



Impact of Multicultural Environment on Teamwork: A Case Study

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Abstract: When companies operate internationally they face many challenges. One of the most important challenges is the culture. In international companies, it is usual practice that people from different nations, race, regions and religions live together and work together. Even when employees are ready and keen to work together, they may unintentionally confuse or even offend each other because of their diversified ways of perceiving things. The multicultural environment has great effect on teamwork and thus on business. It is believed that multicultural teams are the future of many organizations, and so is the case of Pakistani and Chinese organizations. In this period of time, there is growth of relationship between Pakistan and China. Many of the Pakistani and Chinese people are working together in order to achieve common goals. The focus of this research work is the teams composed of Pakistani and Chinese people. This research work aims to find out how is the teamwork when Pakistanis and Chinese nationals works together in teams. This research work not only provides us to understand a teamwork in multicultural environment but also provide us understanding between the people of Pakistan and China. Since decades, research has been going on for obtaining effective teamwork from multicultural teams. Multicultural teams have become a vital part in worldwide business environment. Working in a multicultural team requires great potential. Whether it is to lead a team or it is to talk with colleague, cultural differences create hindrances. It has been witnessed that lack of teamwork in multicultural teams, can cause failure of businesses. For the success of organizations, teamwork is essential requirement from multicultural teams.

Keywords: *Teamwork, multicultural environment, factors affecting teamwork, strong or weak teamwork.*

1. Introduction

The success of any company's depends upon their teams. For the effective running of any company, their teams have to be effective [1, 2, 3]. In this era of globalization, there is continuous growth in companies operating internationally and it mostly happens in the form of projects [4, 5]. When companies go internationally, it is normal practice that people from different nations, race, regions and religions work together and live together. People and organizations no longer live isolated from their cultures, thus a multicultural environment is developed inside companies. In this case companies face many challenges, one of the most important challenges that influence the success of companies is efficient working of their teams which are composed of culturally diversified people [6]. The multicultural environment has great effect on teamwork, the way people interact with each other, respond to different situations, respond to problems, sort out solutions are greatly affected by culture. Inside these teams even when people are ready and keen to work together, they may unintentionally confuse or even offend each other because of their diversified ways of perceiving things [7, 10]. Working in multicultural teams require potential. Whether it is to lead the team or to talk with a cross cultural

colleague, cultural differences always creates some hindrances. It has been witnessed that lack of teamwork can cause failure of projects [9]. For the success of companies teamwork is essential requirement from teams. Multicultural teams has become an important topic for international human resource managements.

This study was conducted on teams composed of Pakistani and Chinese nationals at Hydrochina International Engineering Co. Ltd. at Jhimpir, Sindh, Pakistan. The aim of this study was to assess how the teamwork is when Pakistanis and Chinese nationals works together in teams. Whether the teamwork is strong or weak/positive or not among the teams composed of these nationals. And to analyze the teamwork in view of these nationals separately.

2. Scope

As the globally working environment is becoming the norm, studies of this type are becoming greatly important. As such research can help the organizations to develop mutual understanding and teamwork inside teams. It is believed that multicultural teams are the future of many organizations, so is the case of Pakistani and Chinese organizations. Due to national interests, Pakistan and China have become the close friends for decades. There is

continuous growth of relationship between Pakistan and China. Many of the Pakistani and Chinese people are working together in order to achieve common goals. The focus of this research work is the teams composed of Pakistani and Chinese people. This research work not only provides us to understand a teamwork in multicultural environment but also provide us to understand relationship between the people of Pakistan and China.

3. Literature Review

One of the primary difficulties impacting the success of projects is making of the multicultural teams. Multicultural teams comprise individuals having broadened approaches to see their surroundings as indicated by their way of life. Dealing with a multicultural teams exhibits new difficulties and chances to develop new abilities, specifically dialectal and cultural learning [8]. Multicultural teams have been connected to extra advantages over monoculture teams where they require applying various abilities and judgements [5]. Current examinations on multicultural teamwork have been however on two ends with only few researchers contending on the advantages and extravagance of multicultural environment in international organizations like creativity and decision making; while different investigations seeing multicultural environment as just an obligation than a benefit, by concentrating on issues generating from these environments, like communication [11]. As verified by different authors that challenges experienced by multicultural teams are more mind boggling and brought about more genuine difficulties in comparison with monoculture teams' difficulties [6].

When team members get together to achieve common objectives, various factors affect the teamwork. In the literature different authors have described the factors affecting teamwork. The factors are as follows:

Clear team objectives, responsibilities should match with skills, communication, motivation, leadership, compromise with each other and cohesion [12].

Colocation, decision making, commitment, reward strategy, mutual assistance and feedback [13].

Understanding objectives, leadership, defeating obstacles, mutual understanding, recognition, multidisciplinary and feedback [1].

Communication, interpersonal relations, decision making, conflict management, flexibility and believe in importance of teamwork [6].

Here among all factors identified by different authors, there are 21 dissimilar factors. These factors have been important for the assessing teamwork in this study. When a team possesses these factors, the teamwork is considered to be positive or strong.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Instrument

Five-point Likert-scale questionnaire was used as research instrument. Likert-scale questionnaire is quantitative approach and assesses different levels of agreement and disagreement of a symmetric agree-disagree scale and make a statistical difference in understanding the respondents' viewpoint [14]. The research questionnaire is composed of two sections, demographics and questions. The first section demographics contains qualification, experience, age, nationality and gender. In questions' sections for each factor one question was made, so there were total 21 Likert-scale questions. For all questions, when the response is absolutely agree or agree it will be considered as positive for the teamwork and when the response is absolutely disagree or disagree it will be considered as negative for the teamwork whereas the response undecided will be considered as neither positive nor negative for the teamwork.

4.2 Data Collection

The target quantity of respondents was set to 200. However, the questionnaire was dispatched to 220 respondents that was in case if any of the questions had left blank in any questionnaire or in case if any of the questionnaires had not received back, it had fulfilled the required quantity of 200 filled questionnaires. The data was collected from Pakistani nationals and Chinese nationals, both working together in multiple teams at Hydrochina International Engineering Company Limited, at Jhampir city, Sindh province. Half of the respondents were Pakistani and the other half of the respondents were Chinese (110 respondents were Pakistani and 110 respondents were Chinese), that was in order to get the equal viewpoint of both the nationals.

4.3 Data Analysis

The data collected through questionnaire was analyzed at spss. Firstly the reliability of data was obtained by applying Cronbach's Alpha. To assess the teamwork simple statistics like mean, frequencies and percentages were obtained. For further analysis, the normality of data was analyzed. Later Mann-Whitney Test was applied to analyze the teamwork in view of these nationals separately.

5. Results

5.1 Reliability of Data

The Cronbach's Alpha was applied on the data obtained from 200 respondents, each with 26 variables of data (5 demographic characters and 21 questions). The resulted reliability was 0.717, which is an acceptable value of reliability [15]. This value of reliability represents that data is reliable for further statistical analysis.

5.2 Mean, Frequencies and Percentages

To assess the teamwork, mean, frequencies and percentages were obtained. The higher the value of mean, frequencies

and percentages, the stronger is the factor in teamwork and the stronger is the teamwork. The mean, frequencies and percentages of demographics are shown in table 01 and of questions are shown in table 02.

Table 01: Mean, frequencies and percentages of demographics

Qualification	Options	Intermediate	Diploma	Graduation	Post-graduation	Other	Total
	Frequency	30	52	87	27	4	200
	Percentage	15.0	26.0	43.5	13.5	2.0	100.0
Experience in this environment	Options	0-2 yrs	3-4 yrs	5-6 yrs	7-8 yrs	Other	Total
	Frequency	61	99	27	11	2	200
	Percentage	30.5	49.5	13.5	5.5	1.0	100.0
Age	Options	20-25 yrs	26-32 yrs	33-40 yrs	40-50 yrs	Other	Total
	Frequency	36	104	41	18	1	200
	Percentage	18.0	52.0	20.5	9.0	0.5	100.0
Gender	Options	Female	Male	-	-	-	Total
	Frequency	7	193	-	-	-	200
	Percentage	3.5	96.5	-	-	-	100.0
Nationality	Options	Pakistani	Chinese	-	-	-	Total
	Frequency	100	100	-	-	-	200
	Percentage	50.0	50.0	-	-	-	100.0

Table 02: Mean, frequencies and percentages of questions

Question No.	Factor	Statistics	Absolutely Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Absolutely Agree	Total	Mean Response
Q1	Clear team objectives	Frequency	2	14	26	58	100	200	4.20
		Percent	1.0	7.0	13.0	29.0	50.0	100.0	
Q2	Responsibilities should match with skills	Frequency	5	11	7	113	64	200	4.10
		Percent	2.5	5.5	3.5	56.5	32.0	100.0	
Q3	Mutual assistance	Frequency	9	11	9	98	73	200	4.08
		Percent	4.5	5.5	4.5	49.0	36.5	100.0	
Q4	Communication	Frequency	38	72	20	42	28	200	2.75
		Percent	19.0	36.0	10.0	21.0	14.0	100.0	
Q5	Feedback	Frequency	4	13	22	76	85	200	4.13
		Percent	2.0	6.5	11.0	38.0	42.5	100.0	
Q6	Compromise with each other	Frequency	15	20	11	63	91	200	3.98
		Percent	7.5	10.0	5.5	31.5	45.5	100.0	
Q7	Decision Making	Frequency	7	14	26	74	79	200	4.02
		Percent	3.5	7.0	13.0	37.0	39.5	100.0	
Q8	Motivation	Frequency	21	13	36	66	64	200	3.70
		Percent	10.5	6.5	18.0	33.0	32.0	100.0	
Q9	Conflict management	Frequency	20	17	30	65	68	200	3.72
		Percent	10.0	8.5	15.0	32.5	34.0	100.0	
Q10	Leadership	Frequency	17	12	5	86	80	200	4.00
		Percent	8.5	6.0	2.5	43.0	40.0	100.0	
Q11	Cohesion	Frequency	22	28	21	67	62	200	3.60
		Percent	11.0	14.0	10.5	33.5	31.0	100.0	
Q12	Multidisciplinary	Frequency	8	17	14	77	84	200	4.07
		Percent	4.0	8.5	7.0	38.5	42.0	100.0	
Q13	Collocation	Frequency	20	29	22	74	55	200	3.58
		Percent	10.0	14.5	11.0	37.0	27.5	100.0	
Q14	Commitment	Frequency	20	20	20	69	71	200	3.76
		Percent	10.0	10.0	10.0	34.5	35.5	100.0	
Q15	Defeating obstacles	Frequency	11	31	28	56	74	200	3.76
		Percent	5.5	15.5	14.0	28.0	37.0	100.0	
Q16	Recognition	Frequency	13	11	13	63	100	200	4.13
		Percent	6.5	5.5	6.5	31.5	50.0	100.0	
Q17	Reward strategy	Frequency	25	25	16	79	55	200	3.57

		Percent	12.5	12.5	8.0	39.5	27.5	100.0	
Q18	Mutual understanding	Frequency	13	21	29	55	82	200	3.86
		Percent	6.5	10.5	14.5	27.5	41.0	100.0	
Q19	Interpersonal relations	Frequency	15	28	12	64	81	200	3.84
		Percent	7.5	14.0	6.0	32.0	40.5	100.0	
Q20	Flexibility	Frequency	8	37	13	56	86	200	3.88
		Percent	4.0	18.5	6.5	28.0	43.0	100.0	
Q21	Belief in the importance of teamwork	Frequency	6	34	22	60	78	200	3.85
		Percent	3.0	17.0	11.0	30.0	39.0	100.0	

From above obtained results, for questions Q1 to Q3, Q5, Q7, Q12 and Q16 the mean response is between agreed and absolutely agreed, which represents that factors for which these questions are made are strong inside teams and makes teamwork strong. For question Q10 the mean response is agreed, which also represents that factor for which this question is made is strong inside teams and makes teamwork strong. For questions Q6, Q8, Q9, Q11, Q13 to Q15 and Q17 to Q21 the mean response is between undecided and agreed, which also represents that factors for which these questions are made are strong inside teams and makes teamwork strong. Only for question Q4 the mean response is between disagreed and undecided, which represents that factor for which this questions is made is not strong inside teams and makes teamwork not strong.

The results show that for all factors except the factor for which question Q4 is made, the mean response is strong for teamwork and for the factor for which question Q4 is made its mean response is not strong for teamwork.

Question Q4 is formed for factor “communication”. Here the results show that the communication between the multicultural teams of Pakistani and Chinese is not strong.

If we compare the number of questions whose response is strong for teamwork with the number of questions whose response is not strong for teamwork, there is only one question Q4 whose response is not strong and the rest 20 question have strong response for teamwork. It can be concluded that overall teamwork is strong among team members of Pakistani and Chinese nationals.

5.3 Distribution of Data

Difference between the responses of both the groups (Pakistani and Chinese) need to be obtained. For that in order to choose a test to be applied on the data, it is important to know the distribution of data, whether it is normal or non-normal.

If the data is normal, parametric tests are applicable and if the data is non-normal non-parametric tests are applicable. To check the distribution of data whether normal or non-normal, Skewness and Kurtosis tests are applied here. The more the value of Skewness and Kurtosis near to zero the more the data will be normal [14].

In the results shown in table 03, Questions from Q1 to Q21 are negatively or left skewed except question Q4 that is positively or right skewed.

Table 03: Skewness and Kurtosis of the data

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Qualification	-0.042	-0.406
Experience	0.944	0.972
Age	0.599	0.083
Gender	-5.099	24.239
Nationality	0.000	-2.020
Q1	-1.128	0.474
Q2	-1.533	2.035
Q3	-1.512	2.151
Q4	0.341	-1.204
Q5	-1.187	1.030
Q6	-1.165	0.201
Q7	-1.112	0.703
Q8	-0.843	-0.264
Q9	-0.845	-0.349
Q10	-1.414	1.101
Q11	-0.680	-0.793
Q12	-1.294	1.055
Q13	-0.678	-0.716
Q14	-0.906	-0.334
Q15	-0.685	-0.712
Q16	-1.466	1.302
Q17	-0.748	-0.696
Q18	-0.886	-0.290
Q19	-0.926	-0.395
Q20	-0.813	-0.683
Q21	-0.735	-0.675

Questions from Q1 to Q3, Q5 to Q7, Q10, Q12 and Q16 have positive Kurtosis, whereas questions from Q4, Q8, Q9, Q11, Q13 to Q15 and Q17 to Q21 have negative Kurtosis. Hence, the data of all the questions are non-normally distributed.

Therefore, from above observations it can be concluded that as all the 26 variables have non-normally distributed data, non-parametric tests will be applicable.

5.4 Difference in Response

In order to analyze the teamwork in view of these nationals separately, Mann Whitney test is found most suitable non-

parametric test. Mann-Whitney test is used to find difference in response of the two groups. Mann-Whitney test calculates a Z value and a significance value (p value).

If Z value lies between -1.96 and 1.96 then there is no difference between responses of the two groups and if Z value lies out of -1.96 and 1.96 then there is difference between responses of the two groups [14].

On the other hand when p value is higher than 0.05 then there is no considerable difference between responses of the two groups and when p value is less than 0.05 then there is considerable difference between responses of the two groups [14].

Table 04: Mann-Whitney Results

Question	Z value	Significance (p value)
Q1	-1.220	0.222
Q2	-0.094	0.925
Q3	-0.317	0.751
Q4	-7.261	0.000
Q5	-0.987	0.324
Q6	-0.706	0.480
Q7	-0.932	0.351
Q8	-0.003	0.998
Q9	-1.744	0.081
Q10	-1.352	0.176
Q11	-1.219	0.223
Q12	-0.525	0.599
Q13	-0.626	0.532
Q14	-0.724	0.469
Q15	-1.770	0.077
Q16	-0.466	0.641
Q17	-1.099	0.272
Q18	-1.044	0.297
Q19	-1.117	0.264
Q20	-1.250	0.211
Q21	-1.218	0.223

In the results shown in table 04, it can be noted that except question Q4 the Z value of all the questions lie between -1.96 and 1.96, which represents that there is no considerable difference in responses of both the groups. Whereas for question Q4 the Z value lies out of -1.96 and 1.96, representing that there is considerable difference in responses of both the groups.

On the other hand, the p value of all the questions except question Q4 is higher than 0.05, which represents the same that there is no considerable difference in responses of the two groups. Whereas for question Q4 the p value is less than 0.05, representing that there is considerable difference in responses of the two groups.

For question Q4 in order to analyze the difference in response of the two groups, mean, frequencies and percentages of responses are obtained separately for the

two groups. The results are provided in table 05 as given below.

Table 05: Mean, frequency and percent for Q4

Nationality	Pakistani		Chinese	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Absolutely Disagree	8	8.0	30	30.0
Disagree	20	20.0	52	52.0
Undecided	13	13.0	7	7.0
Agree	37	37.0	5	5.0
Absolutely Agree	22	22.0	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0
Mean Response	3.45		2.05	

In above table regarding the question Q4, for Pakistanis the mean response obtained is 3.45, which is between undecided and agreed and represents a strong teamwork. Whereas for Chinese the mean response obtained is 2.05 which is nearly disagreed and does not represents strong teamwork. Therefore, from these results we get that Chinese nationals are finding more difficulty than Pakistanis at conversing in English language.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

In organizations teams possess great importance. Teamwork creates benefits not only for organizations but also for individuals. It facilitates tasks to be accomplished easily, efficiently and quickly. For the success of an organization effective teamwork has become a vital factor. Different organizations have teams in different forms. This research was conducted on multicultural teams composed of people of Pakistan and China in Hydrochina International Engineering Co. Ltd. at Jhimpir, Sindh, Pakistan. This research was aimed at finding how the teamwork is when Pakistanis and Chinese nationals work together in teams and to analyze the teamwork in view of these nationals separately.

In the research, various factors were taken from literature which have impact on teamwork. The factors are; clear team objectives, responsibilities should match with skills, communication, feedback, decision making, motivation, conflict, leadership, compromise with each other, cohesion, multidisciplinary, co-location, commitment, defeating obstacles, mutual understanding, recognition, reward strategy, mutual assistance, interpersonal relations, flexibility, and belief in the importance of teamwork.

Later, in order to assess the teamwork in terms of these factors, questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was composed of two sections, containing total of 26 questions, section one contained 5 questions of demographics and section two contained 21 questions of data formed from 21 factors, one question for each factor.

The questionnaires were distributed among 220 respondents, equally between Pakistanis and Chinese. The data of only 200 respondents were counted for analysis.

Reliability of the data was measured which was found within the acceptable limits. The demographic results showed that data was collected from respondents of various categories. From all 21 factors, 20 factors were found strong inside teams and make the teamwork strong. Only one factor “communication” was found not strong inside teams and does not make the teamwork strong. This showed that the communication between the multicultural teams of Pakistani and Chinese was not strong and that was due to their lesser strong English language. So from the results it can be said the overall teamwork was strong.

Later teamwork was assessed separately for cross-cultural colleagues. For that distribution of data was observed through skewness and kurtosis, and it was found as non-normal distribution. So the Mann-Whitney test was fit for that data. Mann-Whitney test results showed that responses of Pakistanis and Chinese are almost same for all questions except Q4. Mann-Whitney test showed that for Q4 the response of Pakistanis and Chinese was different, therefore, the mean response was calculated separately for Pakistanis and Chinese. The mean response was found as 3.45 for Pakistanis and 2.05 for Chinese, which shows Chinese people were finding more problem at communication than Pakistanis due to their lesser strong English language. So the conclusion is that from 21 factors, 20 factors were found in favor of strong teamwork and only 1 factor was against favor of strong teamwork. And we can say that overall teamwork was strong.

In the teamwork of Pakistanis and Chinese the language was found as a barrier in communication. It is very fundamental for a teamwork that communication should be strong. Communication in teamwork possesses vital significance and has direct impact on business. Every multinational organization should take necessary measures to overcome the barrier of language. There is wide range of various strategies which can be implemented to overcome this language barrier at workplaces. The most easily applicable and robust strategies are to employ local translators, recruit selective employees which are already fluent in a common language and use of online translation facilities. But one permanent and reliable solution is the language training and language checkup at workplaces [16].

For any deficiency in employees’ skills the solution is training, and so is the language training for language barrier. Firstly company selects a language to be learnt by the workers who share different native languages. English language is definitely the default language and internationally recognized for multinational business organizations. Company then sets its target of learning keeping in view its needs for employees’ language skills

development. Customized courses are particularly intended to achieve the company’s prerequisites of employees’ language skills development. These sorts of courses give off an impression of being exceptionally advantageous. Above all else, workers can utilize gained learning promptly which gives them a reward from the yielded exertion. This thus impacts inspiration which at that point stays high. Another preferred standpoint is that the course is intended to assist the student with progressing well ordered. This is conceivable in light of the fact that there are less targets set which are practical and challenging in the meantime [17].

Language checkup is the way towards recognizing strengths and weaknesses of communication inside teams. It empowers companies to wind up mindful of their present communication skills and the capacities of workers, and sets a benchmark for language training. Language checkup helps in identifying causes of problems in communication inside teams and gives a target of language training [18].

Many multinational companies have got improved teamwork by implementing language trainings and language checkup. A very famous automotive manufacturer Volkswagen Group is called pioneer in the area of language trainings. It oversees language training by applying 6 phases of the course that set up the workers to achieve an adequate capability in common language. Each phase requires attending classes and self-study. Toward the finish of each phase workers are committed to breeze through an accomplishment test. It is compulsory to finish the phase keeping in mind the end goal to proceed with the preparation in the rest of the phases and this language training can prolong up to 6 to 9 months. The Volkswagen Group had achieved great success at removing language barrier among their employees by implementing language training [16]. Other famous multinational companies like Olivetti, Electrolux, Siemens and Daimler-Chrysler had implemented language training strategies for their employees who are lacking at language skills and had achieved great improvement in their teamwork [17]. 35% of organizations who adopted language training saw a bring up in the yield by 16 to 25%. Just 24% of the organizations which adopted language training saw a bring up in the yield beneath 16%. It has been noticed that language training can only produce results that are beneficial for the companies, as well as it underpins workers in their self-development and makes them competitive in any multinational environment [16]. With a specific end goal to stay focused in the market, it is a need for organizations to keep enhancing strategies regarding language issues inside teams.

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