

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

A.S.Chellameena

Head, Department of Business Administration, C.S.I.College of Arts and Science for women, Madurai

Dr. S. David AmrithaRajan

*Former Dean, College Development Council, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai
Head, P.G. and Research, Department of Commerce, The American College, Madurai -2*

Abstract

Cultural competence may also be associated with diversity from organizational communication perspective, a diverse culture. Diversity must be prevalent and valued before one may be considered culturally competent / diversity competent organization. Developing cultural competence requires examining biases and prejudices, developing cross-cultural skills, searching for role models, and spending as much time as possible with other people who share a passion for cultural competence. Diversity training university International (DTUI) isolated four cognitive components: a. Awareness b. Attitude c. Knowledge and d. skills. Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures. A cross cultural competence (3c) has generated confusing and contradictory definition because it has been studied by a wide variety of academic approaches and professional fields. Cross-cultural competence does not operate in a vacuum, however, one theoretical construct posits that 3c, language proficiency, regional knowledge are distinct skills that are inextricably linked but to varying degrees on the context in which they are employed.

Introduction

Culture is about the pursuit of excellence and the continual building of expertise because a competency culture, accomplishes its objectives by knowing more about something than other organizations. The mindset prevalent in a competency culture is one where products and services are viewed as things that can always be improved upon. In a competency culture today's achievements are tomorrow's baseline- with higher goals to strive for. This creates a sense of urgency coupled with intensity with individuals in a competency culture. People in a competency culture love a challenge. Difficult, complex problems represent a chance for them to test themselves. People in competency cultures are "Voluminous information gathers" and make decisions based on logic and facts, all while working under the pressure to make a decisive call quickly. Leaders in competency culture are never satisfied and they are quite often hard taskmasters and they can exact in their expectations of others. Leaders in this culture have a single purpose and want to organize in ways that allow them to reach their goals. Leaders also foster a competitive incentives and differential rewards.

Definition

Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio- economic background, particularly in the context of human resources, non-profit organization and government agencies whose employees work with persons from different cultural / ethnic backgrounds.

Cultural competence four components:

1. Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
 2. Attitude towards cultural differences
 3. Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and
 4. cross- cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively with people across culture.
- A Set of congruent behavior attitude and policies that come together as a system, agency / among professional and enables that system, agency / those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.
 - Cultural competence requires that organization have a defined set of values and principles and demonstrate behavior, attitude, policies and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally.
 - Cultural competence is a developmental process that evolves over an extended period. Both individuals and organizations are at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skills along the cultural competence continuum

Diversity Training International (DTUI) isolated four cognitive components of our cultural competence are: a. Awareness b. Attitude c. Knowledge d. Skills.

A. Awareness: Awareness is consciousness of one's personal reactions to people who are different. A police officer who recognizes that he profiles people who look like they are from Mexico as "illegal alien" has cultural awareness of his reaction to this group of people.

b. Attitude: Paul Pedersen's multicultural competence models emphasized three components: awareness, knowledge and skills.

c. Knowledge: Social science research indicates that our values and beliefs about equality may be inconsistent with our behavior and we ironically may be unaware of it.

d. Skills: The skills component focuses on practicing cultural competence to perfection, communication is the fundamental tool by which people interact in organization. This includes gestures and other non- verbal communication that tend to vary from culture to culture.

Frame work for cultural competency

Competence has often used stage wise developmental models and theories that assume that individuals start with a base level of functioning with appropriate training and education. Individual progress from these lower levels of understanding to increasingly more complex and differentiated modes of functioning. People operating at

higher developmental levels generally possess more proficiency at a particular skill such as developing cultural competence.

The goal of cultural competence training programmes is to develop in individual and institutions levels of proficiency in:

- Understanding
- Accepting
- Working skillfully with culturally different students and families.

Pederson (1994) developed a tripartite development model to promote cultural and multicultural understanding among practitioary. Theses competencies include the domains of:

- Awareness
- Knowledge
- Skills.

Each domain builds successively on the previous one, such that mastery of an earlier domain is necessary before proceeding to subsequent domains. The awareness domain competency involves recognition of one's own biases as well as awareness of the sociopolitical issues that confront culturally different youngster competencies in the knowledge domain involves the acquisition of factual information about different cultural groups. Finally, competencies in skills domain involves integrating competencies in the previous awareness and knowledge domains in an effort to positively impact culturally distinct children.

Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures. The basic requirements for intercultural competence are empathy, an understanding of others people's behavior and ways of thinking and the ability to express one's own way of thinking. It is a balance, intuitively adapted among four parts:

- Knowledge (about other culture and other people's behaviors)
- Empathy (understanding the feeling s and needs of other people)
- Self- confidence (knowledge of one's own desires, strengths, weaknesses and emotional stability)
- Cultural identity (knowledge of one's own culture)

Cross - cultural competence:

Cross - competence (3c) has generated confusing and contradictory definions. Because it has been studies by a wide variety of academic approaches and professionals fields. One author identified eleven different terms that have some equivalence to 3c. The United States Army Research Institute, which is currently engaged in a study of 3c has

defined it as “A set of cognitive behavioral and affective / motivational components that enables individual to adapt defectively in intercultural environment.

The development of intercultural competence is mostly based on the individual's experience while he / she is communicating with different cultures. When interacting with people from other cultures. The individual experiences certain obstacles that are caused by differences in cultural understanding between two people from different cultures. Such experience may motivate the individual to acquire skills that can help him to communicate his point of view to an audience belonging to a different cultural ethnicity and background.

Assessment

The assessment of cross - cultural competence is another field that is rife with controversy. One survey identified 86 assessment instruments for 3c. A United States Army Research Institute study narrowed the list down to ten quantitative instruments that were suitable for further exploration of their reliability and validity.

Qualitative assessment instruments

Research in the area of 3c assessment, while thin points to the value of qualitative assessment instruments in concert with quantitative ones. Qualitative instruments such as scenario-based assessments are useful for gaining insight into intercultural competence.

Intercultural coaching frameworks, such as the ICCA (Intercultural communication and collaboration Appraisal), do not attempt an assessment: they provide guidance for personal improvement based upon the identification of personal traits, strengths, and weaknesses.

Quantitative assessment instruments

Three examples of quantitative assessment instruments are :

- The inter - cultural Development inventory
- The Cultural intelligence Scale
- The Multi-cultural Personality Questionnaire.

Conclusion

Competency culture must be included in an agile adoption, but it cannot be the culture. There are places where the competency culture can step over the line. Like being overly competitive and demanding and working people into the ground in the process. Cross- cultural competence training and skills does not break down into the application of individual that as a whole, think differently it may fail to recognize specific differences, it may fail to recognize specific differences between groups, especially in the case of heterogeneous population and value systems. Madison has criticized the tendency of 3c

training for its tendency to simplify migration and cross - cultural processes into stages and phases.

References:

1. Sea.M.C., et al. (1994) Latino cultural Values: Their Role in Adjustment to Disability Psychological Perspectives on Disability select press CA.
2. Stavans, 1.(1995) The Hispanic Condition: Reflections on culture and identity in America.
3. Mercedes Martin Billy Vaughn (2007). "Strategic Diversity &Inclusion Management" magazine pp.31-36. DTUI Publications Division San Francisco, CA.
4. Moule, Jean (2012) Cultural Competence: A primer for educators. Wadsworth /Cengage, Belmont, California.