

CHALLENGES OF MULTICULTURAL TEAMS WITH REFERENCE TO IT SECTORS

B. B. Biradar¹, Dr. Vishnukant. S. Chatpalli²

¹*Dept of Management Studies, Karnatak Arts College, Dharwad (India)*

²*Dept. of Business Administration, Rani Channamma University, Belagavi (India)*

ABSTRACT

In today's scenario multicultural teams plays a vital role in the organization growth. These teams are composed with a different social background, gender, ethnic and culture takes place business environment becomes more challenging. These multicultural with diverse cultural backgrounds offer challenges to the organization. The purpose of this study is to identify the challenges in Communication issues, Behavioural issues and Group dynamics. The convenience and snowball sampling is adopted for this descriptive study. Sample of 156 project managers of different IT companies are considered for the study. The findings of the study reveal that among the three issues major challenges faced by multicultural teams is Group dynamic issues followed by Behavioural issues and communications issues. Among these three issues fluency, language, lack of cohesiveness, unawareness of the cultural differences, resistance to change are some of the major challenges.

Keywords: *Behavioural issues, Challenges, Communication issue, Multicultural Teams.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has become a reality. This has given rise to companies operating in more than one country with the people from different social backgrounds. In this globalized world, multicultural teams accomplish a significant proportion of organization work. Multicultural teams are formed because they improve organizational effectiveness in the global business environment (Cox, 1993; Galbraith, 2000; Kirchmeyer & Mclellan, 1991; Kirkman & Shapira, 2001; Tung, 1993). Multicultural teams are composed of members coming from more than one culture (Sarah Christopher Kiteleja). The challenges faced by multicultural teams are dealing with coordination & control issue, communication issue, group dynamics issue & behavioural issues. To have an effective multicultural team, the member of the team must learn to address the challenges that arise from them.

Indian IT organizations are working globally now. This has created a heterogeneous environment among the IT employees in India which has become a biggest challenge for the organization to manage multicultural employees. In this paper the challenges of managing multicultural teams are broadly classified into 3 issues i.e. Communication, Behavioural Aspects & Group Dynamics. Among these which is the most challenging issue in managing multicultural teams is identified & also comparing among these 3 issues to know which issue is a most challenging in IT companies to manage the multicultural teams.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Campbell (2000) on his part defines culture as a complex web of information that a person learns and which guides each person's actions, experiences, and perceptions. It is no longer acceptable to proceed with the study of teams as if its members are isolated from their cultural and national heritage. Garfield, Charles A (2005) shared his views on the topic 'Diversity is an asset-Variety is the spice of life and business success'. According to him, "Without an understanding and appreciation of the needs, backgrounds and unique contributions of diverse groups, communication is difficult and misunderstanding is inevitable-even with the best of intentions. Taylor Cox (1991) said that increase diversity presents challenges to business leaders who must maximize the opportunities that it present while minimizing its cost to accomplish this, organization must be transformed from monolithic or plural organization to multicultural model. Garfield, Charles A (2005) shared his views on the topic 'Diversity is an asset-Variety is the spice of life and business success'. According to him, "Without an understanding and appreciation of the needs, backgrounds and unique contributions of diverse groups, communication is difficult and misunderstanding is inevitable-even with the best of Intentions. Zdenka KONECNA (2006) said that culture and cultural differences play an important role in international companies at work of multicultural teams and international teams at international meetings. Different understanding of approaches, different cultural patterns may cause that it is not possible to efficiently and successfully execute good intentions and ideas. People from individualistic and low context cultures prefer direct confirmation of conflict, while those from collectivistic and high context culture prefer indirect confirmation (Brett, 2001). Multicultural team members with strong values for collectivism rent to be more cooperative, productive and empowered in self managing work teams than team members with weaker values from collectivism (Kirkman & Shapur, 2001). Kelli A. green, Mayra Lopez, Allen said on basis of their descriptive research titled "Diversity in the work place: benefits, challenges" that respective individual differences will benefit the workplace by creating a completive edge & increasing work productivity and diverse management benefits associates by creating a fair and safe environment where everyone has access to opportunities and challenges. Multicultural team "A Multicultural team is a group of employees selected from two or more countries who are brought together to coordinate, develop, or manage some aspect of a firm's global operations" (Steers & Nordon, 2006).

III. METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study is to know the most important challenge for managing multicultural teams in IT sector. The samples considered for the study are the project managers working in IT companies. The sample size of 156 respondents of various backgrounds is considered using convenience & snowball sampling method for selecting samples for the study. The primary data is collected through structural questionnaire designed in Google form and was administered to the employees. The questionnaire was intended to investigate the challenges faced by respondents in managing multicultural teams consisting of major 3 issues. The Cronbach's alpha method is used to test the reliability of variable or issue. Nunnally (1978) recommended that Cronbach's alpha level of 0.7 or greater is an indication of good internal consistency. The collected data is analysed with the help of Mean score & ANOVAs to compare the challenges and know which factor is more challenging in manage multicultural teams.

IV. HYPOTHESIS

In accordance with the objectives, the following hypothesis were formulated for testing

- a) H0: There is no difference between scores of communication issues.
H1: There is a difference between scores of communication issues.
- b) H0: There is no difference between scores of Behavioural issues.
H1: There is a difference between scores of Behavioural issues.
- c) Ho: No difference between scores of Group Dynamics issues.
H1: There is a difference between scores of Group Dynamics issues.

Reliability Test

Cronbach’s Alpha: - It is designed to measure the consistency among the variables in the questionnaire. The value of the test varies from 0-1. There are 5 variables relating to Communication, 06 variables relating to Behavioural and 9 variables relating to Group Dynamics challenges. These 03 issues and their variables are tested separately and their value of “N” is also different which is reflected in the bellow table.

TABLE NO: 01 Shows the Cronbach’s Alpha scores of challenges of Multicultural Teams

Challenges	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Communication Issues	0.796	05
Behavioural Issues	0.926	06
Group Dynamic Issues	0.857	09

From the above table it clearly shows that the score of Cronbach’s Alpha for all the issues of is more than 0.8, hence we can say that it is an indicator of good consistency.

V. ANALYSIS

- A) H0: There is no difference between scores of communication issues.
H1: There is a difference between scores of communication issues.

Fig. No. 1 Showing scores for communication

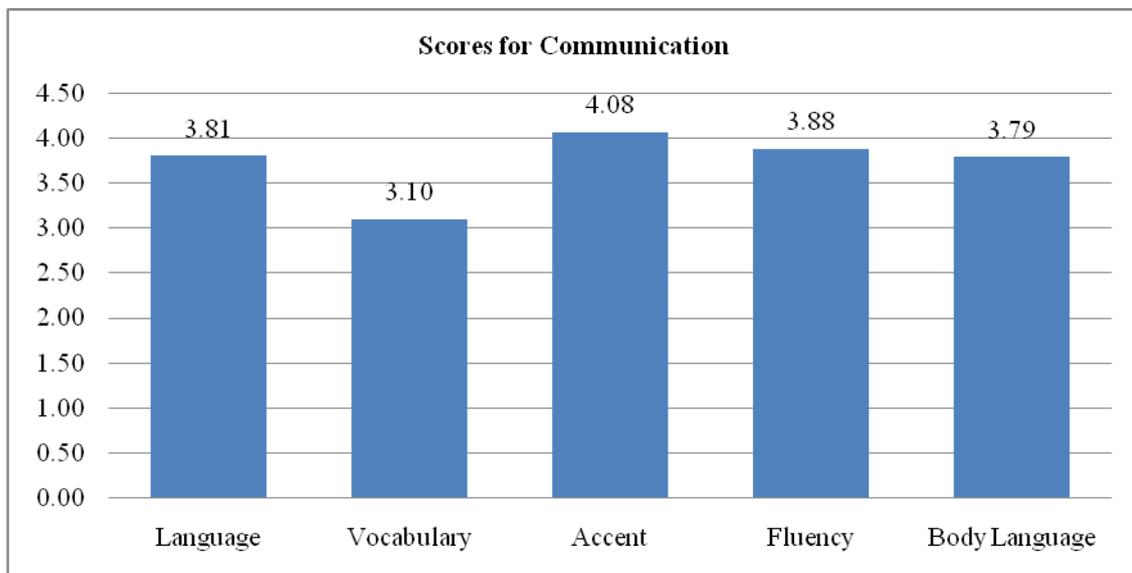


TABLE NO: 02 Shows the most important challenges of Communication in managing

Multicultural Teams

Challenges	Language	Vocabulary	Accent	Fluency	Body Language
Ranks	3	5	1	2	4

TABLE NO: 03 Shows one way ANOVAs Analysis of Communication issues.

ANOVAs: Single Factor						
SUMMARY						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Language	156	594	3.807692	1.975682		
Vocabulary	156	484	3.102564	0.957155		
Accent	156	636	4.076923	1.000496		
Fluency	156	606	3.884615	1.431762		
Body Language	156	592	3.794872	0.925393		
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	85.50769	4	21.37692	16.99147	2.29866E-13	2.383421
Within Groups	975.0256	775	1.258098			
Total	1060.533	779				

Table No: 03 shows the ANOVAs one way analysis of factors determining challenges of communication in managing multicultural teams. The calculated value of F is 16.99 with having 4 degrees of freedom. As the value of F is more than critical value (F) which is 2.38, hence the H0 hypothesis is rejected. Based on the average score factors determining challenges of communication variables are ranked. According to the score the most challenging factor is accent followed by fluency, language, body language and vocabulary.

B) H0: There is no difference between scores of Behavioural issues.

H1: There is a difference between scores of Behavioural issues.

Fig. No. 2 Showing scores for Behavioural Issues

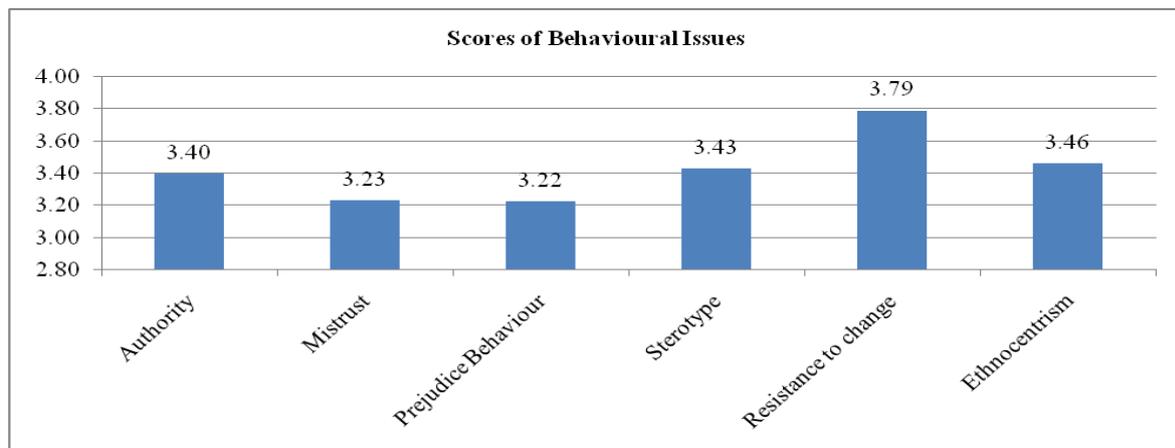


TABLE NO: 04 Shows the most important challenges of Behavioural issues in managing Multicultural Teams

Challenges	Authority	Mistrust	Prejudice Behaviour	Stereotype	Resistance to change	Ethnocentrism
Rank	4	5	6	3	1	2

Table No: 05 shows the ANOVAs one way analysis of factors determining challenges of behavioural issues in managing multicultural teams. The calculated value of F is 4.76 with having 5 degrees of freedom. As the value of F is more than critical value (F) which is 2.22, hence the H0 hypothesis is rejected. Based on the average score factors determining challenges of behavioural issues are ranked. According to the score the most challenging factor is resistance to change followed by ethnocentrism, stereotype, authority, mistrust and prejudice behaviour.

TABLE NO: 05 Shows one way ANOVAs Analysis of Behavioural issues

ANOVAs: Single Factor						
SUMMARY						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Authority	156	530	3.3974359	1.518445		
Mistrust	156	504	3.2307692	1.4173697		
Prejudice Behaviour	156	503	3.224359	1.4525641		
Stereotype	156	535	3.4294872	1.1498346		
Resistance to Change	156	591	3.7884615	1.5098015		
Ethnocentrism	156	540	3.4615385	1.2952854		
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	33.09508547	5	6.6190171	4.7599992	0.0002663	2.223727
Within Groups	1293.211538	930	1.39055			
Total	1326.306624	935				

C) Ho: No difference between scores of Group Dynamics issues

H1: There is a difference between scores of Group Dynamics issues

Fig. No. 3 Showing scores for Group Dynamics Issues.

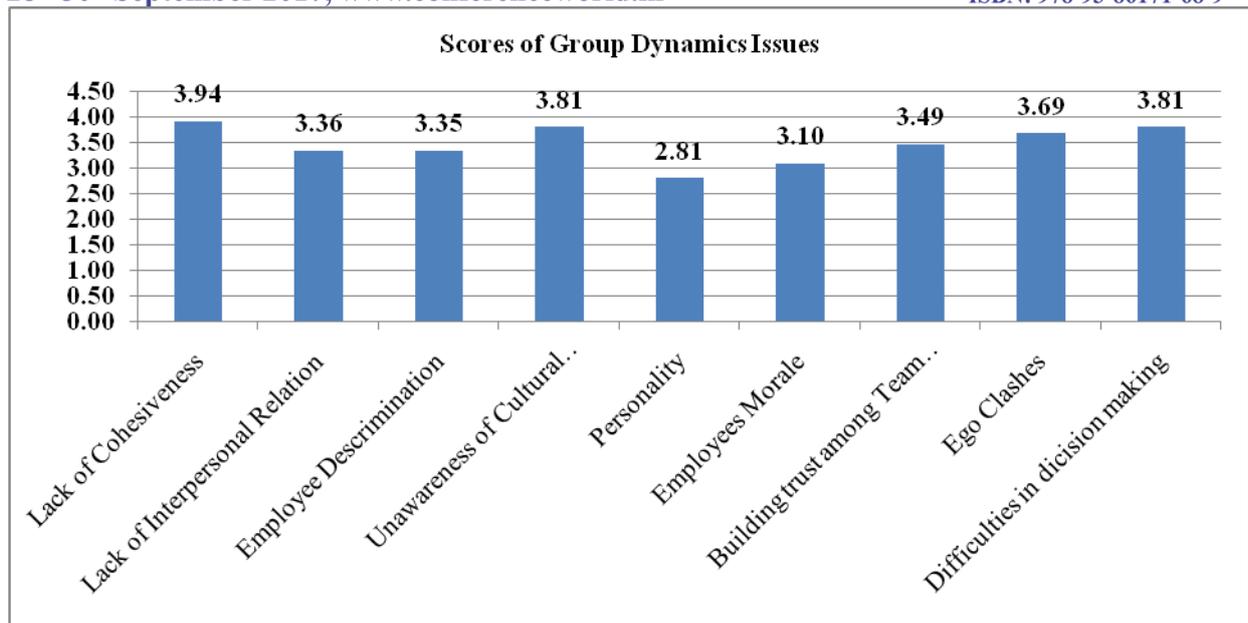


TABLE NO: 06 Shows the most important challenges of Group Dynamics issues in managing Multicultural Teams

Challenges	Rank
Lack of Cohesiveness	1
Lack of Interpersonal Relation	6
Employee Discrimination	7
Unawareness of Cultural Differences	2
Personality	9
Employees Morale	8
Building trust among Team Members	5
Ego Clashes	4
Difficulties in decision making	3

Table No: 07 Shows one way ANOVAs Analysis of Group Dynamics issues

Anova: Single Factor						
SUMMARY						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Lack of Cohesiveness	156	614	3.935897	1.363606		
Lack of Interpersonal Relation	156	524	3.358974	1.031596		
Employee Discrimination	156	523	3.352564	1.223284		
Unawareness of Cultural Differences	156	595	3.814103	1.055542		
Personality	156	439	2.814103	0.978122		
Employees Morale	156	483	3.096154	0.835856		
Building trust among Team Members	156	544	3.487179	0.986931		
Ego Clashes	156	576	3.692308	1.388586		
Difficulties in decision making	156	595	3.814103	1.313606		
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	171.2308	8	21.40385	18.92819	3.39E-27	1.945028
Within Groups	1577.455	1395	1.130792			
Total	1748.686	1403				

Table No: 07 show the ANOVAs one way analysis of challenges of group dynamics in managing multicultural teams. The calculated value of F is 18.93 with having 8degrees of freedom. As the value of F is more than critical value (F) which is 1.95, hence the H0 hypothesis is rejected. Based on the average score factors determining challenges of group dynamics are ranked. According the score the most challenging variable is lack of cohesiveness followed by unawareness of cultural differences, Difficulties in decision making, ego clashes, and building trust in team members, lack of interpersonal relation, employee discrimination, employee’s morale and personality.

TABLE NO: 08 Shows the Consolidated Weighted Average Score of the challenges of Multicultural Teams

Challenges	Communication Issues	Behavioural Issues	Group Dynamics Issues
Wt Aver Score	193.3	213.5	326.2
Rank	3	2	1

The above table reveals the information about the challenges of Multicultural Teams. Based on the factors of each variable the Weighted Average Score is calculated. Among these three major challenges, Group Dynamics is most challenging issues followed by Behavioural issues & Communication issues.

VI. CONCLUSION

Managing Multicultural Teams is a broad & complex issue. Managers face biggest challenge in building Multicultural Teams. This paper throws a light on challenges of Multicultural Teams. The challenges are broadly classified into Communication issues, Group Dynamics issues & Behavioural issues. Generally among these entire issues accent, resistance to change, lack of cohesiveness, unawareness of cultural differences, difficulties in decision making, interpersonal relations, ethnocentrism, and fluency in language are identified as major challenges of Multicultural Teams. To overcome these challenges an effective leadership style will help the organization to improve its productivity & efficiency. The further scope is to identify the different types of leadership styles to overcome these challenges.

REFERENCES

- [1.] Kundu, S C, Managing cross-cultural diversity a challenge for present and future organizations, The Journal of Delhi Business Review Vol. 2, No. 2, July - December 2001
- [2.] Fred Luthans, Organisation behaviour (Tenth Edition, Mc Graw Hill Publishing House 2005 (page 44-112).
- [3.] Campbell (2000), Choosing Democracy, 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall,38.
- [4.] Vakola, M. and Wilson, I.E. (2004), "The challenge of virtual organisations: critical success factors in dealing with constant change", Team Performance Management, Vol. 10 Nos 5/6, pp. 112-20.
- [5.] Brett, Jeanne, Kristin Behvar & Mary C. Kern. (2006). "Managing Multicultural Teams" in Harvard Business Review: November, 84-91.
- [6.] Earley, P. Christopher & Cristina B. Gibson. (2002). Multinational Work Teams: A New Perspective. Mahwah, NJ: LEA Publishers.
- [7.] Halverson, B. Claire & S. Aqeel Tirmizi. (2008). Effective Multicultural Teams: Theory and Practice. New York: Springer.
- [8.] Shapiro, Debra L., Mary Ann Von Glinow & Joseph L. C. Cheng. (2005). Managing Multinational Teams: Global Perspectives. Amsterdam: Elsevier JAI.
- [9.] Faird, Elashmawia, and Philip Harris. Multicultural Management. Gulf Publishing Company, 1993.
- [10.] Henderson, G. (1994). Cultural diversity in the workplace: Issues and strategies. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.

Books

- [11.] K. Aswathappa, Human Resource and Personnel Management, 4th edition, Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi, 2006.
- [12.] Cox, Taylor, Jr. Cultural Diversity in Organizations. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1993
- [13.] Cox, Taylor, Jr. "The Multicultural Organization." Academy of Management Executive. Vol. 5, no. 2, 1991.