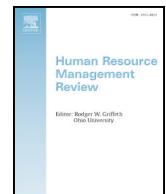


Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Human Resource Management Review

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/humres](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/humres)

## Building influence as an outsider: A theoretical approach to cross-cultural impression management

Anna-Katherine Ward <sup>a,\*</sup>, Elizabeth C. Ravlin <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Tech, 880 West Campus Dr, Blacksburg 24060, VA, USA

<sup>b</sup> Darla Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina, 1014 Greene St, Columbia 29208, SC, USA

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 1 June 2015

Received in revised form 20 December 2016

Accepted 23 December 2016

Available online xxxx

#### Keywords:

Impression management

Diversity

Cross-cultural management

### ABSTRACT

This paper explores the process by which an international newcomer may increase her influence in workgroup decisions. We present a theoretical approach to cross-cultural impression management to describe how the link between cultural differences and workplace influence may be effectively enhanced, specifically by focusing on proactive behaviors shaping self, target, and contextual perceptions. This perspective makes conceptual additions to the human resources, impression management, and cross-cultural management literatures and provides a foundation for increasing the benefits of diversity in organizations.

© 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

The game of business now transpires on a global field with teams composed of an intercultural mix of players, and increasing employee mobility (Wang, Zhan, McCune, & Truxillo, 2011) continues to compound these changes in team cultural composition. Though research has recognized that a diverse employee population increases insight and cultural sensitivity, thereby potentially enhancing firm performance (e.g., Richard, 2000), cultural diversity is often over-looked, or its negative aspects emphasized. Cultural differences between an actor and the target majority group generally create barriers to the actor's influence within the group (e.g., Anderson, Spataro, & Flynn, 2008; Ashcraft, 2013; DiTomaso, Post, & Parks-Yancy, 2007; Joardar, Kostova, & Ravlin, 2007). Judgments about an actor's potential for social affinity and task contribution (components of one's status or value; Joshi & Knight, 2015) are initially made by target group members based on actor demographic characteristics (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Joshi & Knight, 2015; Ridgeway, 1991), and deference in workplace decisions is granted based on these perceptions of status (Joshi & Knight, 2015). As cultural difference often activates negative categorizations of the actor in the targets' minds and/or inhibits actor expression of status behaviors (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2009; Kim, Kirkman, & Chen, 2006), individuals from foreign contexts may have difficulty attaining a position of influence in the new environment.

Consider, as an example, a well-educated Turk with strong work experience who has recently immigrated to Canada. This individual is likely to become underemployed due to lack of education/credential recognition, culturally-biased employment tests, language issues, and lack of experience with Canadian firms (Aycan & Berry, 1996). This foreigner is less likely to be liked/trusted by his new co-workers, due to his dissimilarity from them (Byrne et al., 1971), or to be given the same level of professional respect as in Turkey, due to the loss of occupational status (Aycan & Berry, 1996). A lack of perceived similarity and competence in the eyes of the locals leads to lower perceptions of constructiveness in the immigrant's input (Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2012) and a lack of deference to him (Joshi & Knight, 2015). As the norms for status and general behavior in Canada

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [annakward@hotmail.com](mailto:annakward@hotmail.com) (A.-K. Ward), [ravlin@moore.sc.edu](mailto:ravlin@moore.sc.edu) (E.C. Ravlin).

are very different from Turkey (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002), the immigrant likely does not know where to begin to enhance his impression on the locals.

The purpose of this paper is to examine how a culturally-different newcomer may develop an influential voice within an otherwise culturally homogenous work team, specifically through *cross-cultural impression management* (CCIM). CCIM is defined as an actor's attempts to alter the way she is perceived by a culturally-different target group. CCIM is important because many work contexts require the ability to influence from a position of the cultural minority, including expatriate management (e.g., Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991; Firth, Chen, Kirkman, & Kim, 2014), culturally diverse top decision-making teams (Buttner, Lowe, & Billings-Harris, 2009; McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1996), global supply chains, and cross-border teams, all of which play a role in enhancing the competitiveness of the firm (Richard, 2000). As research suggests that impression management tactics considered desirable in one context may not be endorsed in others (e.g., Leary, 2007; Sandal et al., 2014), and attempts to act like the targets (e.g., by relying on their typical tactics) may be seen as insincere (e.g., Ickes, Holloway, Stinson, & Hoodenpyle, 2006; Thomas et al., 2008; Thomas & Ravlin, 1995), there is substantial uncertainty as to how impression management can be applied cross-culturally. Effective CCIM should allow a foreign newcomer to attain *influence* (or ability to alter the actions of others; Anderson et al., 2008) in workgroup decisions despite (or, at times, making use of) significant cultural difference.

This paper is organized as follows: the first section provides an introduction to the foundations of influence and deference using Joshi and Knight's (2015) dual pathways model to demonstrate how an actor's demographic characteristics lead to influence (or lack thereof) in a target group. We discuss how impression management is used in developing status and influence based on two impression management models in particular that touch on the complications of inter-cultural contexts (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997; Roberts, 2005). These models are critical for understanding impression management in complex scenarios, especially where clear actor/target differences exist; thus, they serve as the foundation of CCIM. In the second section, we expand on these earlier models to explore how individuals develop new scripts for successful impression management in unfamiliar contexts through CCIM. The CCIM model is intended for contexts in which learned behavioral scripts are ineffective and in which the actor and targets do not share (or do not know whether they share) a mutual understanding of the environment. We integrate and extend prior models to illustrate the CCIM process through which a newcomer makes sense of the foreign context's status structure, determines impression needs, and reconstructs her image as well as perception of the context to enhance her status (and, in turn, influence) with the target group. We discuss antecedents (cognitive and regulative resources), the behavioral process, and outcomes of CCIM, as well as critical moderating conditions (refer to Fig. 1). The final section explores the implications of our model for human resource theory and practice.

We limit our scope to the group-level context: however, we anticipate that the CCIM model should ultimately help to increase our understanding of individual expatriate or business traveler success and organizational-level ability to leverage cultural diversity. We are not specifically focused here on cultural intelligence (i.e., the ability to adapt to foreign environments; Earley & Peterson, 2004), acceptance of international newcomers (e.g., Joardar et al., 2007), or identity negotiation (Brannen & Salk, 2000; Yagi & Kleinberg, 2011), though components of our model do rely on these concepts. Rather, in this paper, the concern of the culturally-different actor is with building status in the eyes of a target majority group (going beyond mere adaptation), thereby creating a context that allows her to have a significant voice in decisions.

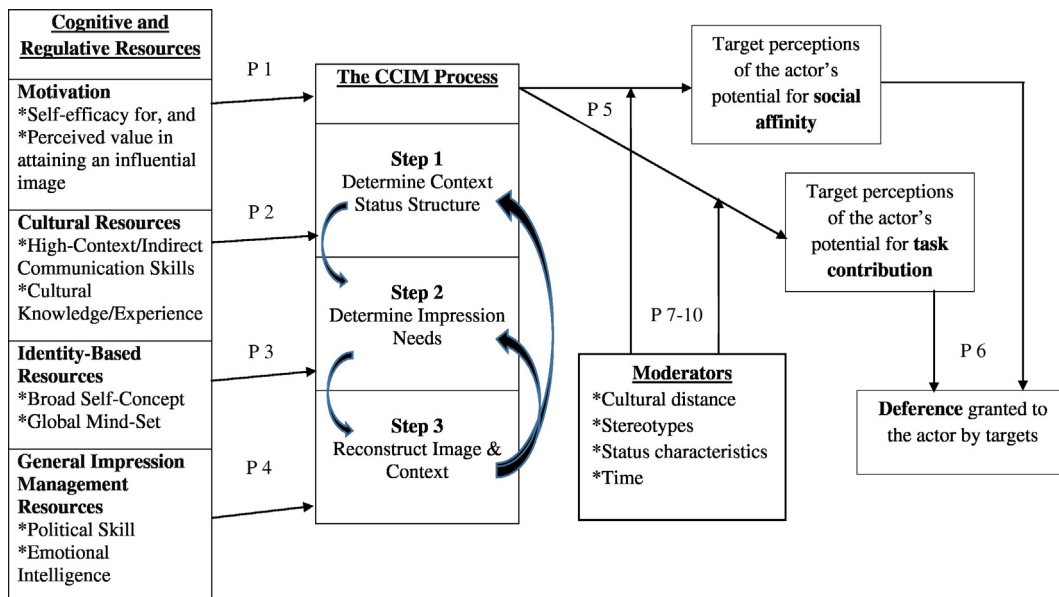


Fig. 1. Building influence through cross-cultural impression management.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5033631>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5033631>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)