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Relationships between personality traits, cultural intelligence and intercultural communication competence

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Abstract

Cultural intelligence has been subject to so many studies in literature. Besides cultural intelligence, intercultural communication competence is emphasized in literature. Relationship between cultural intelligence and intercultural communication competence is presented in literature. Personality traits are very changeable as individuals have different personality traits. This difference influence cultural intelligence and intercultural communication competence. Our study focuses on the relationship between personality traits, cultural intelligence and intercultural communication competence. The study is conducted on 4 senior employees of two firms operating in automotive industry in Turkey. To examine the relations, interviews was done with 3 senior employees working in German origin firm and 1 senior employee working in South Korean origin firm. The obtained data from the interviews are evaluated through the depth examination. Findings revealed that cultural intelligence has positively influence on intercultural communication competence and also personality traits on the cultural intelligence and intercultural communication competence. Also it is supposed that effect of personality traits decrease on intercultural communication competence when cultural intelligence is clearly considered.

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Keywords: Personality traits, Cultural intelligence, Intercultural communication competence

1. Introduction

In the modern business world, employees are one of the most valuable resources for companies. Companies always create strategies to have competition advantage. Companies utility from their employees' ideas during creating strategies. Managing employees who have various cultures is critical to support strategies of companies. Because employees expect from each other to understand their cultural values and attributes. Understanding of expectations exactly satisfy them. When employees satisfy at workplace, they can support mission, vision and strategies of

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companies. So managing cultural diversity and understanding personality traits influencing intercultural communication are crucial to successfully execute strategic decisions.

There are employees who have different attributes and various capabilities in companies. Personality traits of these employees are different from each other and this difference influences thoughts and behaviors of employees. In global world, companies correspondingly include employees who have various cultures. Understanding employees who have various cultures is crucial for companies. Employees who internalize cultural differences and show tolerance towards these differences have an important capability. Companies wish to hold these capable employees.

As personality traits of employees are different from each other, perspective of employees to cultural differences varies prominently. Comprehending of a various culture can vary according to personality traits. Some employees do not accommodate to individuals who have a diverse culture, but conversely some employees quickly accommodate to same culture. Hence personality traits of employees are a considerable factor to understand different cultures. Likewise when communicated with individuals who have diverse cultures, personality traits of employees influence quality of communication. While more extrovert individuals easily communicate with someone who has an unfamiliar culture, introvert individuals extremely suffer for communication.

It is needed to manage cultural diversities to communicate with individuals having various cultures. It requires to have information about norms, traditions and practices of foreign cultures. In this study, firstly personality traits are handled. Afterwards cultural intelligence and intercultural communication competence are explained respectively. Studies that focus relations between these three concepts are referred to provide theoretically background. Lastly findings and conclusion are shared clearly.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Personality Traits

Personality is a topic which is often handled by researchers. As each individual has a complicated personality, it is difficult to absolutely understand individuals. Attributes of individuals help to understand them. At this point, personality become an important factor because it has different attributes. Physical attributes of individuals and also their thoughts, emotions, behaviors, habits, demands and attitudes differ substantially (Günel, 2010).

Personality has a role on determining emotional, behavioral and cognitive forms of individuals. (Mount et al., 2005). Diversities of individuals can be explained by personality. As mentioned above, behavior of each individual differs substantially. Diversities of performed behaviors are related to values and beliefs of individuals. Values and beliefs of individuals are result of their personality (Dweck and Leggett, 1988).

Some models were presented to examine personality. In this research, Big Five Personality Model which is extensively used by another researchers was handled to measure personality traits. According to Big Five Personality Model, personality traits have five dimensions. These dimensions are extroversion, openness to experience, neuroticism, compatibility and responsibility. (Costa and McCrae, 1995). Extroversion includes talkativeness and initiative behaviors by contrast with calmness, shyness and passiveness behaviors. According to this, extroversion requires substantially energetic, active and dynamic actions (Goldberg, 1993). Openness to experience articulates that individuals become creative and sensible to art, These individuals behave more flexible and respect to values of other individuals. Also these individuals have more different thought structure (McCrae and Sutin, 2009). Neuroticism means appealing emotions that reason stress. It has attributes related to these emotions (Bitlisli et al., 2013). Compatibility articulates that individuals consider others and also behave sympathetic towards others (Rothmann and Coetzer, 2003). Responsibility articulates that individuals work more organized and planned. These individuals work as more determined (Barrick et al., 1993).

2.2. Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence means that individuals can effectively manage cultural diversity. Individuals who manage the cultural diversity have cultural intelligence capability (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). Cultural intelligence requires

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