

Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Diversity

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Abstract Today, in order to achieve an effective result in a globalized business environment, an understanding of cultural diversity is urgently needed. In this background, such a concept, cultural intelligence, is newly presented. This is an ability to socialize and work with people from different culture and background without cultural struggle. This article discusses about a concept and theory of cultural intelligence and suggests a solution to expand and intensify the discussion about cultural intelligence.

Keywords: Cultural Intelligence, Cultural Diversity, Cross-cultural Management, Globalization, Business Environment.

1 Introduction

Today, cultural diversity, caused by globalization, brings about social issues in many aspects. There are two different opinions that solutions for conflicts which might be caused in a meeting among diverse cultures are needed, while cultural diversity might provide positive effects to a society as various, rich cultural asset. In either event, most of people agree to the importance of acknowledgement and protection of cultural diversity throughout the world. In 2005, UNESCO presented the protection of cultural diversity as a logic dealing with commercialization of culture and cultural capitalism through “Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression” in earnest.

Cultural diversity is now part of our everyday life and unavoidable condition. What qualifications we need to live in this environment? In order to achieve effective results in globalized business environment, understanding of multi-culturalism is needed more than anything else. Since the 1980s, theories about cross-cultural management have been studied because of the increased labor force from diverse cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, cultural diversity is considered as a main factor for economic success in today’s creative economy system. Different cultures constantly meet through an alliance, merger, and relocation of companies. At this moment, an attempt to change a diversity of human resource and business management skills into a positive business performance is increasing. Cultural diversity should be considered as a part of corporate culture.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is a new concept that is rising in this trend. Followed by IQ and EQ, the importance of CQ today is being emphasized. Generally, it means an ability to recognize cultural differences and adapt to them, that is to say an ability to socialize and work together with people from different cultures and backgrounds without cultural conflicts. This article is going to discuss about the concept and theory

of CQ which is an important qualification to succeed in global business environment and a required qualification in a globalized society.

2 Three Definitions of Cultural Intelligence

According to David Livermore, cultural intelligence is a person's capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity[1]. It means a capability to work effectively in various situations of cultural diversity such as in school, workplace, and organization through meeting, communication and working together. He suggests four steps to understand and develop cultural intelligence, which are CQ-drive, CQ-knowledge, CQ-strategy, and CQ-action[1]. CQ-drive is the first factor that helps to operate effectively in culturally diverse situations and represents one's interest and confidence toward cultural diversity. CQ-knowledge is the second factor for cultural intelligence which represents the knowledge about differences and similarities between cultures. CQ-strategy is the strategy that how an individual can make cultural diversity meaningful in experience. Lastly, CQ-action is a capability to practice as faced with places of cultural diversity, that is to say an ability to express in both verbal and non-verbal words.

The four steps of the above in more detail are as follows. First, CQ-drive shows both inner and external interest, and confidence. Inner interest is an interest in enjoying culturally diverse experiences, and external interest is an interest in gaining benefits from culturally diverse experiences. These are eventually down to confidence, which can be said as trust in own capabilities in culturally diverse situations. CQ-knowledge is applied to a variety of knowledge of cultural differences. This is a fairly wide range of knowledge, for example, from the knowledge of economic or legal system of other cultures for business to an inner factor that causes a cultural gap, including knowledge of value or religion. This, of course, covers the knowledge of other languages. CQ-strategy is the awareness, planning and checking, and the awareness is knowing the cultural knowledge, planning is establishing the strategy before meeting with others from different cultures, and checking is conducting a check to suppose a possible situation which can be different from an expectation when treating different cultures and to try to adapt to it. CQ-action represents a modification of non-verbal communication such as gesture and facial expression. Verbal expression means more than just using the other's language, that is to say a modification of accent or tone. David Livermore presents cultural intelligence concretely with the four steps mentioned above and shows the meanings and undertones of each step.

Christopher Early also emphasizes the importance of cultural intelligence with his own definition in detail, but it is distinguished from David Livermore's. Christopher Early defines cultural intelligence as follows. Cultural intelligence is the capability to have an ability to observe and understand in meeting with other cultures, feel the motive of reactions and interactions and pass from thought to action[2]. He divides factors of cultural intelligence into three parts, analyzes how each concept is interrelated, and also proposes the process to develop cultural intelligence. The three factors of cultural intelligence are 'culture strategic thinking' which includes cultural knowledge and a way of thinking, 'motive' to translate ideas to actions with patience and confidence, and 'action' to deal with given circumstances appropriately[2].

Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Diversity

Culture strategic thinking is related to general thinking technique used when understanding patterns of behavior and their reasons of people from other cultures. This helps us catch and understand not only a belief and a value system of people from other cultures but the procedure and custom of their behavior. The motive for cultural intelligence is given depending on core value and preference, and this helps make the purpose and intention clear. The behavioral part of cultural intelligence indicates the capability to observe, recognize, adjust, and act in contact with other cultures. He compares cultural intelligence to human body, which are head, chest, and body based on cultural adaptation. The head of cultural intelligence corresponds to higher thinking in cultural adaptation. The chest of cultural intelligence is the ability to maintain confidence, patience, and goal-oriented attitude to relate to others. The body of cultural intelligence includes a modification of behavior. It is not enough to just recognize why other people act in a special way or feel the motive to relate to them. The behavioral cultural intelligence can be compared to one organism, and when it has head, chest, and body all together, it will be more effective than having just one part.

Brooks Peterson also proposes a concept of cultural intelligence and emphasizes its importance. He considers cultural intelligence as a combination of knowledge and recognition of culture, and specific skills. The knowledge of culture reveals facts and cultural characteristics and the recognition represents awareness of oneself and others, and specific skills means behaviour[3]. In other words, cultural intelligence indicates the capability to act using the skills and qualifications to respond appropriately to a standard of cultural value and attitudes of people interacted with. The skills represent language skills or personal relations, and the qualifications mean bearing ambiguity or flexibility[3]. Unlike the above two scholars, he does not give a detailed structure of cultural intelligence, mentioning that the cultural values of the past several scholars who have presented to recognize cultural differences and cultural dimensions are the basic structures. He also says that since the use of different terminology causes a confusion, he proposes the five simplified concepts. These concepts, however, are similar to David Livermore's CQ-knowledge, and Christopher Early's motive for cultural intelligence. We can point out that his theory does not contain a more systematic concern about cultural intelligence like the other two scholars'.

3 Cross-cultural Management and Cultural Intelligence Concepts

A discussion of cultural intelligence in order to understand in more detail previous studies and the researchers who influenced the above three scholars should be a brief. The representative scholars are Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Hall. Starting in the 1980s, as the multinational company's global market strategy became a hot issue, to solve conflicts due to the differences between diverse cultures workers, the cross-cultural management theory was raised in earnest. The first scholar was Hofstede G. The common problems he found are as follows[4]. First, the social inequality, including the relationship with authority, and second, the relationship between individuals and groups. Third, the concept of masculinity and femininity, and the fourth is a way to cope with the uncertainty related to attack control and expression of emotion. Based on these empirical studies, the four main problem areas are defined as cultural

dimensions, proposing culture division index. After analyzing the Chinese Value Survey through the collaborative research project with Michael Bond, the fifth dimension, Confucian dynamism, which indicates long-term and short-term orientation in life, was added.

Another representative scholar is Fons Trompenaars, and he proposed five measures in human relationships and one measure in relationship with time and environment throughout the study[5]. The first measure is the 'Universalism vs. Particularism.' The former gives priority to general law, whereas the latter gives priority to special situations or relationships. The second is 'Individualism vs. Communitarianism.' The former places emphasis on human rights and personal freedom of an individual as one of the principals, whereas the latter puts a stress on a common purpose, harmony and cooperation. Third, 'Neutral vs. Affective,' is the measure that classifies based on the degree of emotional expression. The fourth is the 'Specific vs. Diffuse.' The former limits a vertical relationship or hierarchy within workplace just to workplace, whereas the latter spreads limits to private life. The fifth is the 'Achievement vs. Ascription.' The former is evaluated by human achievement or personal history, while the latter is evaluated by position or potential such as man's age, class, and education. Sixth, the notion of time was measured based on the association with the past, present, and future, and it is classified by whether they are closely linked to or separated. Seventh, in the relationship with environment, it compares culture based on control possibility, and this represents that thinking of controlling nature (controlling own life) and thinking of being part of nature (one's life is affected by other power) are the contrast concepts.

Along with the differences between cultures suggested by the above two scholars, there is one more important study of difference classification about high-context and low-context culture presented by Edward Hall. He proposed the direct and indirect speech act of high-context and low-context culture which affect human behavior as cultural unique characteristics[6]. The feature of communication with a high degree of context is to have information programmed already, there is only a minimal amount of information in forwarded messages, and in the communication with a low degree of context, most of information is contained in delivered messages to fill up the missing parts of context. Thus, people from high-context cultures largely depend on the interpretations of their experience and cultural environment in communication. They learn how to interpret the tacit meaning about backgrounds in communication and many meanings are conveyed indirectly. In low-context cultures, however, the environment is less important and non-verbal behavior is often ignored. So communication parties should provide more specific information.

Analyzing the study on the difference between cultures presented by the above three scholars comprehensively, it can be categorized into the solution to the three common problems faced by mankind. Three common problems and concerns can be seen as time, nature, and human relations. Although the cultural classification studies of the above three scholars are mainly focused on human relations, it is certain that in more macro views there are just common questions of time, nature, and relationships and the differences between their solutions.

The recent discussions of cultural intelligence presented by three scholars, David Livermore, Christopher Early, Brooks Peterson, actually owes to the efforts of previous scholars. David Livermore's CQ-knowledge, Christopher Early's motive for

Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Diversity

cultural intelligence, and Brooks Peterson's five differences between cultures must have selective contents from previous studies. Ultimately, those three above scholars of cultural intelligence are emphasizing Hofstede's five cultural classifications, Trompenaars's seven cultural classifications, and Hall's high-context and low-context cultural differences, which are thirteen kinds of cross-cultural research in total, depending on their own preferences as significant factors for improvements of cultural intelligence.

4 Conclusion and Suggestion

I would like to say that the overall understanding of previous studies discussed earlier is needed for the discussion of cultural intelligence which is newly presented. Only then it is possible to accept the discussion of cultural intelligence which is still in its infancy more critically. Certainly, cultural diversity is inevitable in this age of globalization, and one of the solutions to this issue is the spread and training of discussion of cultural intelligence. I believe that continued discussion on cultural intelligence should be expanded and intensified.

I suggest the cultural intelligence survey of college students as part of the discussion. First, conduct the survey suggested by scholars as the results of their studies without giving students information about cultural intelligence. After training through lectures for one semester, conduct the same survey, then analyze the changes in the results. It is possible to observe if there are changes in the results of cultural intelligence measurement survey, and if there are, what parts of the survey are changed can be found. The main contents of the training should be the understanding of the need for cultural intelligence and causing concern as the first. For the knowledge of cultural intelligence, the contents on cross-cultural differences (13 kinds of cross-cultural difference theories of Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Hall) should be included. Meanwhile, role play for actual situation settings of different cultures can be helpful to learn behavior change and strategies of cultural intelligence. Through these experiments, it is possible to find the advantages and disadvantages of the survey and expand the understanding of concepts of cultural intelligence by considering alternatives and views critically.

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