.al (2008) studied 40 New Zealand exile administrators in China and findings of an electronic mail poll uncovers that social elements are persuasive in all parts of life in China, including business phone and administration. Notwithstanding diverse capabilities, it is imperative for ostracizes in China to have cross practical capacities, culturally diverse communication abilities, and preparing aptitudes. Thus the determination of ostracizes ought to concentrate on the ownership of these basic aptitudes and capacities and, in addition, significant useful or specialized encounters and abilities.

A range of cross-cultural researches investigated the accomplishment of Expatriates of U.S. Multinational Firms in Mexico, including determination criteria like culturally diverse training and failure of mates to change help us to comprehend U.S. exile rates of achievement and disappointment in Mexico, this examination shows the critical disparities that exist while analyzing the results of the correlation between one and other variables individually. The effect of diverse preparing for ostracizes in a Chinese firm, utilizing a specific Chinese firm, considered by Chenyi and Yehuda(2010) highlights the worth and need of cross-cultural training for fruitful exile to an outside nation. Information was gathered from 82 exiles. However, this was observed to be a confinement of test size in the quantitative examination. Multinational companies (MNCs) are experiencing issues holding ostracizes for their worldwide operations. The investigation of Okpara and Kabongo (2011) analyzed the effect of diverse training and exile alteration among western ostracizes in Nigeria. A specimen of 226 multinational westerns ostracize supervisors working in Nigeria was reviewed for this study. Results demonstrate that diverse sorts of multifaceted preparing influence exiles' modification.

## **Conclusion**

This study finally concluded that the major cross- cultural parameters required to create competitive advantage among the companies are (Willingness to experience, Individual Tolerance, Cross cultural motivation, previous experience abroad climate for training support, emotional intelligence and cultural flexibility. This study found numerous literatures available on cross cultural training and cross cultural competence training but literature on cross cultural communication training was not available. The study on whether transference of the training mediates between learning and cross cultural success in the context of select Indian companies, the importance of factors related to the individual and the environment leading to increased training transference, and the factors that impact the effectiveness of cross cultural communication training in the context of select Indian companies is very less and that to in other countries. This gap suggests a need for the future scope of research to be undertaken for these parameters. A critical analysis of literature also pointed out the need to focus on the transference of the training mediating between learning and cross cultural success in assigned objectives. Ijabadeniyi (2014) investigated the impact of cultural diversity on the views of 92 Indians and 283 Africans in Durban. However, the importance of factors related to the individual and the environment leading to increased training transference was missing. Panda and Gupta (2004) reviewed four previous empirical studies of J.B.P. Sinha and his associates on the cultural diversity inside India. However, it has considered an only evolutionary-emic approach to study cultural diversity within India. The effectiveness of cross-cultural training in Indian countries are

Exploring the Competitive Advantage of Cross-Cultural Communication Training: A Conceptual limited (Waxin & Panaccio, 2005) in perspective of the business alliance in the international market. Researchers in this domain have also studied the cross cultural competence training and effectiveness of participants from Costa Rica, Albania, Fiji, and Mali but factors that impact the effectiveness of cross cultural communication training in the context of select Indian companies required to be studied. Further research devoted to investigating cross-cultural training effectiveness has been primarily conducted through the quantitative research approach and from the experiences of Western expatriates. Therefore, there is a need to engage in a qualitative research approach that looks into the insights and the knowledge of its effectiveness as provided by non-Western expatriates who have undergone cross cultural training (Osman-Gani & Rockstuhl, 2008). The gaps prevalent in literature will enable corporate organizations to look into those dimensions and create strategies to augment competitive advantage for the companies. These gaps will also be useful for the academicians to delve deeper into research to analyze and come out with findings that will provide directions to the corporate for creating effective cross-cultural communication training modules and enhance competitive advantage in the globalized world.

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