# "Can cultural awareness be seen as one of the core competencies in the IT multi-nationals?"

## Dublin Business School/Liverpool John Moores University

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## **Table of Contents**

## List of figures:

## List of Abbreviations:

HRM      Human Resource Management.

I.T        Information Technology.

PVP      Pace Volume Pitch.

KPI       Key Performance Indicator.

IQ         Intelligence Quotient.

EQ        Emotional Quotient.

CEO      Chief Executive Officer.

TCS       Tata Consultancy Services.

KPMG   Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler.

CQ        Cultural Quotient.

IBM       International Business Machines.

CIPD     Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

QDA      Qualitative Data Analysis.

HR        Human Resources.

HCL      Hindustan Computers Limited.

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I would like to thank all my lecturers. The knowledge they have shared with me has enriched both my knowledge and my life.

Finally, I am grateful to the lord for keeping me healthy and giving me this opportunity to learn more.

# Abstract

**Purpose**: The purpose of this study is to find if cultural awareness can be seen as one of the core competencies in the IT multinationals. The study intends to answer this question and further offer a solution by recommending a culture training module as a part of the soft skills training in the IT firms.

**Research Design/Methodology**: The research adopts a qualitative and cross sectional approach based on a questionnaire. Since the nature of the research question is subjective, the interviews conducted were semi structured and encouraged narration of incidents and experiences.

**Findings**: This research found that having 'culture awareness' as part of the soft skills is essential for an IT professional to succeed in the corporate world and lack of cultural awareness would have an impact on their performance in the long run. In spite of the length of academic literature and data available, there exist exceptions. It is difficult to have a unanimous approval on a subjective topic. The number of years of work experience turned out to be one of the most important factors that influenced the responses.

**Research limitations**: Study's limitations are related to sampling and breadth of scope. Although the research represents samples from different nationalities, gender, age, designation and years of experience, the convenience sampling may impel reduced level of details.

**Practical implications**: Organizations undertaking development initiatives are encouraged to look further into the soft skills training programs and include culture awareness module. Success depends not only on domain expertise in the technical world, but also on such important elements as soft skills, contextual awareness and cultural sensitivity.

**Originality/Value:** This paper begins with establishing the importance of soft skills in the multinationals, and further researches if cultural awareness; which is a subset of soft skills, can be one of the core competencies in these firms. The contribution made by this research is the culture training module as a possible solution.

**Keywords**: Training, soft skills, awareness, culture, leadership.

**Paper type:** Thesis research.

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Human resource management (HRM) is a compressive and coherent method to the employment and development of people. However, Osterby and Coster criticized the concept of referring people as resources and making them yet another aspect of production (Armstrong, 2012, p.12). HRM was also called nothing but a synonym of 'personnel management'. Many authors criticized the concept of HRM. Some called it the old wine in a new bottle and some framed it as emperor's new clothes and so on. However the success and outreach of the subject and its application cannot be ignored. It is a matter of fact that Human Resource department has become a non-negotiable aspect of every big organization. Considering the soft and the hard nature of HRM, it stands out clearly that to make the utmost of any unit in the workforce, it needs to be monitored. Hence, it can be analyzed that HRM is the right beginning to maximize the utilization of employees at work. Therefore, the focus of this research will be on the soft skills of the employees. Throughout the research the effort is to narrow down from a broader perspective, to one concept. This piece of work includes describing, explaining, understanding, criticizing and analyzing (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005).

Organizational culture can be defined as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from others" (Hofstede, 2014). However, in this research we will be focusing on the national culture which when represented by different individuals in an organization forms the collective nature at work. The national culture is defined as the "software of mind" that can influence people's patterns of thinking and behaving (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p. 21). It is certain that every organization has its own set of values but here we will be focusing on the culture that the several employees come from. The similarities and the differences within them and the challenges that they face.

## 1.2. Research Area

Although culture is a topic that is essential in any industry, this study has been limited to the Information Technology (IT) sector. The areas covered under this research include, demonstrating the importance of soft skills training at workplaces, finding if cultural differences can impact the performance of an individual. It concludes by recommending cultural awareness as a part of the overall training that an employee in an IT company goes through.

## 1.3. Research Objective

Saunders et al (2009) defines research objectives as clear, specific statements that identify what the researcher wishes to accomplish as a result of doing the research. Objectives are more generally acceptable to the research community as an evidence of the researcher's clear sense of purpose and direction (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 123).

The study begins with an overall view on soft skills and their importance in the Information Technology (IT) firms. It further proceeds to talk about one of the rare soft skills, that is, cultural awareness. The research question is, 'Can cultural awareness be seen as a core

competency for people working in an IT multinational?' The effort made is to find out the effectiveness of the research question and to work out a solution.

## 1.4. Research Question

The main research question is to find, 'Can cultural awareness be seen as a core competency for people working in an IT multinational?' However, in order to reach the core of the study, several build up questions were framed as a part of the qualitative data collection exercise. These included finding if cultural awareness or acknowledgement of the employee's culture impacted the performance outcome. This was asked because a skill can be a core competency only when it contributes both to the growth of the individual and also the company. This is the bottom line of strategic planning, where the objectives of the employees are in line with those of the company.

## 1.5. Research Suitability

The researcher has prior experience of working in a non-profit organization doing a lot of volunteer work. In such an organization working with different cultures can sometimes be non-negotiable. Also, since the researcher's domain was human resource management, this subject was of particular interest and relevance too. After having completed all the modules in the field of Human Resource Management, the researcher will use the learning experience to proceed with the research.

## 1.6. Recipients of the research

This dissertation title is submitted as part of the curriculum of Masters in Business Administration program at Dublin Business School in association with Liverpool John Moore University. The principal recipient of this dissertation will be Dublin Business School and Liverpool John Moore's University. The primary recipient will be Ms. Claire Devlin.

As the research is mainly intended to perform a detailed study to understand the impact of cultural awareness in the IT multinationals, many of the respondents interviewed have shown an interest in the outcome of this research. A copy of the research results will be made available to the respondents interested in the findings of the study.

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

**2.1 Introduction**

The practices of Human Resource Management can be diverse in nature. As indicated by Storey, one aspect of diversity is the distinction between the 'hard' and 'soft' version of HRM (Price, 2007, p.7). Thus, under HRM one can adapt to either of the two techniques of management, as per the values of the company. Looking back, Taylor and Henry Ford were the two authors who introduced the hard aspect in the field of HRM. Taylor's approach to management was scientific, which was in simple words treating men as just another set of resource. Such a harsh management style was opposed by a number of authors. This lead to human relations movement which inspired the practices towards 'soft' people management. On the similar grounds, author Elton Mayo was working on establishing that soft HRM is the right way of managing people. He conducted an experiment on a sample trying to change the brightness of the place. Surprisingly he discovered that even after reducing the brightness below the average level, the productivity of the employees did not fall. On further investigation, it was found that the social needs were much valued by the employees and that made them undergo the challenge without affecting their performance (Price, 2007, p. 272).Therefore, with this background, the researcher tries to establish the need of 'soft' aspect of the business. For instance, 'soft power' a term coined by Harvard academic Joseph Nye in 2004 states that in individuals, soft power rests on the skills of emotional intelligence, vision and communication (Howard, 2011). Similarly, soft skills are proficiencies that enhances the personal attributes of the employees which in turn helps in adding value to the individual employees. Thereby helping in succeeding the cut throat competition by an extra edge.

After gaining an overall view of the history of HRM and the foundation of 'soft' management and trainings in the history of organizations, we move further to the core of the study. The first half of the literature will establish the need for soft skills trainings in different industries today. Whereas, the second half of the literature review will be focused on the study on culture and its importance in the IT multinationals. This will revolve around the research question in order to establish the traces in the literature about the topic of study.

**2.2 Soft Skills in IT industry**

Success is one common entity that most of us are looking for. If a youth were to be asked, whether they aim at succeeding at the job they are doing, the answer would be affirmative. One of the essential criteria's in succeeding in the world today, is having the right set of soft skills. Daniel Goleman, a Psychologist, defines soft skills as 'emotional intelligence' in his book of the same name (Goleman, 1995, p. 47). This is justifiable because research shows that the use and possession of soft skills contributes more than technical skills or intelligence to an individual's success or failure, both in professional and personal life. Stanford research institution conducted a research where they asked many young people what is it they thought can bring them this much desired success (Crosbie, 2005, p. 42). What kind of skills would a modern day global citizen need if he/she wanted to be successful? They got many answers, and they then categorized these answers into primarily two slots. One set of skills on which success seemed to be dependent was called 'Domain Knowledge' and the other set of skills on which success seemed to be dependent was called 'Soft-Skills'. To elaborate, Domain Knowledge would include skills like academic/technical knowledge and Soft-Skills would probably include a wide variety of skills like:

- Interpersonal Skills
- Team Building
- Communication Skills
- Time and Priority Management
- Decision making ability
- Stress Management ability
- Conflict solving
- Culture awareness/ Emotional intelligence

Anyone who observes real life closely enough would agree that for success you need both, domain expertise and soft skills. The researchers did something interesting; they asked the survey respondents in what proportion they thought these skills impacted success. So how much percentage of their success would they attribute towards domain knowledge and how much would they attribute towards soft skills. Turned out that most people said that almost 85% their success was dependent on soft skills and about 15% on domain knowledge (Crosbie, 2005, p. 46). In other words, 80% of the samples believed that they were unsuccessful not due to the lack of technical expertise but due to lack of 'people's skill'. The industry selected for this research is the 'Information Technology' (IT) field. The reason for selecting the IT sector is because there is a huge demand for the various technical skills and an exponential growth of the resources in the industry. Due to this, the resources have

become more centered towards developing only the technical skills and undervalue the soft skills. This may hamper the success of the resources (Newell, 2002, p. 290). Looking at this from a broader perspective, it could be said that the resources need an additional skill (Soft) apart from the actual technical skills.

Figure 1: Stanford study result.
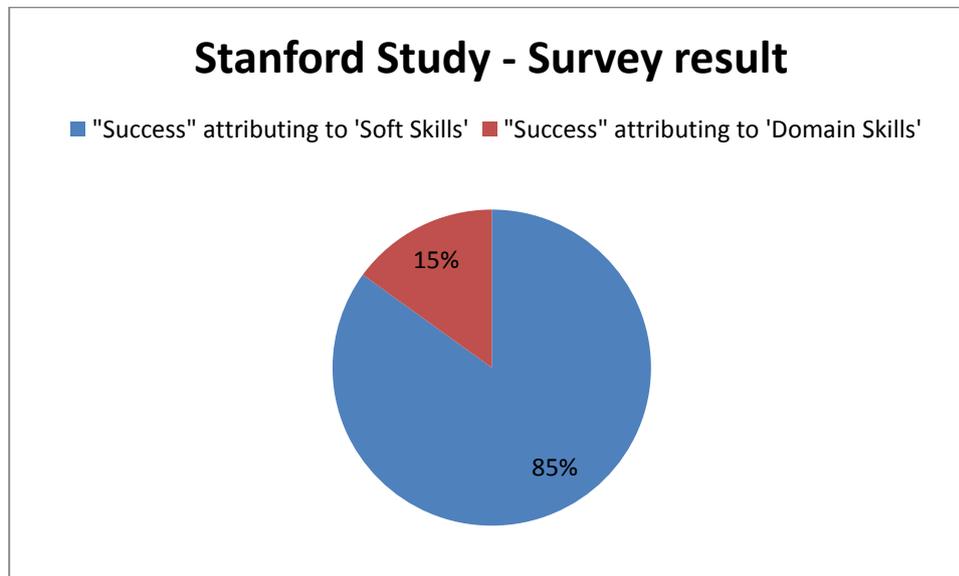


Most people out there now believe that if they want to be successful, they need soft skills more than domain knowledge (Crosbie, 2005, p. 46). Therefore, without de-evaluating the importance of domain and academic rigor, it definitely wakes up to the reality that times are changing and the tools required to be successful are changing.

It is also striking that if we look at the typical education system, especially in developing countries, it can be found that the practices and processes followed by the education system are not in tune with the Stanford study, we just explored. In fact, the typical education system in most countries places far more value on academic and domain knowledge than soft skills (Leithwood and Seashore et al., 2004, p. 62). If a young students or professionals were to be asked, how much, in terms of percentage of their time, effort and money, have they spent in developing domain knowledge and how much in developing soft skills, the Stanford equation of 85%-15% might actually be reversed. On taking India as an example, it was found that the equation almost reversed. To make a point that almost all of the time, effort and money is spent on developing domain knowledge and soft skills are majorly neglected. The study revealed that although 46% students weighed soft skills more important, only 15% were actually involved in any kind of extra-curricular activities. (Lay more stress on Soft Skills than Domain Knowledge, Say Indian College Goers, 2014) India has a population of over one

billion of which 50% are 25 years of age or younger (Indiaonlinepages.com, 2014). If this is how we are preparing the young generations, it is doubted if we are preparing them at all for real life success.

**2.3 Are soft-skills overrated?**

This could be a valid question to counter argue the information stated above. It could be said that soft skills is an important factor for any employee to climb up the corporate ladder, but the degree to which it is required and is essential, can be argued. It is not surprising that most of the articles written in journals and studies conducted are in favor of the need for soft skills. One could argue that in a technical field, having the expertise in domain work can help one succeed on its own. However, there is no study or samples of the same. In fact, the studies that started with a hypothesis of proving that soft skills is not as important also ended up demonstrating counterproductive results (Morden, 2013). An article in the Forbes magazine, written by Keld Jenson speaks on how actually, it is intelligence that is overrated. He exclaims, that the intelligence quotient (IQ) level of the scientist Albert Einstein was estimated to be 160, which is exceptionally high. However, it is questionable, with a regular IQ level of 115, is it merely enough for us to survive the challenging career path? (Jensen, 2012). It is definite that IQ is a prerequisite, but on its own, a high IQ does not guarantee that we can stand out and rise above our colleagues.

With this awareness, it can be said that soft skills is not an overrated phenomenon. It is indeed the need of the hour. The efforts put by the several IT firms to make sure their new employees possess such skills and the earlier ones are trained for the same, needs to be acknowledged. To take the study of soft skills a step further, this research will be focused to find out if cultural awareness; a subset of soft skill, can be seen as one of the core competencies in the IT multinationals. Although soft skills is gaining credibility and importance, it is debatable if 'culture', which is a subset of soft skill, is being imparted in the soft skills training or not.

The researcher analyzed the literature to be accurate because it is such skills that build the personality of an individual. A person with good soft skills and high level of empathy will not only perform well at work but also excel in personal life. Such an employee is expected to be highly social and have smooth relationships in professional and personal life (Bennett, 2004, p. 65). Clear communication and ability to handle objections can be important key

performance indicators (KPI). With these strengths and less stress in personal life, it is complimentary to deliver better results at work. Therefore, by educating employees on these interpersonal skills, the company is genuinely interested in the growth of the employees. Companies are these days investing in training the employees on the non-tangible skill set (Erickson, 2008, p.3). For all practical reasons, when an employee meets a client in an office setup or otherwise, it is not just the domain knowledge being tested, however it is an overall impression which plays an important role in getting a positive feedback (Nix, Eades and Frost, 2013)

**2.4 Cultural Awareness, a subset of soft skills**

After having looked into the aspect of soft skills, let us now have a look at the core of this study. From the pool of soft skills that were mentioned above, the focus will be on culture awareness. We have often heard about the organizational culture, one needs to adapt to the culture of the firm they work for. However, we are here speculating about the individual cultures that the several employees come from. With this era of globalization and one world family and tag lines like 'global is local' we need to check the fact weather is this truly happening around? Under this section we will proceed with our research in the focused area and learn more on culture training, the work of different authors and critical evaluation of the same. The contemporary term Culture, is often used in daily life and is achieved from several interconnected meanings. The origin of this word culture is found in the Latin language, 'culture' literally meaning cultivation or agriculture. However, in the 19th century much effort has been put on the intellectual side of the cultivation, calling it culture. (Harper, 2012).

Considerable attentiveness has been sited on culture in organizations in the last two decades, and it has never been as important in corporate terms as it is today. "Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving" (Culture definition, 2014). As the world shrinks and turns into a global village, culture becomes more and more important. Emotional intelligence is no more a 'nice-to-have' soft skill, but has become a core competency, especially if one is working across nationalities and communities (Jiang, 2011). It would be easily accepted, without the shadow of a doubt, that people with high degrees of culture awareness would have far better chances of success in a multi-national, multi-cultural work environment of modern day corporate giants. It might be inaccurate to perceive that culture is same as

nationality (Ibarra, 1996, p.7). In many countries of the world, especially the Asian countries, within the same nationality one could have many cultures. Taking India as an example, there are many different cultures that exist within the socio-cultural fabric of India. Of course there is an overall 'Indian Culture', which can be a broad set of cultural values that would be common to all Indians, but there are also many diverse and active cultures with their own set of values and rules (Gregoire, 2013, p.4). Depending on the extent of involvement with the nationals of a particular country, one might gauge the level of cultural intelligence needed for global success.

Culture is a complex mix of many different attributes of human behavior. It can be analyzed that there are two main components of culture; Values/Identity and Customs/Rituals. Understanding culture: (Culture Matters Most, 2014).

### 2.4.1. Values and Identity

"Many values remain unconscious to those who hold them" (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). This is because values are learnt and established at an early stage in life, as stated by Hofstede (2010) and Lewis (2006). Since these values are acquired so early it may seem like they are inherited however, we just cease to register them. Values are actually learnt from people around and situations one has been in. Certainly, individual's behavior is affected by both gifted human nature/personality traits and also by the influence of culture. "Individuals express culture and its normative qualities through the values they hold about life and the world; values in turn affect their attitudes about the form of behavior considered most appropriate and effective in any situation; continually changing patterns of behavior eventually influence the society's culture" (Adler and Gundersen,2008). Therefore, the process of cultural learning begins with the advancement of values, passed on from parents. Moving further, the learning gradually shifts to more cognitive knowledge through practices and atmosphere that an individual experiences (Lewis, 2006). Through such a growth process one becomes a part of the society's culture which is naturally passed on to the next generation, causing the cycle to continue (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010).

Figure 2: Interaction of Culture and Behavior.
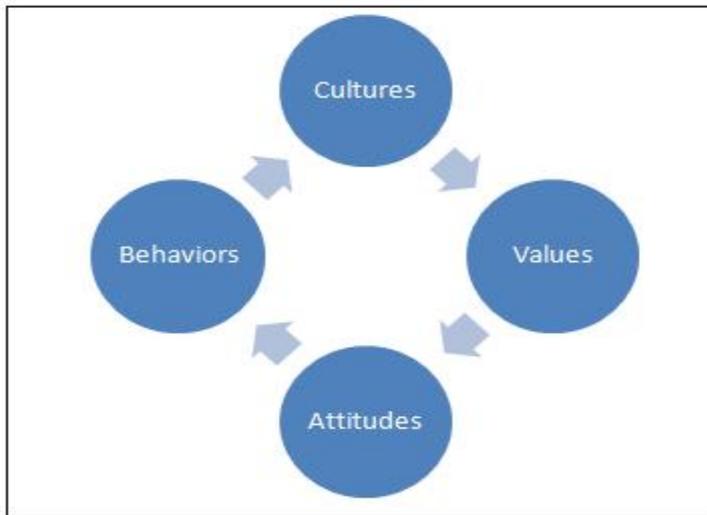


## 2.4.2. Customs and rituals

Rituals "are collective activities, technically superfluous to reaching desired end, but which within a culture are considered as socially essential" (Geert Hofstede et al., 2010). Such rituals are responsible for reinforcing the relations with a culture. It is usually assumed that culture is inborn; although we experience so many examples that when a kid is born in a foreign country, he/it is more likely to behave like the culture of that country. Therefore, it can be concluded that culture can be learnt, and is not simply inherited. "Culture derives from one's social environment rather than from one's genes" (Greet Hofstede et al.., 2010, p.172). This further rules the impact of customs and rituals of a country on the shaping of an individual's behavior due to the impact of culture. Culture comes in layers, like an onion and in order to understand it we need to unpeel the layer one at a time. Geert Hofstede in the Culture's Consequences (2001) presented the "Onion" model of culture which denotes the four core elements of culture which are connected to the fifth overall element that combines the latter four. (Figure 3)

Figure 3: Onion model of culture
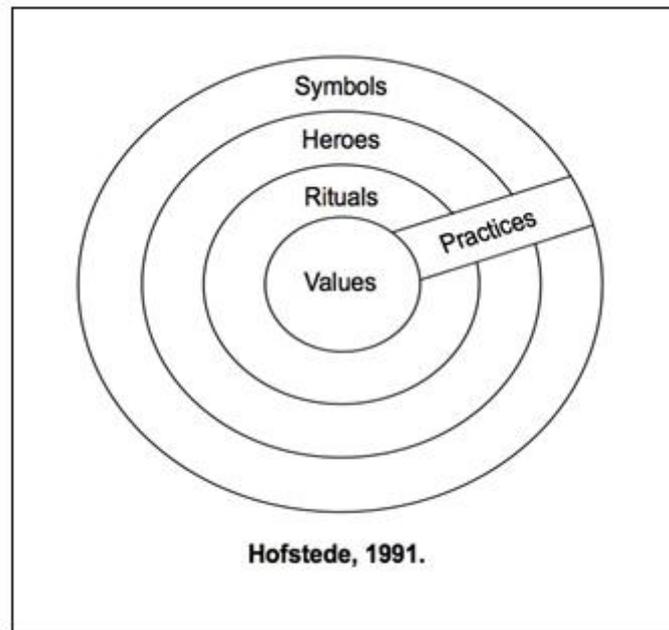


Source: (Hofstede, 2001)

**2.5 Models on Culture**

In the past few decades, as development of worldwide communications through internet and other resources, have made the world appear smaller. Also, with the ever growing number of multi-national organizations, the influence of national culture and cultural differences has attracted particular interest in managerial studies. This has inevitably made the workforce diverse in nature and a lot of scholars have focused on national culture influences in practical and theoretical world. The work of Hofstede clearly stated that it is impossible to create a universal model, since the nature of culture is so subjective. Differences occur in several cultures. Models of national culture established by Hofstede, Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner and others deliver knowledge and involvement about national cultures. These are prerequisite to inter-cultural acceptance and active adoption of management practices in a multicultural atmosphere. Consequently, leading to successful performance (Morden, 1999).

Broadly, the model on national culture can be divided under two headings: single dimensions and multi dimensions models. As the name suggests, the single dimension

model has only one variable whereas the multi-dimensional has more than one variable and is more reliable. Authors like Hall, Lewis and Fukuyama are the ones who have worked on the single dimension models. Whereas, authors such as Hofstede, Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner, Lessem and Neubauer are a few who worked on the multi-dimensional piece of the study (Morden, 1999).

### 2.5.1. Single dimension model

### 2.5.1.1 High and Low context cultures

Author Hall in the year 1977, identified the difference between the high and the low context cultures. In high context cultures, the hierarchy level is highly respected and the individuals depend on their seniors to receive instructions to do things in a particular manner (Morden, 1999). The decision is not usually taken solely by the individual. Whereas, in the low context culture there is high level of independence and people use research and technical data to get information (Hall, 1977). The decision making process is autonomous unlike above. Therefore, national culture can be defined as the manner in which individuals seek information and knowledge in order to make decisions (Morden, 1999). An example of a low context nation would be U.S. and that of a high context would be Asian countries (Wps.pearsoncustom.com, 2013).

### 2.5.1.2 Mono-chronic and Poly-chronic cultures

According to Lewis culture can be defined as mono-chronic and poly-chronic (Lewis, 2006). As the name suggests, the mono-chronic culture rests on one thing at a given time and time is a valued resource. On the other hand, poly-chronic culture, tends to accomplish several task and usually in an unplanned way and without any time constraints (Morden, 1999). An example of mono-chronic is possibly the European countries and that of poly-chronic could be Asian countries (Rutledge, 2011).

### 2.5.1.3 Low and high trust cultures

Author Fukuyama (1995) considers cultures in relation to trust. According to his study, high trust cultures exhibits flexibility, responsibility, delegation and "ability to spontaneously generate strong groups" (Morden, 1999). On the contrary, low trust culture as the name suggests, tend to isolate themselves in strong groups with own level of trust between distinct

individual (Morden, 1999). An example of a low trust culture would be African countries and that of high trust cultures consist of European countries.

Yet another example of single dimension cultural model is that of Edgar Schein's (2010) level of culture. It includes three levels of an upside down pyramid. This is often referred to as an 'iceberg' model (See Figure 4). There exists three main levels under the same. First one is the 'Artifact' and this is the top of the iceberg. These are visible organizational structures and procedures. They are easily visible, like the behavior but difficult to interpret. The middle of the iceberg consist of the 'Espoused value', which refers to the strategies, philosophies, goals and values within a culture. This is the invisible and intangible aspect of culture and hence is an underwater layer of the iceberg model. The final and the bottom layer of the model is the 'Basic assumption'. This refers to the unconscious and inherited behavior of the culture. They form a core of the culture and guide the behavior. They are the ultimate source of values and hence difficult to change. Although the Schein's model on culture is mainly used for organizational cultures, he uses this model to explore and define the concepts on culture in general through his book, 'Organizational culture and Leadership'. (Schein, 2010, pp. 319-322).

Figure 4: Iceberg Model on the 'Three Levels of Culture'
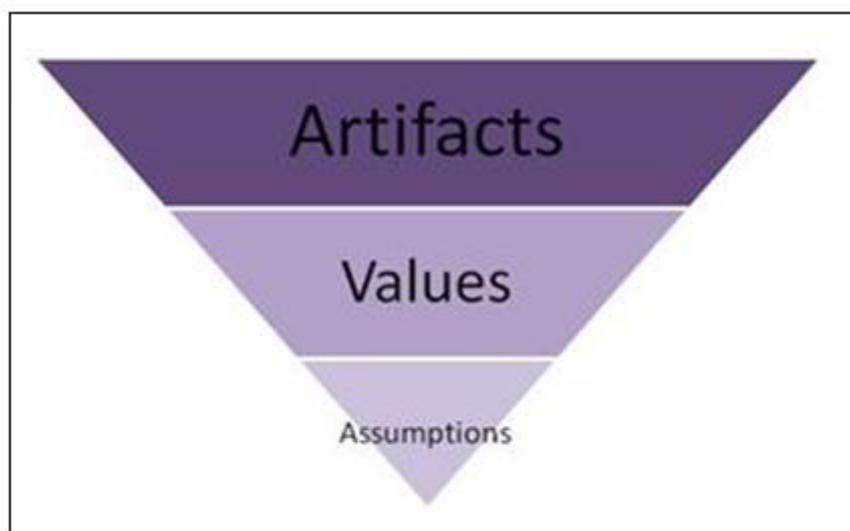


**2.5.2. Multi-dimensional models: Geert Hofstede's work**

Although the study on culture in relation to workplace has been relatively new, the extent of work covered by the pioneers of research is massive. The three famous researchers and authors in the field of culture are Professor Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden. However, Bartels was the one of the few authors who wrote and explored culture

in 1967. He was one of the first few to study the importance of culture (Bartel, 1967).Before collecting and analyzing the data, it is important to note the different models on study of culture and their practical use in the corporate world today. The behavior of the employees which is influenced by the culture they come from, can be analyzed with the help of the models on culture. This research is heavily influenced by the work of Professor Geert Hofstede. He has been a role model and initiator of making culture one of the main pillars in the organizations. The research that started in 1990 under professor Hofstede's supervision still endures. "Undoubtedly, the most significant cross-cultural study of work-related values is the one carried out by Hofstede" (Bhagat and McQuaid, 1982). Nonetheless, his work was criticized and quoted 'incomplete' by yet another author Trompenaars in late 1990's (Trompenaars and Hampden-Tuner, 2000, p.13) it can be said that the work done by Hofstede is foundation base which created the essence of culture in a very early stage.

Culture, as Hofstede (1997, p. 4) states, is the "software of mind" that can influence people's patterns of thinking and behaving. Suggested ways to assimilate cultural competency:

- Develop cultural relativism.

- Demonstrate universal inclusiveness.

- Learn to value cultural differences.

- Expand one's cultural intelligence. (CQ)

- Devise culture training module for IT companies.

The study of the field began in earnest with the work of Hofstede with his landmark study of IBM (Hofstede 1980). This particular piece of work is relevant to this research, because the survey was done with the employees of IBM. Since the field chosen is the IT industry the work of Hofstede will be supportive. Professor Hofstede devised a model to understand culture under five categories. They are the following:

**2.5.2.1 Individualism–collectivism**

Individualism–collectivism defines the relationships individuals share in each culture. An individualistic culture would be where one looks after oneself and sometimes the immediate family too. Like U.S. has high individualism, for that matter any western country with a culture of independence will be high on individualism. On the other hand is collectivism, where an individual will belong to a group that has common objectives and looks after them. This is a way of being loyal and exchanging favors. These groups are highly social in nature and are interdependent too. As Geert Hofstede states in an interview, "You identify first with

the group and secondly with yourself" (Hofstede, 2009).It also exhibits, unquestionable loyalty towards the society. Any Asian country, especially Japan has high collectivism.

This can be related to the performance and the culture of the organizations. For instance, employees who belong to collectivism national culture will be more team work oriented. These people will perform well in a group. Whereas, the ones with high individualism are better off with self-targets and one-one motivation. However, this can create a feeling of competition with fellow employees. Within the IT industry, an employee with high collectivism is better off but with high individualism will also not be harmful. The reason being, the job profile of technical experts is desk oriented, however every job has some amount of interaction level.

### 2.5.2.2 Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance refers to "The extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity and try to avoid these situations" ( Hofstede, 1991, p.113). This dimension deals with the need for well-defined rules for prescribed behavior. It revolves around predictability and a need for written and unwritten rules. It identifies the comfort level of people about uncertainty of one's future and mainly how these individuals handle risk (Geert Hofstede, 2012). The book on cultures and organizations site several studies done on all the four dimensions. One of which states a dislike for ambiguity and a requirement for precision and formalization in the countries/companies with high uncertainty avoidance index (UAI). Whereas, in companies with low-UAI, ambiguity and chaos are sometimes praised as conditions for creativity and spontaneity (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p. 183).

A study done on the top management in Britain, and other parts of Europe, unfolded an interesting fact.  It was found that in Britain top management occupied themselves more with strategic issues and less with daily operations, whereas in France and Germany the reverse was the case (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p. 184). When this study was conducted by Horovitz, the European economies were doing better than the British. Therefore, low UAI causing more strategic planning does not compulsorily increase the productivity or effectiveness. Also, it is worthy to note that stronger uncertainty avoidance does not necessarily restrict creativity and the vice versa is equally true.

**2.5.2.3 Power distance**

This dimension reflects the consequences of power inequality and authority relations in society. It is a factor that influences hierarchy and dependence relationships in the family and organizational contexts. It expresses the degree to which the difference in the distribution of power is accepted in the society or an organization. Therefore, a society in which the power distance is high, it will work comfortably in a hierarchical structure. However, if an individual comes from a low power distance nation, it might be a struggle for these individuals to fit in the company culture.

It is necessary to have a structure in place as the company keeps growing. With multinational businesses it is mandatory to have uniformity and hence a hierarchal structure too. However, this should not reflect in the behavior of the employees at different levels. In an article on the Harvard blog, the author talks on her experience of working with a highly skilled employee in the customer service, but was surprised to see her unusually uncomfortable in front of her supervisor. The blog talks about how due to her cultural background, which is of a high power distance country Indonesia, she is restricting herself and also her path to success. In an IT firm a group of employees tend to work in closed projects (Sweetman, 2010). With a large number of employees in these multinationals, it is important to keep the employees engaged or connected with something common. It could be a goal, the owner with his unique vision or the service itself. The approach of having the manager's cabin door open and the fact that an employee can walk into their seniors without any appointment shows efforts of making the workplace more comfortable for employees from low power distance national cultures (Moss Kanter, 2009).

**2.5.2.4 Masculinity–femininity**

"Masculinity and femininity identifies the sexuality of roles in the societies" (Morden, 1999) and "preferences for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards in societies" (Hofstede, 2012). Dominant values in masculine countries are achievement and success, whereas in the feminine countries are caring for others and quality of life. Therefore, organizations in masculine societies stress results, they reward people on the basis of equity, which means better the performance higher the reward. However, organizations in feminine country are more likely to award the individuals on the basis of equality. This means everyone gets rewarded as per the need (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p.143).

It is found that based on the cultural characteristics, the masculine and the feminine countries

excel in different types of industries. Mechanically advanced masculine cultures have a competitive benefit of producing in large volume and doing the job efficiently and quickly. On the other hand, feminine cultures have a relative advantage in service industries like hospitality, transport, customer service and so on. For instance, "Japan is a world leader in high quality consumer electronics; Denmark and the Netherlands excel in services, in agricultural exports, and in biochemical products like enzymes and penicillin" (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p.146).

**2.5.2.5 Long and short term orientation**

This is the fifth and the most recent edition to the four dimension study done by the professor Hofstede. Long vs. short term orientation stands for people's focus and perception of times and virtues. Short term oriented context are normative in thinking, and place a lot of importance on traditions and have little tendency of paying attention on the future. Whereas, long–term oriented cultures "believe that the truth depends on the situation, context, time and show ability to adapt traditions of changed conditions, propensity to save and invest, and perseverance in achieving results" (Geert Hofstede, 2012). The long-term orientation stands for "the fostering of virtues oriented towards future, in particular perseverance and thrift" and the short-term orientation, stands for "the fostering of virtues related to the past and present in particular, perspective for tradition, preservation and fulfilling social obligations" (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005. P. 210).

In today's unstable and turbulent environment, even if the countries and cultures are categorized, it is taken for granted that every organization plans for the future. It is understandable, that countries with a long orientation context will do it in a more precise and systematic way whereas, the ones with short-term orientation will do it in a very uncertain manner. Therefore, complete avoidance of the future, in this age is a myth. However, the degree to which it is practiced will vary.

**2.5.3. Criticisms of Hofstede's dimensions of National Cultures**

Hofstede's model on the cultural dimensions has been more popular in terms of cross-cultural research. However, fame and criticisms are the two sides of the same coin. Similarly, Hofstede's model, Dimensions of National Culture, has also received critics and comparisons. McSweeney (2002) criticizes the model by saying that it is based on incorrect and inadequate assumptions. He mentions that culture and national culture should not be

quantitatively measured. This criticism is based on a notion of national uniformity and an attempt to deny the fact that culture plays no role in behavior between individuals of different cultures (McSweeney, 2002). However, author Williamson recognizes McSweeney's criticism is systematically inconsistent and has inadequate evidence to counter argue the work done by professor Hofstede (Willaimson, 2002). However, he further himself criticize the dimensions on national culture on three grounds. "(1) there is the danger of assuming that all members of a culture homogeneouslycarrythesameculturalattributes;(2)seeingindividualsas'cultural dopes', about expecting individuals' values or behavior to be wholly determined by their cultural background; (3)third danger is of confusing scores for cultural dimensions with cultural constructs for which they are but approximate measures" (Williamson, 2002).

Some other authors criticizing these dimensions, include Jones: who critics the work on its "relevancy, cultural homogeneity, national divisions, political influences, being outdated having too few ingredients and statistical integrity" (Jones, 2007). One of the most interesting point mentioned by Jones in his criticism is that situations may have changed from the time of Hofstede's original study and the political influences must have biased the study, like the occurrence of the Cold war. Nevertheless, the author mentions that professor Hofstede's work is ground breaking for further cultural studies. Another model in comparison is the GLOBE model of national cultures. The Hofstede's dimensions are challenged by the extensiveness of the GLOBE project (Leung, 2006). GLOBE has eighteen dimensions and it describes Hofstede's model to be incomplete. However, professor Hofstede in defense mentions that GLOBE project is far too complex with eighteen items to explain. He further explains that the GLOBE project has a lot of inter-correlations between national cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2006). In conclusion Smith (2006) in his article overviews both, Hofstede's and GLOBE as an approach to national cultures. The difference exists in its way of achieving it, which is slightly different. Both the models have their own threats and uncertainties (Smith, 2006).

Every model devised will sustain to have flaws. Due to the changing environment, economy and political agendas, no one law/model can hold truth universally. For instance, Jones (2007) argues on the reliability of the original data because it could have been influenced by the political situation (Cold war). However, if the data were to be collected all over again, at this stage, it may be affected by the economic situations (Post inflation) if not political. Hence, in this turbulent and unstable environment one has to make some assumptions and work with ambiguity.

**2.6. Conclusions**

Through the length of literature available in theory, it can be expected that the research question should be answered positively. However, it is often found that the literature becomes theory whereas the reality is contradictory. Similarly, it is pointed out by author Price where he comments that, Elton Mayo who preached soft model of HRM, which has become theory whereas Taylor's hard HRM has become reality (Price, 2007, p.51). However, this can be criticized as a subjective fact. For instance, this particular judgment may hold truth when it comes to managing production, basically in labor oriented jobs. Although the same cannot hold truth when it comes to a service industry.

After having mentioned and analyzed the different authors view on the topic, one can infer that such issues are very important yet undervalued. However, with growing globalization and spread of the culture all over the world, it will soon and has started to become a matter of concern. Unlike, a few decades ago HR has now become a non-negotiable part of the global companies. Soon it will also have such softer issues being looked into, if not by choice then by compulsion. Hence, this study is a step further in the cultural investigation of not only the organizational culture and values but also those of the employees, i.e. national culture. Moreover, from the breadth of research on literature it can be found that there is not enough literature on culture being a core competency of soft skills. Also the influence of individual culture and its impact on the performance of the employees or the team will be looked into. This is because, with the changing demographics the potential employee work force in the IT organizations are changing immensely with huge mix of people from various cultures. Therefore, in order to meet the growing demand of multicultural workforce a study on how it would impact the performance and the related activities would be very essential. The research attempts at extending the above literature to a scarcely researched frontier of cultural competency being part of the soft skills in the IT organizations.

The next section will talk about the methodology of the research and data analysis. The researcher aims at completing the study with a recommendation of having culture training modules as a part of the soft skill training. A concrete awareness module outline will be made under the recommendations section for the same. This will be a contribution in the field of primary research.

# Chapter 3

# Research Methodology

**3.1 Introduction**

Research can be defined as something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, which helps in increasing their knowledge. This suggests that research is based on logical associations and not simply beliefs (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 3).Methodology is defined as the way the knowledge is gained, how theories are generated and tested, and the relationship between theoretical perspectives and research problem (Blaikie, 1993, p.7).

This section explains in detail about the research design used. Firstly, the type of research philosophy selected is explained with a rational. Later, the research approach and the different strategies of the research that are to be adopted are clearly explained. The sampling methods and who potential samples for this research are described. Further, the time horizon selected for this research is described in brief. Finally, the instruments that are going to be used for collecting the primary data and the reason for selecting the particular samples are also explained in a separate section. Along with this the data analysis procedure and the limitations of this research are described in brief as a final conclusion.

While it is true that all the things that could have been created have been given to the world and all that we generate now is not really a creation but a discovery of something that existed (Piscopo and Birattari, 2008). Taking a look at the past we cannot really say that we have invented something as concrete and useful as we did years ago. For instance, the invention of the wheel was a mark however all the vehicles that have been produced and the different mode of transport is not as impressive as the discovery of the wheel itself (Slaughter, 2014). Yes it the age of new generation and several new gadgets which is an upgrade more than an invention. We are in the era where innovation is the way since invention has reached its peak. Innovation is when we do the same thing in a new manner, and this is basically what we have been doing.

**3.2 Research Question**

The key research question central to this study is:

Can 'cultural awareness' be seen as one of the core competencies in the IT multinationals?" Sub question: Can a culture training module impact the performance of the employee?

With the growing globalization it is difficult to not come across cultural differences. Every culture has some good and some bad, and with the help of inventions, travelling has become an easy task which is bringing the world closer. Sir Peter Ustinov has humorlessly quoted, 'I imagine hell like this: Italian punctuality, German Humor and English wine.' This shows us that we need to acknowledge the uniqueness of every culture and the fact that it has something to learn from.

**3.3 Research Design**

Research onion is a route map to design the process of a research. A model found by Saunders and Lewis, the onion is a step by step guide to turn a research question into a

research project (Robson, 2002). The first layer is the research philosophy, which helps in understanding the perception of the researcher. The second layer is the approach of the research which clarifies if the researcher has taken the deductive or the inductive approach. Deductive is where a hypothesis is made and then tested out of literature review and analysis , on the other hand inductive approach is the one under which the researcher collects the data and develops a theory out of the data that has been analyzed. The third layer is research strategy which helps in finding the medium through which the research will be conducted, for instance if it's a quantitative research; strategies involved are surveys and action research and if the approach is that of qualitative;  the strategies involved are interviews, experiment and grounded theory. Moving further, one needs to understand the time horizon of the research. This can be either cross-sectional or longitudinal depending on the research question. Finally, comes the core of the research design that is the secondary data, or analysis of the data collected with the help of secondary data available and reaching a valid conclusion. Although the research onion is accepted and applied universally, it cannot escape critiques. Writer's such as Guba and Lincoln (1994) have argued that questions of research method are of secondary importance to the questions of which paradigm is applicable to the research. According to Taylor et al., (2007) "Paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished".

With this broad explanation of the research onion, the research methodology will now focus on going further in depth at the different levels. This will involve understanding the several layers in Saunders's model of the research onion. The explanation will also include the reasons why a particular approach or strategy was not adapted. This will help understand the base better and make data collection and analysis concrete.

Figure 5: Research Onion
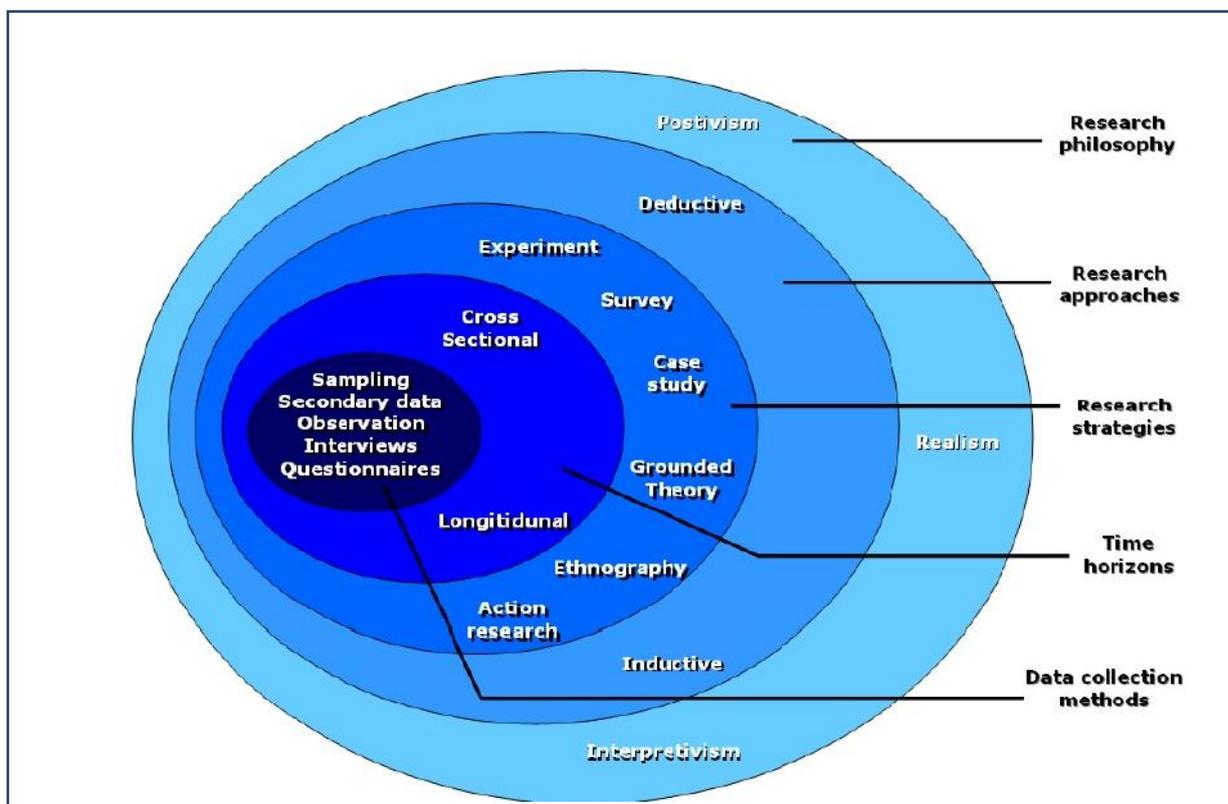


Source: Saunders and Lewis, 2008

**3.4 Research Philosophy**

The research philosophy selected by the researcher depends on the way the researcher thinks about the development of knowledge (Saunders et al, 2007, p. 107).

A research philosophy can be positivism, realism, interpretivism or pragmatism. The philosophy selected for this research is interpretivism**.** In general interpretivism is understanding the difference between humans in their role as social actors (Understanding research philosophies, 2014). An interpretivist perspective is highly appropriate in the case of business and management research where the research is being conducted in the field to investigate the organizational behavior, marketing and human resource management (Saunders et al, 2007, p. 124). Since the topic of research is culture which is social in nature, interpretivism will be appropriate. The primary research consist of interviewing IT professionals in multinational companies. The questions asked are related to soft skills and if culture awareness can be a competency. These questions are very subjective in nature therefore the answers will differ from individual to individual. Also, it can be found that with a qualitative approach where one is conducting interviews, interpretivism is the finest way. This is because whatever the response in the interview is, it will ultimately be interpreted and analyzed by the researcher.

On the other hand, reason that positivism will not be as suitable is because the research does not aim at unraveling any truth about the importance of diverse workforce in the environments. There cannot be a law-like generalization made at the end of the research due to the subjective nature of the topic (Remenyi et al., 1998, p. 32). Similarly, realism and pragmatism were not suitable for this research because the strategy adapted is only qualitative and the philosophy of the researcher suits interpretivism. Since, it purely intends to interpret different people on their understanding of diverse multi-cultural workforce in corporate firms and thereby testing if the research question drawn is positive or negative.

**3.5 Research Approach**

The research approach can either be inductive or deductive in nature. However, the approach suitable for this research is 'inductive'. Inductive approach understands the way humans build their world and permitting alternative explanations on what's going on (Research Philosophy, 2014). In inductive approach, the researcher would collect data and develop theory as a result of the data analysis. This approach is likely to be particularly in concern with the context in which such events were taking place (Saunders et al, 2003, p. 130).Inductive methodology is suitable for this research, because it is about how people feel in different cultural environments which leads to better understanding of the problem. The purpose is to know from people how they have felt when their culture was looked down at or neglected. Reversely, did it impact their performance when they were acknowledged for their origin and upbringing? Also the inductive research method gives an opportunity to engage personally. This helps in wider learning and gives scope for further questioning. As the interviews are questioned an inductive approach helps in building on semi structures interviews. Such an approach in turn helps in being spontaneous and bring out as much as possible from the samples being interviewed.

One of the reasons why deductive approach has been adapted because the research is not built around a hypothesis. Secondly, there are no concepts that are going to be generalized for quantitative measurement as part of this research. Neither the research nor the interviews are highly structured because the purpose is not to prove a point but rather find the point. A deductive approach is criticized to be a cause and effect link which is made between particular variables without the understanding of the way in which humans interpreted their social world (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 128).Another factor that makes induction more valid is that, a time bound qualitative approach cannot involve a large number of samples. Under this research the number of samples involved is average, but the quality of the data collection is detailed. The analyzed data will further help find the validity of the research question. Unlike a deductive approach where data analysis is followed by theory presumed

## 3.6 Research Strategy

In this section we turn our attention to the research strategy being employed. The strategy that is adopted are 'Grounded theory' and 'Ethnography'. According to Glaser and Strauus (1967) classic grounded theory is often thought of as the best example of the inductive approach. A grounded theory is helpful for research to predict and explain behavior, the emphasis is on building and developing theory. Especially as business and management is about behaviors, for example consumers' or employees' pattern, a grounded theory can help in exploring a wide range of samples within the IT industry (Goulding, 2002, p.137).This would further enhance and contribute in the formulation of an outline of a 'Culture training module'. But it is also very important to not over simplify this strategy as pointed by Suddaby in six common misconceptions about grounded theory (Suddaby, 2006, p.9).

Ethnography is firmly rooted in the inductive approach. It is a kind of research strategy wherein a researcher studies the situation by putting themselves in the shoes of the participant/respondent. Thereby seeing the situation from the respondent's perspective and the context in which it is happening. In this study, the researcher will attempt at getting in the shoes of the various people in the IT work place and try to draw out an idea or conclusion from them. The drawback of this strategy is that it is time consuming and may cause a drift due to the open ended nature. However it suits this research the most, because it helps the researcher immerse in the topic completely. Hence the research process was made flexible to accommodate all the changes due to the constant development of new patterns of thoughts about the situation that is being observed (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.149). 'Ethnography' is widely used in studies involving ethnic cultures. Hence it would be apt for this research (Sage Publications, 2009, p.8). The research does not include use of surveys, as the process is qualitative, and it does not use experiments as the research is time bound.

## 3.7 Time Horizon

A research frame can either be a snapshot or a diary perspective. The snapshot version is called cross sectional whereas the one which is akin to a diary format is known as a longitudinal. It is recognized that most research projects undertaken academically are time constrained. Hence, the time horizon selected here is cross sectional. Cross sectional method is usually carried out once and essentially represents a snapshot of particular event at a

particular point in time (Sanders et al, 2009, p. 73). Commonly, cross-sectional studies employ the survey strategy however they may also use qualitative methods depending on the research question (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008; Robson; 2008). Although, the longitudinal study cannot be applied to this research because the longitudinal study's strength lies in its capacity to study the change and development over the period. However, due to time limitations 'longitudinal' time horizon is not adopted for this research. Another reason is that the data collected is only in a particular time frame.

The study on national culture of the individual employees has been conducted by Professor Geert Hofstede. The samples were the employees from IBM spread across many different nations. This is a good example of a longitudinal study conducted on a relevant topic. This helps in building a concrete conclusion out of the cross sectional study conducted by the researcher.

## 3.8 Sampling Methods and Selecting Respondents

Sampling techniques are relevant in research work, where it is not possible to survey the entire population due to time constraints or limiting resources. In most cases, researchers are able to draw conclusions about the entire population based on the selected sample. However, "in order to be able to generalize your findings from your sample to the population from which it was selected, the sample must be representative" (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.40). Sampling methods can be of two types, probable or non-probable (Appendix 2). The method suitable for this research is the non-probability as it involves qualitative research. Purposive or judgmental sampling enables one to use their judgments to select samples that will help answer the research question and meet the objectives (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 237). This form of sample is often used with small size samples and will suit the time bound research. Also, it is used by researchers working with grounded theory strategy.

If we look at the depth of the study done on 'culture' in the corporate world, it is easy to find a lot of work being done on organizational culture. According to Torrington, something is competitive only if it's valuable, rare, inimitable and irreplaceable such as the employee of an organization (Torrington and Hall et al., 2011, p. 70).It is worth asking what makes the organization competitive, different and perform better. In general, each and every employee individually constitute to the organization and also form the organization. Each employee is an individual with a different set of background, values and beliefs. Just as the organization's culture is driven by the mission and the vision statement of the company, similarly each employee has a different mission and vision in life and corporate world. It could be worth considering if the two are interlinked and acknowledged too.

The samples being selected for the qualitative research of this project are professionals from the IT multinationals from different countries and different cultures. Out of the fifteen samples interviewed seven are Indians and rest from different countries. Since, the researcher's strategy is grounded theory and ethnography, it would be more authentic to study the impact on nationals. This makes it possible for the researcher to get into the shoes of the contender and understand the core of the experience within a short frame of time. This is a necessity for an ethnographic strategy. Since the researcher comes from India it makes the research more reliable and insightful. However, in order to make sure that the investigation is

not biased the researcher has also involved other nationalities who have worked with a diverse culture. This includes Asians, Americans, Europeans and English people (See Appendix 7.7).The details of the samples are included in the next chapter which attempts at analyzing the data collected.

## 3.9 Research Ethics

Research ethics means ensuring the design of the research methodology is sound and morally defensible to all those involved. It is clear that ethics is something that must be taken in an account during the research process. However focusing on the data collection element, this states that the participant has given permission on the information provided by the researcher; if this information will be changed or manipulated, it will be considered as convert and unethical behavior. The participant were given the option to withdraw at any time which was respected by the researcher (Saunders et.al. 2003, p. 183). The identity of the research population will be disclosed only on their consent. All the matter gathered will be used purely for the purpose of the research and constructive conclusion. The information gathered is from individuals and not organizations hence, making it tranquil and reliable.

In spite of this, there are a couple of ethical challenges that are expected while undergoing this research. Main ethical issue is the credibility of the information from the samples. Since the research questions are primarily going to be focused on "Diverse cultural workforce", certain samples could be biased to certain views and may give improper information due to emotional biases. This may mislead the research and may lead to drawing wrong conclusions. In order to avoid these, the samples are selected in such a manner that they vary from various levels of experience starting from a minimum of two years till above fifteen years. This gives diversity to the sample population. Also the samples selected are those who worked as part of various multicultural team, hence this gives credibility to the data collected. Since it is a qualitative research, it will be easy to filter the not so credible source as the mode of communication will be direct. This will be helpful in collecting credible information which would support in drawing an unbiased conclusion. The interviews to be conducted will be preplanned and a definite time would be intimidated to the samples well in advance. This would make sure the samples are well prepared and they are not in a rush to complete the interview. As rushed and unplanned interviews may lead to improper primary data. By following the above said actions yet again will enable the researcher to get unbiased, reliable and trustworthy information which would help in analyzing to a more precise conclusion.

## 3.10 Data Collection Instruments

As a result of literature review, and secondary data collection, a good deal of information will be gathered. As mentioned earlier, primary data is intended to be collected through interviews. An interview is a purposeful discussion between two individuals (Kahn and Cannell, 1957, p.23). Interviews can either be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. (Appendix 7.3). For the purpose of this research a semi structured interview questionnaire has been prepared. This will help the researcher go with the flow of the interview and also gives the interviewee a chance to add information without restrictions. The interviews will be conducted on Skype and recorded at the same time.

Qualitative research is capable of creating unique challenges in the analysis process. This is because it does not employ concrete statistics and data measurement tools unlike quantitative analysis. Here in the researcher is expected to analyses the themes and patterns in a systematic way in order to address the central research question (White, 2000, p.61). The secondary data will be predominantly collected from Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) books and website. The CIPD source will aid for the relevant and current culture based data. Hofstede's Culture Centre website is yet another source of constant inspiration and reference for anyone studying or working on cultural aspects. The study also includes research papers from the reputed sources like, the Stanford research institute (SRI) and Harvard business school review and blog. Noted above are a few sources of secondary data. However, the detailed analysis will be included in the chapters to come.

### 3.11 Data Analysis Procedures

The main research methodology adopted here is 'Qualitative' analysis. "Development of concepts which help us understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences and views of the participants." (Pope & Mays, 1995).Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating. (Online QDA - What is Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA), 2014).

White (2000) advocates three step process to consider data analysis:

1. Read through all results and identify themes and patterns as they keep developing.

2. Re-review information emphasizing recurring themes and group the topics. Assign each topic a code or color to ensure ease of accumulation and completion.

3. After completing reading and grouping, examine emergent patterns and supporting evidence.

The primary data that is collected from the interviews will be analyzed separately through theory, coding themes. Then a common theme would be identified among the data from each of the individual interviews. From the common theme a coherent sets of information will be derived. By comparing this analyzed data with the secondary data available i.e. from the literature review and secondary data on particular topics a further detailed analysis would be performed. From them, a clear conclusion could be derived.

### 3.12 Limitations of Methodology

The research findings from the selected population sample can be generalized only to the population from which that sample was taken. Hence, this is an inherent limitation to any research of this kind and is not particular to the methodology used. So, a large scale research covering enlargement of population sample across several industry sectors would be more representative and would also increase the quality of the study (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

The limitations of following the Qualitative analysis and inductive methodology are that the number of sample selection. As this research especially requires people from various diverse

cultural ethnic backgrounds focusing on all the cultures would not be practically possible. However, efforts will be taken to make sure that most of the samples taken are from diverse backgrounds. Lastly, evaluating the data in the interview and interpreting them would require a lot of research and study. In spite of all these limitations utmost care will be taken to make sure that the questionnaire is drafted in such a way that it eliminates biases. Also efforts will be taken to conduct the interviews in a manner that could help best in bringing up the authentic experiences of the respondents.

# Chapter 4

# Data Collection and Analysis
# (Findings and Discussions)

**4.1 Introduction**
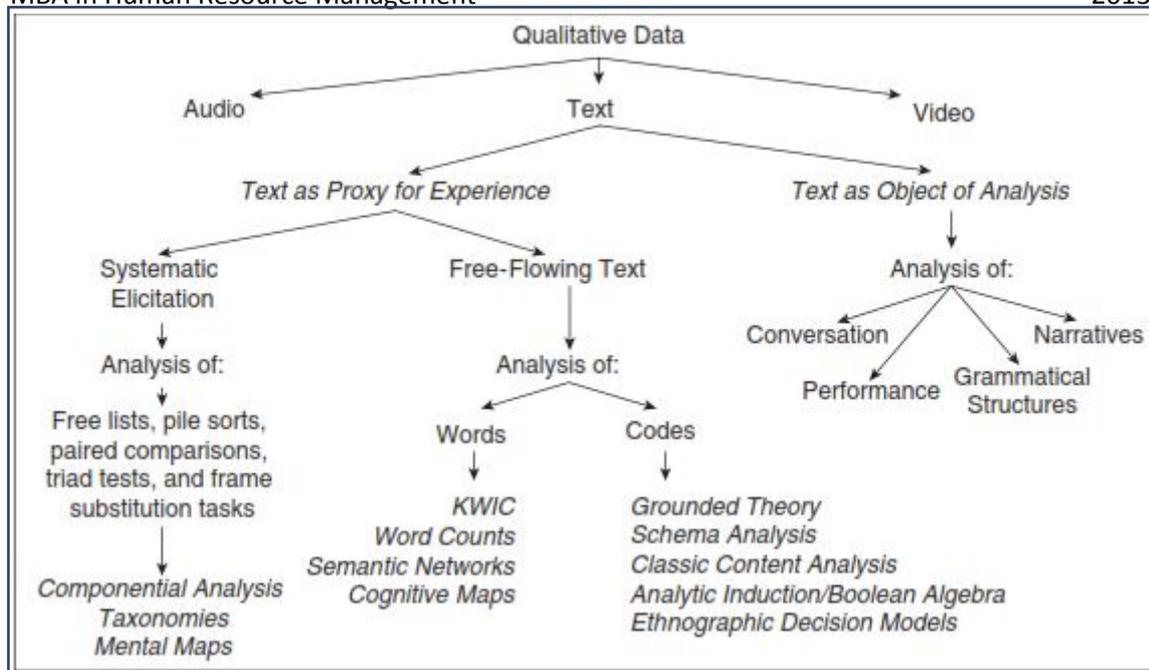
The data collection approach can be either mono, mixed or multi-channeled (Saunders et al, 2007, p.318). However, the researcher chose the mono method because it is better to understand one concept in depth rather than making an analysis out of a hybrid collection. The qualitative research method used in this research is employed to answer the pattern and strength of understanding the human behavior, opinion and experiences that is difficult to obtain through quantitative-oriented methods of collection. Although the form of the interviews is semi-structured, the researcher maintained a consistency in the questions that were asked to the interviewees (See Appendix 7.4). A key distinction is between pure or applied research (Sage Publications, no date).The purpose of the data collection and analysis is more to do with the latter research type – applied research. Applied research is defined as that "which strives to improve our understanding of a problem, with the intension to contribute a solution of that problem" (Bickman and Rog, 2009, p.X). This kind of research has an ability to contribute to a problem by generating new knowledge, focusing on the real-world problems. Such a pragmatic approach suits the researcher's philosophy of being able to understand the core of the topic and will help fulfil the need of creating an outline of a 'Culture Training Module'. This will be a possible solution if the research question is positive.

**4.2. Collecting Qualitative Data**

The focus of the research is to answer the question, "Can 'Cultural Awareness' be seen as one of the core competencies in the IT multinationals?

Accordingly, the sample interviewees selected for the qualitative survey are all professionals from the IT world. To keep the responses truly representative of a diverse work culture in the multinationals today, the respondents were selectively chosen from a wide range of nationality, age, number of years of work experience, work profile, location and gender. For example, out of the total of fifteen respondents, three men and three women are from the United States, one from the UK, one from Ireland. The research includes nine Indians too, out of the nine, six are working abroad and the rest three are placed in a multi-national companies in India and have relevant work experience (See Appendix 7.6). This demonstrates how the researcher had an opportunity to interview people from different countries who have had exposure to multiple cultures in their professional worlds. We can thus assume that for all practical purposes, the data collected is fairly accurate and credible.

Figure 6: Qualitative Data Analysis

```
                              Qualitative Data
                                     │
          ┌──────────────────────────┼──────────────────────────┐
        Audio                       Text                        Video
                          ┌──────────┴──────────────┐
              Text as Proxy for Experience      Text as Object of Analysis
                  │                                   │
          ┌───────┴────────┐                    Analysis of:
     Systematic      Free-Flowing Text        ┌──────┼──────────┐
     Elicitation            │            Conversation        Narratives
          │            Analysis of:       Performance    Grammatical
     Analysis of:       ┌────┴────┐                        Structures
          │           Words     Codes
 Free lists, pile sorts,  │        │
 paired comparisons,    KWIC    Grounded Theory
 triad tests, and frame Word Counts  Schema Analysis
 substitution tasks  Semantic Networks  Classic Content Analysis
          │          Cognitive Maps  Analytic Induction/Boolean Algebra
 Componential Analysis           Ethnographic Decision Models
     Taxonomies
     Mental Maps
```

Source: (Ryan and Brenard, 2000)

## 4.3 Analysing qualitative data

Data collection, data analysis and the development and verification of propositions are interrelated and interactive set of processes. This leads to analysis during the collection of data as well as after it (Kvale, 1996, p.67). Such an approach is suitable for the researcher, because of the inductive nature of the study and the grounded approach that is adapted. Analyzing qualitative data can be far more complicated than analyzing quantitative data. However, conducting interviews and collecting the information in a systematic way makes the task simpler and results more reliable. There are a few electronic software to calculate and examine data like SPSS for evaluating surveys, which is an example of quantitative research. Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDA), NVivo, ATLAS.ti, N6, and HyperReasearch are a few software programs for qualitative analysis (Saunders et al, 2007, p.480). However, these sophisticated measures are available for professional research. After studying these tools briefly, the researcher decided to analysis the data through segregating the information collected in four different sections mentioned below. Since the research philosophy is inductive, the researcher commences the study collecting and exploring data without using a predetermined theoretical or descriptive framework (Yin, 2003, p.192).

According to Sauder's et al, there exist three types of qualitative analysis process; summarizing (condensation), structuring (ordering) and categorizing (grouping). Since inductive approach itself is informal, the researcher chose to move ahead with categorizing which is more formal in comparison with summarizing and structuring. This will bring in a discipline resulting in a more reliable conclusion. Within the categorizing process, the analytical procedure selected is 'narrative analyses'. This is because the interviews conducted, resulted in narration of incidences which were relevant to the question. Further the categories are divided under six main sections that cover the main concepts of the research. These resemble the thoughts of the questions asked in the interviews.

**4.4 Advantages of working in a diverse team**

**4.4.1. Primary research**

Overall, there was a strong belief and acknowledgement that working within a multi-cultural team gives an opportunity to learn something new. All the fifteen participants, with different levels of experience reached a common conclusion of the advantages that exists while working with people from a diverse set of background. The Indian national participants believed that although India is one whole nation there exists dissimilarities within the several states and their respective state cultures. The Indian respondents shared experiences where people from South India were placed in parts of North India and vice versa as a strategic decision by their companies so as to create culturally diverse groups. It was believed that this mixing of North and South Indian cultures would form a mutually beneficial expertise group. Individuals who have been parts of culturally diverse groups shared that this diversity added to their personal growth. One of the American interviewee, Mr. John Silver, mentioned that he has worked the most with Asians and particularly Indians, both off shore and on shore. When asked, what were the top three things he learned from the Indian employees and their culture? John mentioned their eagerness to learn, how quickly they absorbed something new and that their openness to try new things. In his words, 'they do not say no easily'. Similarly Mr. Aditya Kedekar, an Indian who has worked in the United States for nine years and is currently the Vice President of J.P. Morgan, shared how he learned about the work life balance from the west and appreciated their calmness in dealing with issues. The one thing that remained common in the responses of the interviewees was the acknowledgement of the differences and willingness to accept the fact that there is so much to learn from the different cultures around the world. Mrs. Preeti Wadekar, an Aluminia of the Columbia university and a current employee at KPMG in the Culture Conflicts department, mentioned the fact that how people from different culture bring in different perspectives on the table. This is highly encouraged in her New York based company.

**4.4.2. Secondary research**

Research says that, "diverse teams can be of great benefit because team member possess different perspectives and a wider variety of information. The process of reconciling these differences leads to deeper consideration of issues, more sophisticated understanding, and broader exploration on ideas, all of which boost performance" (Jackson, Joshi and Erhardt, 2003). All the participants interviewed were asked, if given a chance to work in a homogeneous or heterogeneous team, what would they select? The answer unanimously was working with a diverse set of people in spite of whatever experience they have had. Some individuals when asked, brought up the point of nature versus nurture. The ideas of the western world that humans need instant gratification, are greedy and self-cantered may only apply to societies that allow such an ideology to flourish. So the real question could be if human behavior is motivated by a universal 'human nature' or is human behavior learned through culture? (Alexander, 2012). In this case it is a mixture of both and the later has an important role to play. This further reflects in our nature and conduct which is defined as the cultural behavior. Hence, one can state that the cultural behavior can be nurtured in an individual to the benefit of both the employee and the employer. It is an advantageous skill to possess which will not only enhance the quality of the work force but also enrich the

personality of the employee. This can further lead to a more organized personal life, reflecting the ease and productivity at work too. Professor Elton Mayo has spoken on the social needs of the employees through the illumination effect. Yet another study done on the Japanese management showed that by promoting team work and creating higher interdependency the rate of absenteeism actually reduced. (Price, 2007, p. 579)

## 4.5 Challenges of working in a diverse team

### 4.5.1. Primary Research

Just like the two sides of a coin, it is certain to have challenges while working within an international or intercultural team. The key is minimizing these trials since elimination is not possible. All the fifteen interviewees had stories too share about the challenges they faced while working with different set of cultures. Mr. Mosher from Seattle explained how he was mentoring a project where the project manager was from the U.S., the team leader was an Indian, and the team members were from different states of India and also a few employees were contributing from overseas.  The difference was not only in the time zone but also in the way they worked and manner they thought about an issue. For instance, John shared that Indians were a little apprehensive about contributing ideas or speaking their minds unless they were asked. He found it was a challenge to make them speak. On the contrary he shared how working with English men was different because they were more blunt and direct. He observed that the English men were not as flexible as other nationalities and were comfortable only with their own style of working.  Mr. Sarran and Mr. Sashi who are working in U.S. and the UK respectively had a similar take. Equally, Mr. James with an experience of 35 years and working with more than ten different nationalities emphasized on the communication variances between different nationalities. He found the eastern countries to be more formal and the western countries to be more informal in dialect. Therefore, it was not easy to work with the two in a mix. The Latin-Americans are too direct in both their praises and criticism. However, this may not be very well received by the countries with a high context culture. Mr. Sashi, who is a project manager for a company in UK, heads a team of four and each team member is from a different land. He gave an interesting example of socializing post work. He mentioned how drinking was a culture in the west however one of his team mates was from the east and drinking was a taboo in his home country. He chose not to hang out with the other team members and this made him feel left out creating a gap between the team. The possible solution here, could be that the team plans an outing elsewhere to include this team member and such an effort may lead him to come on these night outings and still choose not to drink. Mr. Sashi pointed that how bonding happens beyond work and this leads to better rapport and co-ordination within the workplace. Another challenge mentioned by Mr. Aditya, the VP at J.P. Morgan in his words, "I do feel culturally challenged frequently. Lack of interest in sports (basketball, American football) and not growing up in U.S. which makes it difficult to get pop culture references, makes it difficult to make small talk or casual elevator conversations".

### 4.5.2. Secondary research

"In many ways, working for a multinational company or organization today is like working for the United Nations. It requires an uncommon level of diplomacy, tact, and sensitivity to other cultures" (Corkindale, 2007). There is a famous saying that 'When in Rome act like the

Romans'. This essentially means, in order to be successful in a situation different form your own, one needs to adapt to the local customs (Molinsky, 2014). However, to what extent, is the question? Sometimes when the employee tries to adapt to a culture on his own without adequate training, it can do more harm than good to both the individual and the people around. For instance, Professor Andy Molinsky author of the book 'Global Dexterity' narrates an incident where a Chinese employee, Cheng is starting a new job as a management consultant at a strategy firm in the U.S. In Cheng's learning, he was explicitly told he needs to be expressive of his ideas and on occasions directly disagree with his superiors. Therefore, Cheng in his very first meeting with his boss calls his idea to be crazy and points out the potential draw backs of the same. Although Cheng was uncomfortable doing this he felt proud about having expressed himself. However, such a blunt statement in a public meeting room back fired Cheng, leaving him in his boss's bad books. The assertive scale in China would have been 1-2 on a scale of 7, in U.S. it is expected to be 5, but Cheng went up to 7. This is clearly due to lack of understanding the correct level of power distance between the two cultures (See Appendix 7.5). One cannot avoid the conflicts when working in a diverse team. Such cultural faux pas are inevitable, but the learning is not trying to over-switch and being as authentic as possible. This will minimize the chances of such abruptions. Another way of doing this is teaching the employees the forgiveness strategy which can be a part of the culture training module (Molinsky, 2013).

## 4.6. Did culture awareness and acknowledgement impact the performance of the individuals working in multi-nationals?

### 4.6.1. Primary research

This was a question that lead to contemplation for a lot of the interviewees, 'Did cultural awareness impact their performance?' The replies were a mix of yes, no and can't say. The responses for this lead the research forward, making the researcher feel all the more passionate about the topic. Some examinees had a straight answer both positive and negative whereas some were doubtful. What is interesting about these responses, was the pattern that unfolded later. The initial set of interviews was with employees who have 0-3 years of experience and have not been exposed to the different cultures too much. For instance, Mr. Nitish Chandra with three years of work experience at CISCO is now the Product manager. He deals with clients of 30 different nationalities, however has never travelled abroad. From his experience and learning, he mentioned that culture awareness is a good to have skill. However, the lack of such a training or skill will not make any difference to the performance of the employees. He was confident that everyone at the end of the day will make sure the work is done irrespective of their feelings. Similar were the responses from Mr. Krishna Kumar from Wipro, Mr. Aravind Kumar from TCS and Miss Janet Felicia from HCL. Although they believed that culture awareness may enhance the level of performance, when asked if the absence of such a training will impact the performance poorly made them say, "No, it isn't that important in our field, we will still continue doing our job in the same manner". These were the first set of interviews conducted which gave an impression that the research was flowing in one direction. However, on interviewing a few more participants the other side of the story unfolded. This gave a balanced and multi-dimensional view point to the research. Majority of the remaining respondents agreed to the necessity and the level of importance of culture awareness within their firms. Which is, out of the remaining eleven
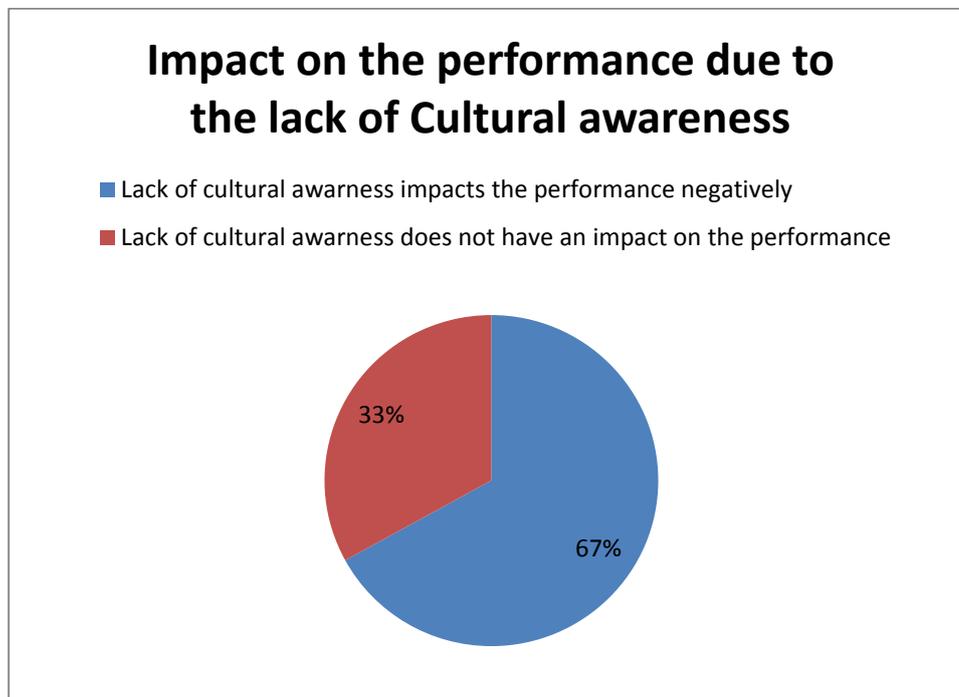
respondents, ten were for it and only one was neutral/not positive about it. Therefore, in total, out of the fifteen interviewees, ten were in favor of the research whereas five were negative about it. The ones who were not in favor, comprised of 33% of the whole set of interviews, who denied that culture awareness and sensitivity would impact performance. Whereas, the rest of the 67% clearly were of the opinion that lack of cultural awareness would negatively impact employee performance. In Mr. John words, with an experience of 15 years, 'If you do not have cultural awareness, you are guaranteed to have challenges'. This is definitely a strong sentence from Mr. John. He has said that one is bound to have challenges if not culturally aware, which implies that the productivity of the individual will take a hit when he/she is facing difficulties in the team due to the lack of cultural awareness. This will impact the individual's performance which in turn will have an impact on the team he/she is in. Considering if many such individuals were in the same team then it would lead to a decline in the performance of the entire team which will in turn affect the business of the particular firm.

### 4.6.2. Secondary Research

A research done by the Harvard Business Institute, focuses on what is expected out of young executives. As a part of the research, they went through the job description and profiles of hundreds of executives gauging the skills from essential to nice to have category (Groysberg, 2011, pp. 2-4). Interestingly what they came across was a strikingly consistent finding. The research mentioned that the skills that one needs to reach the C-suite are not enough once the individual has reached there. C-suite includes all the top level positions including the chief executive officer (CEO), chief finance officer (CFO), chief human resource officer (CHRO) and so on. To explain further the technical and domain expertise are just a means to the end but not an end in itself. According to the same research it has been a constant fact for all the seven C level jobs. The main reason for this could be the burst of the web opportunities. Such was not the scene in the early 1980s and 1990s when most executives in the information technology grew up in the function. These employees are expected to know tasks beyond their job profile too. This includes leadership skills and mentoring. As mentioned earlier with the growing globalization it is common to have a team of varied nationalities. In fact as noticed in section 3.2.1, employers strategize to place a diverse set of employees together to create a mixed bunch of talent. This is a way to enhance creativity. Therefore, it becomes of immense importance for these mentors to not only acknowledge the cultural differences but also put effort for it to work in their favor. Research has showed that if the employees have a low level of emotional intelligence, they may get impacted (David, 2014). This will further be reflected on their performance. For instance, the first four individuals who answered the researcher that irrespective of the atmosphere at work they will continue to perform well, three out of the four samples, who did not find culture awareness to be as important, exhibited to have a strong sense of emotional intelligence. This could mean that since they had such strong emotional intelligence quotient, they found it easier to manage the differences and also the stiffness created due to these differences sometimes. Whereas the forth interviewee Mr. Aravind from TCS was not yet exposed to any other culture and has only worked with people from the same region. Therefore it can be defended why these respondents denied that cultural awareness can be a core competency. Hence with a majority of 67% of interviewees of the primary research who agreed that lack of cultural awareness will impact the performance poorly and the secondary research done in the past, the answer is positive. With such a high positive turnout, it can be stated that cultural awareness is one of

the key components and can be a key performance indicator. When comparing the primary and the secondary data it could be noted that the findings of the primary data match with the secondary data available. The concept that is reflected in the secondary data is that the lack of cultural awareness would impact the performance of the individual. This is positively validated by the findings from the primary research as 67% of them have inferred the same.

Figure 7: Impact on the performance due to lack of cultural awareness.



**Impact on the performance due to the lack of Cultural awareness**

- Lack of cultural awarness impacts the performance negatively
- Lack of cultural awarness does not have an impact on the performance

33%

67%

**4.7 Culture awareness being a part of soft-skills training**

**4.7.1 Primary Research**

It is certain that soft skills have made its way to the level of core competencies in most of the industries today. One needs to know beyond the technical skills in order to climb the ladder of success with pace. On interviewing the interviewees, with whatever levels of experience, one fact persisted throughout; they valued soft skills and the total sample size, had at some point in their career graphs taken a soft skills training program. However, some of the interviewees shared that it was a volunteered training and the ones interested could opt for it. There were some like Mr. James Kavanagh (Director of Operations, at AA, Ireland) and others who received formal training since their roles demanded these skills. For instance, Mr. Siddharthan Arul, at Accenture received a 'green field training' as a part of the induction. This training was a mixture of both technical and soft skills. Apart from this, Mr. Siddharthan Arul had mandatory soft skills training in Accenture even while he was working in projects at client locations. Mandatory completion of these soft skills trainings were considered as part of their performance appraisal cycle. He continued to say that people even in the senior management roles were supposed to take appropriate soft skills trainings according to their

level. This clearly indicates how the company (Accenture) emphasizes on the need for soft skills for their employees.

On further investigation, it was found that 78.57% of the interviewees neither had any training on culture awareness nor was it a topic under the regular soft skill training modules. Only three out of the fifteen interviewees had received some kind of culture training. For example, Miss Janet from HCL, Mr. Kumar from Wipro and Mr. Sarran from TCS had come across culture training. They agreed to the fact that it helped them have a broader vision of different cultures, making them more accommodative in nature. However the fact is that these three interviewees received such a training not because it was a part of the organizational learning modules but because their job profile at some point required such skills. They were leading the off-shore team and had to work in collaboration with the team on shore. Within the same organizations that these interviewees worked for, not all the employees had the opportunity to attend these trainings. It is not a hidden fact that the companies want to invest in skills that will earn them returns. The majority who lacked the experience of such a training also believed that its high time culture awareness becomes a part of the soft-skills modules. Mr. John Silver from Seattle said, 'Organically, it will happen. Culture awareness will be a module taught to the employees as it has become an essential skill to have'.

Figure 8: Culture training ratio
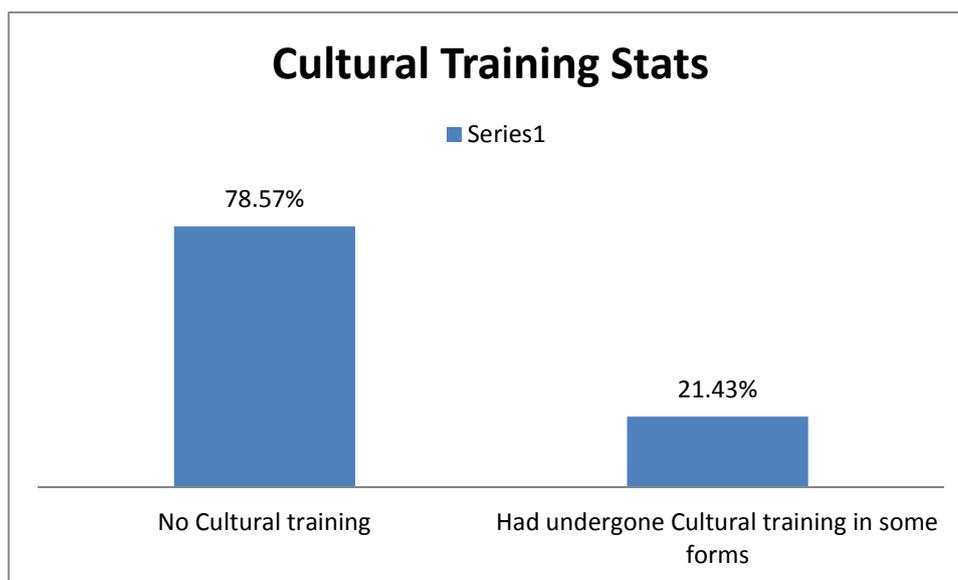


**4.7.2. Secondary Research**

The Deloitte group in Australia, conducted a study on diversity sampling a team of seven members, each belonging to a different nationality. To name a few, the team leader was from Spain and the rest of the six members came from U.S, Japan, Germany and Australia. One of the participants from the case study commented that "finding out about the cultural backgrounds of team members was an important part of building relationship with them". Another participant spoke about the valuable self-development (Isarria and Bourke, n.d.). It is getting more and more evident about how culture awareness is becoming a required and a

much appreciated skill. This is true not just for the employer but amongst employees too. Yet the researched found that in the secondary data, cultural awareness is not imparted as a training in most companies. This is a short coming that the researcher has pointed out with a solution. In today's time, employees are expected to know how to wire together a holistic system to ensure global growth. However, it the employers responsibility to start placing importance to these soft issues. With the external challenges in today's day and time it gets very difficult to survive if one does not have a strong company culture. The company may decide to converge or diverge but once that has taken place, the employee relations should be managed. A press release by the Harvard Business Review talks about how offering these trainings in places it is valued the most will increase the productivity of the underperforming employees (Jody Hayman, 2010, p.12-17). The research aims to find the necessity of having these trainings in the IT multi-nationals. With the growing global age, working across borders and cultures is not uncommon. Hence, this training will be valued at these places because there is already a need. Mr.Hari Bedi writes about the prerequisite of the ability to adapt the local culture and how organizations are appointing the expat managers not only from the view point of business need but also on the ground of social and cultural acceptability (Bedi, 2014)

## 4.8 Conclusion

In order to meet the foreseeable future, it has become essential to include diversity training as a part of new-hire training programs and advanced training programs for managers (Ingram, 2014). Through the collection of the primary data it was evident that cultural awareness can help employees recognize prejudices and cultural assumptions in their own minds. This will help in teaching those skills to employees who seek to understand other cultures they come in contact with. Also, it can be noted from the primary data that there is strong positive correlation between the 'years of experience' of the interviewees and the affirmative nature of the answers for the culture training. The more the experience, the more the interviewees were in favor of culture training. Hence it could be confidently concluded that the professionals with immense experience of working with diverse multinationals have a strong positive viewpoint towards the importance of the cultural awareness in the teams. Culture awareness should be imparted as a formal training program to the employees. Although it may look like an easy phenomenon, but is one of the most difficult thing to practice. As Lao Tzu, a philosopher and ancient Chinese poet has wisely said, "Water is the last thing a fish notices".

**Chapter 5**

**Conclusion**

The overall aim of this study is to improve the understanding of soft skills in the global IT firms. The specific research objectives were to find if 'cultural awareness' can be one of the core competencies in these information technology firms, which are profit driven and innovation focused organisations.

This section will revisit the research objectives above, summarize the findings of this research work and offer conclusions based on the findings. A synthesis will be done under this section, reflecting on the major ideas of the research.

Research objectives are divided under four sub headings to discuss the critical points in detail and with clarity. Recommendations for future research will be discussed, in terms of how to progress with the research study. Importantly, the contribution of this research to the development of a culture training module will be clarified. Conclusion is the final most part of the study, which reveals the findings of the entire process. Additionally, a section reflecting on the research process that has been undertaken has been included at the end of the study. By adopting this structure it is intended that the research work will be concluded so as to reflect on whether or not the objectives stated at the start of the research have been met, including the consideration of the study (Biggam, 2012, p.185)

Figure 9: Conclusion chart.
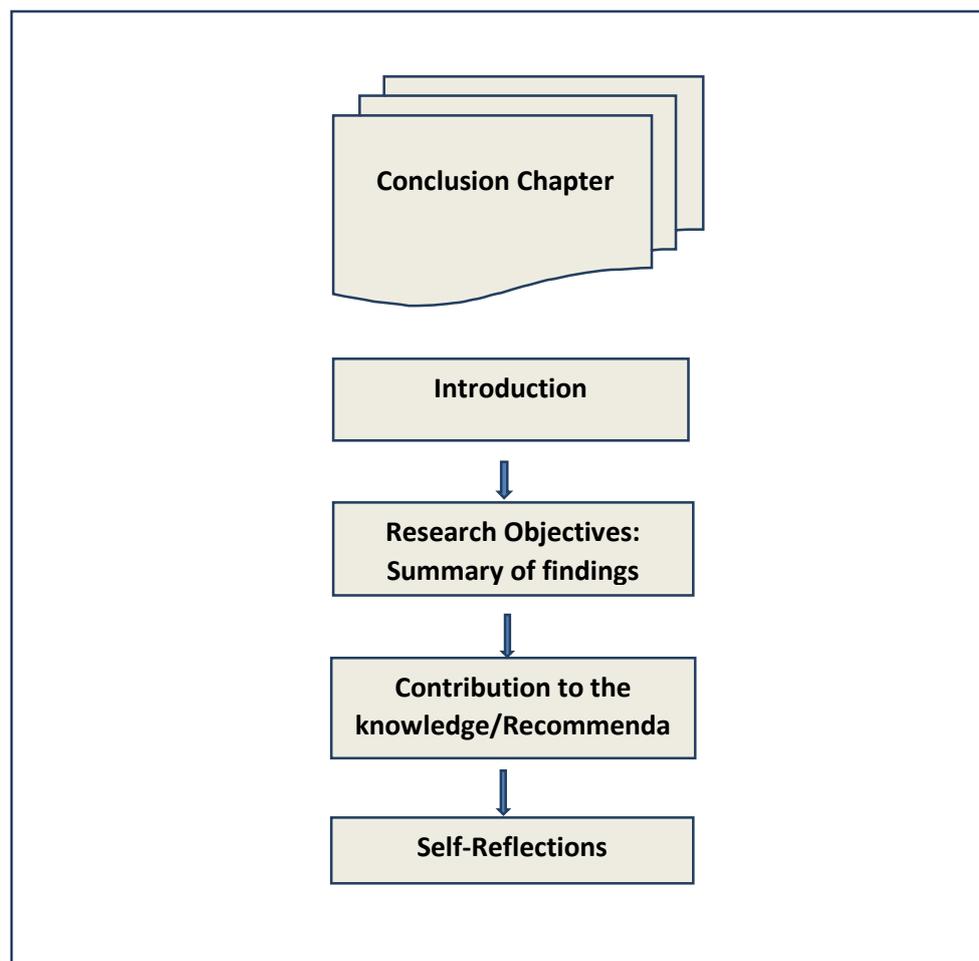


Source: (Biggam, 2012, p. 187)

Professor Geert Hofstede was an inspiration and his studies were a guide for the researcher. "Using the analogy of the way computers are programmed, Professor Hofstede calls the patterns of thinking, feeling and acting as the mental program or the software of the mind" (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p.3)

Figure 10: Three Levels of Uniqueness in Mental Programming
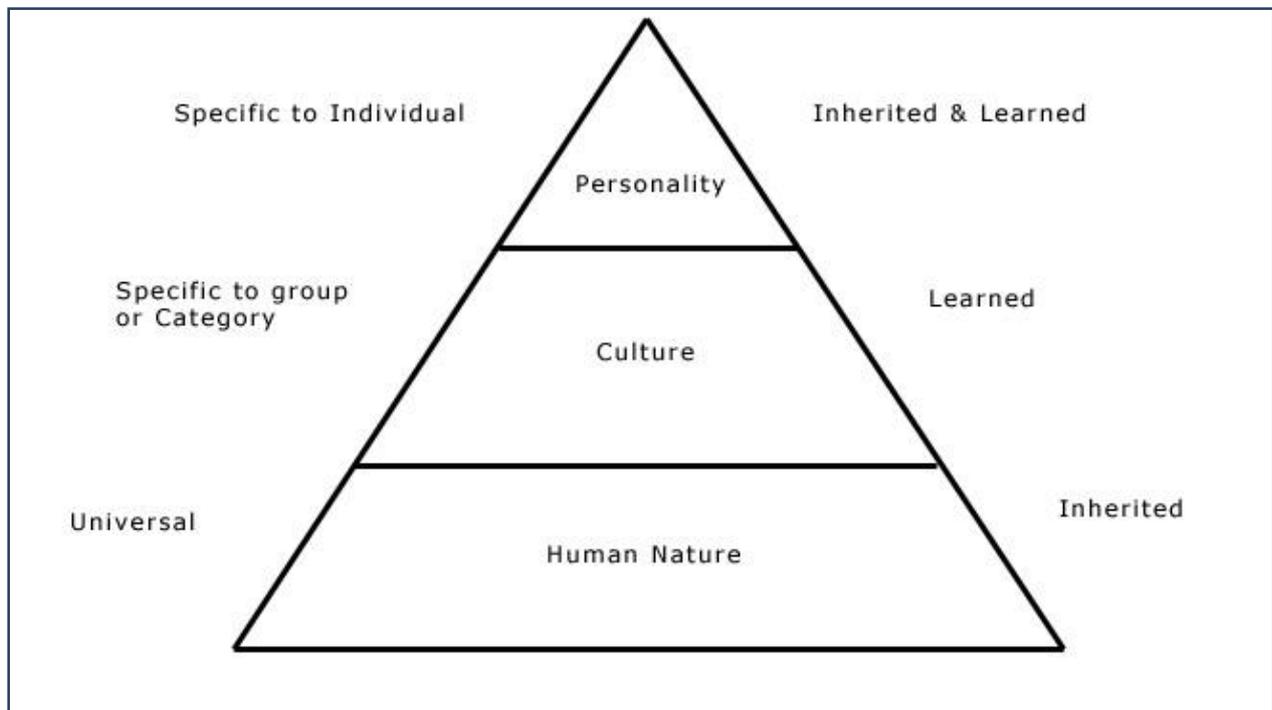


Source: (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p.4)

**5.1 Research objective 1: Cultural Convergence or Divergence**

Convergence is a word that is capable of describing technological, industrial, cultural and social changes depending on the need of the speaker. It is said that cultural convergence occurs when two cultures become more alike (Jenkins, 2006). On the other hand, divergence is an act of moving apart, deviating and doing things in the traditional way. Research about the development of the cultural values has shown repeatedly that there is not much evidence of international convergence of culture overtime. It is believed that the value difference, described by the various authors centuries ago still cease to exist. It is expected that, "for the next few hundreds of years at least, countries will remain culturally diverse" (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p. 366)

With this prediction, it is certain that employees will have to adapt to the company culture and the country culture they will be working for. In such a scenario, it has become the company's responsibility to make this process of adaption as smooth and pleasant as possible. Therefore, such a culture training module will avoid restricting the progress of the employee due to unnecessary yet unavoidable differences. This will be an effort made by the company to help their employees save their minds against such a stress. Mr. Saran who is currently working for an IT firm in London, mentioned that how he creates a culture for his own team. Since he is leading a team of four people, he mentions how he leads by example and would naturally work on culture to create a strong bonding between his team mates. He gave an example how they made it clear on day one that coming late and making the whole team wait

is just not acceptable and this has been the case since then. He further went on to say that, 'Everyone in the team follows this including myself'.

Therefore, the first objective states that whether the company converges or diverges with the culture of the country, the individual employee needs to go through the amendments. Mrs. Wadekar, working at KPMG shared her experience of doing a stake holder analysis of the companies that go through mergers and acquisitions. This is a part of her profile and she exclaimed the importance of putting culture as one of the important factors in the matrix.

**5.2 Research objective 2: At the top of the pyramid-CEO'S**

Business leaders directly give an influential message when they demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion. But how does diversity make its way to the top of CEO's agenda? To find this out, a study done by the Harvard research institute, interviewed twenty four CEO's from reputed companies. To name a few, MasterCard, IKEA, AVON, Nissan Motors and so on(Groysberg and Connolly, 2013). This study explained how the CEO's believed that diversity cannot be a 'once-and-done' initiative but each one of them took it as a personal mission. Mikael Ohlsson of Swedish home-products company IKEA, stated that "the leadership on diversity should be vision-driven from a business point of view and value-driven at the foundation". Hence, there are two imperatives of culture, both moral and business. The other highlighting part of the article is where John Rowe of Exelon, a U.S. energy producer noted that, "A big organization needs only a few generals and a lot of sergeants. The sergeants deserve respect and attention too" (Groysberg and Connolly, 2013, p. 71-73).

This clearly indicates the need of having a culture and diversity awareness module which deals with the bottom of the pyramid, since it comprises of the majority of the population within an organization. Through this it can be stated that culture inclusion and education starts from the top and should reach the bottom too, ensuring a strong understanding of culture amongst all, which is both genuine and applicable. Mrs. Wadekar is an Organization and Human Capital Development Consultant at KPMG in the U.S. She mentioned that such an awareness program will be very useful especially during mergers and acquisitions. She made a striking point that whenever such soft changes need to happen in the business, they need to commence along with the main business leaders. Her point in saying this is to create a level of significance about the program. She further stated that on such an occasion of introducing the program, it should be coming from someone at the top of the pyramid. There are two reasons for this, she said, one; it is taken earnestly and is not looked up as merely an HR activity but includes everyone's active participation, second; the business leaders set an example by being the brand ambassadors of what they are saying.

Therefore, the need of culture awareness should be realized not only at the middle and lower management level, but right from the top of the company. Some of the most successful companies out there have followed the soft management principles and have made its way to the top in spite of being in a turbulent and unstable environment.

**5.3 Research objective 3: Chief Human Resource Officer**

In the whole arena of the study, the role of a chief human resource officer is of immense value. In spite of the fact that talent management is a tedious task, HR managers still find it a struggle to make it to the C-suite. As Howard Schultz, the CEO of Starbucks, was quoted

saying in the New York Times, "The discipline I believe so strongly in is HR, and it's the last discipline that gets funded. Marketing, manufacturing—all these things are important. But more often than not, the head of HR does not have a seat at the table. Big mistake."(Groysberg, Kelly and MacDonald, 2011). It is a pity that in small to medium size companies, HR jobs are internally more administrative in nature. However, since the beginning of 2000s when globalization was at its peak, the role of the HR personnel started gaining momentum. Especially, the work agenda of the generation Y, the new set of employees joining the business, is individual growth along with the professional success. Hence, it is becoming more and more important for companies to make their workplace as worthwhile as possible. This is another way of getting the best talents and retaining them too (McKeown, 2002, p. 138). The article, "The New Path to the C-Suite" mentions how important it is to have the HR manager or the Chief Human Resource Officer given that value seat in an organization. It further says, how HR managers/people are responsible for managing the diversity of the workforce. This article was published in 2011 and it is only fair to infer that things have moved faster than expected. In today's environment such a level of awareness of diversity in culture is expected out of the employees working within the organisations.

It is also important to note that although today's era is that of specializations, it is also an era which expects increasing level of interdependent and cross-functional team work. For instance, a software programmer's job may be to code a program, however he/she is also expected to co-ordinate and work in a diverse team, with employees off/on shore, deliver a presentation on the progress of their work and so on. The working environment is becoming more and more demanding, with such a fast pace that a global company needs to have a concrete plan for the growth of its employees. "As companies make more cross-border acquisitions, employees will have to become more culturally and internationally astute. The idea is of creating a high-performing organization with the least possible disruption- a tall order" (Groysberg, Kelly and MacDonald, 2011).

## 5.4 Research objective 4: Suggestion for managers

Cultural awareness is achieved when all the employees of an organization can see and experience the benefits of cultural diversity. There are a number of benefits of having a diverse team like the fact that people from different cultures bring different perspectives to the table which generates new ideas, perceptions and personalities into strategic planning processes and workplace activities in general. Such a culturally diverse and aware workforce will create a company culture of mutual respect and dignity, which will lead in building a good reputation of the employer in the market. (Ingram, n.d.). Therefore, it is a suggestion to the mangers to invest in such skill sets of the employees. Professor Hofstede points out that work places can be a perfect laboratory for intercultural cooperation, as the problems are practice and result are visible to everybody (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p.367). It is found that expatriate managers when sent abroad are given a high level training on cross-cultural differences. This is due to the high expatriate failure rate that has been an issue for most of the international firms. The chartered institute of personnel and development points that one of the six steps in managing diversity is training. Under this training the relevant point to the research was the suggestion of awareness raising programs (Cipd.co.uk, 2013). This is a

process of making the task of a manager simplified by creating a strong bond between the employees, further reducing the need for dispute management and conflict solving issues.

## 5.5 Research objective 5: Answering the research question

"Can culture awareness be seen as one of the core competencies in the IT multi-nationals?"

The whole research started with proving how soft skills training is becoming a mandatory part of an organization's training module. However, culture training is yet not an integral part of such modules. The researcher's aim is to find if such an addition can add value and if it can practically be a core capability. On analyzing the sample size by interviewing people from Silicon Valley to developing nations, the research went through mixed stages. But towards the end, after having interviewed all the participants it created a clear picture. Only 33% of the participants denied the need for culture awareness training. Whereas, a majority of 67% believed and strongly vouched for the need of such a training. In Mr. John Silver's words, "Organically, it is something that will happen". Hence, the companies who will make the paradigm shift by investing that extra bit in training their people are the once who will be the trend setters. It was made clear by the end of the research that how sensitive the topic of culture is and how most of the employees are not even vocal about it. Introducing cultural awareness will be a platform for the people of the company to unite and see beyond the differences.

The research question is answered positively. The researcher further uses all the information gathered and data analyzed to recommend an outline of how a "culture training module" should look like and what are the potential areas it should cover. This module will be a possible solution offered to the corporate firms in the IT industry. A survey done on the Indian market, names the top ten technical companies to work for in 2013. Google tops this list. One of the reasons for being the most attractive workplace, is that it places 52% of importance to the environment and cultural aspects at work. This is the second highest after receiving 62% for compensations and benefits (Pandey, 2013). Similarly, an article written by John Bryan discusses about the most on demand skills for generation Y, and cross-cultural sensitivity is one of the highest rated agendas (Byrne, 2014). This shows that since such a skill is expected from the entrants in the new millennium, it will be something demanded and required in the future too. It is clear that employers are looking for such qualities in the new recruits and the employees are also expecting the same from the company. Also, another thing to keep in mind is that since the new bees are learning these skill sets even before they join work, it is of immense importance to have the existent staff to be trained well on the same too. This will help in avoiding the gap that can be created.

## 5.6 Research Objective 6: Experience and maturity counts

Mr. Ashokan pointed out how undervalued the topic of cultural awareness is. An interesting fact was revealed while conducting all the interviews. It was found that the employees with minimum inter-cultural and international exposure and less work experience, did not find the skill of cultural sensitivity to be as important. Whereas the ones who have crossed the threshold level of competency and number of years in the industry found it a non-negotiable

skill to possess. In fact, even for the people who have worked with different cultures but not travelled outside their own region, this was just a nice to have skill. However, on interviewing participants with international travel and stay experience, it was certain to say that one cannot get away with lack of such skills. One of the respondent shared how even if one doesn't know about the sports, music or culture of the team, it is difficult to pitch an elevator conversation. Another fact is that even the sense of humour is different in several cultures. So the way employees mingle with one another may not be so simple. Such were the points brought in by the more experienced respondents in the qualitative research.

Therefore, the research concludes that in today's global and turbulent environment, culture awareness and sensitivity can be one of the core competencies in the IT multi-nationals. Although we had a 33% of the respondents who disagreed to this, more than half of the sample size (67%) willingly agreed and voted for it. Hence, it was not complex and perplexing to reach this conclusion. Although it has always been in the theory, it is time that we translate it to the actual corporate world. Author Bedi pointed out the fact that whatever gets measured is what gets done (Bedi, 2014).Hence, the researcher recommends that companies should have a "culture context index" and have a budget plan for these trainings. Such exercises will very subtly contribute to the smoother functioning of the teams. Since such preparation can prevent a disruption even before it occurs, it may be found that they are undervalued overtime. Hence, it is necessary to make it a mandatory and non-negotiable part of the company's culture. Therefore, the article on 'New path to the C-suite' was highlighted which mentions how such soft skills matter more and more as you keep climbing up the hierarchical ladder. If such skills are followed by the people at the top and the middle of the pyramid, it is easier for the majority of the employees to adapt to the same, thus making culture sensitivity an integral part of the organisations. The twenty-four chief executive officers interviewed by the Harvard research institute, all vouched for cultural diversity and management at workplace.

## 5.7 Inference

As we conclude the study, the researcher points out the fact that it is time that we don't just tolerate and accept the differences but celebrate them. Tolerance is a sign of accepting differences which one does not like, however, if one values the differences, they should be celebrated. Companies around the world are striving hard to make their workforce as diverse as possible for many reasons (Riordan, 2014). Therefore, after having put so much effort to recruit and train the diverse staff, it is necessary and wise to also invest in these trainings. They invisibly add value and avoid the friction that can create additional challenges for the people of the organisations.

In this turbulent and unstable environment, escaping external competition and challenges is not possible. In such a scenario, it is only intelligent to avoid at least the internal conflicts that inevitably arise when teams work together even from the same culture.

The next chapter on recommendations will offer a solution to the IT companies of having a culture training module. The researcher creates an outline of the module, including the various topics that can be covered.

# Chapter 6

# Recommendations

Since the research question, 'Can cultural awareness can be seen as one of the core competencies in IT multi-nationals' has been answered positively, the researcher recommends a training module for the same. It was observed in the data collection that only 20% of the employees received some form of culture training. This was also due to the nature of their job which involved managing multi-cultural teams in different nations. The research, with a majority of 67% of the respondents acknowledging the value of a training module on culture, recommends an outline of the teaching. However, this module is only a possible solution and will have its own short comings as highlighted under the limitations section of the study. Also, it is merely an outline and will need to be altered and elaborated as per the need of the audience to make it more relevant (Cushner and Brislin, 1997, p. 231).

**6.1. Outline of a Cross-Cultural Training Module**

- Initiation:
    - Ice-Breaking.
    - Purpose and Agenda of the training.
- Verbal Communication:
    - Accent Neutralization
    - Pronunciations.
    - Pace-Volume-Pitch.
- Speech Culture:
    - Greeting and Conversation Openers.
    - Phone Etiquettes.
    - Speech dos and don'ts (Sebenius, 2002, p.8).
    - Jargons.
    - Idioms and phrases.
    - Slang.
- Non-Verbal Communication:
    - Body Language.
    - Signs and Symbols.
    - Suitable dressing sense for different occasions.
- Belief System:
    - Understanding belief related to religion and communities.
    - Common rituals on birth, marriage, death etc.

- Assumptions:
    - Avoiding miscommunication due to making assumptions either while receiving or transmitting information.
    - Breaking the stereotypes (Steele, 1997, p.616).
- Listening and Questioning Skills:
    - Listening and anticipating (Sebenius, 2002, p.9).
    - Polite assertiveness.

- Conversation Techniques:
    - Situational Conversations.
    - Role Plays (Sebenius, 2002, p.6).

- Holidays and Festivals:
    - Orientation to major holidays and festivals and their significance
    - Learning how to wish others on such occasions

- Understanding Culture Taboos.

- Culture Orientation:
    - Introducing the culture of the country (Bennett, 2004, P. 64).
    - Introducing the culture of the company.
    - Etiquettes and protocol.
    - Mannerism do's and don't
    - Business ethics.

- Miscellaneous topics:
    - Influence and role of cinema
    - Socio-Economic fabric of the country
    - History of the country and the culture
    - Understanding the IT industry of that particular country

- Closure:
    - Revisiting the covered points.
    - Experience sharing.
    - Take home points.

Cultural awareness is increasingly important. As a result, the employees must be aware of the cultural differences that exist between their clients/customers and also internally within their firms. The points mentioned above has been inspired by a lot of research done on training modules on cross-culture training. However, this is just an outline and needs a lot more work. For instance, the 'situational conversation' under conversation techniques, need a bank of situations which can help the trainees get a practical experience out of the workshop. These situations are examples to point out the day to day challenges an individual may experience at work due to lack of culture awareness.

**Chapter 7**

**Limitations of the Research**

Under this section we will look at the drawback of the research. Nothing that is discovered can be complete and perfect. The main reason for this is that everything keeps transforming with time. Similarly, there exists a number of limitations on the study conducted by the researcher on culture. The topic itself is very subjective in nature and with full awareness the researcher points out the limitations of the study.

## 7.1 Theoretical limitations

The study done by Professor Geert Hofstede has been an inspiration for many theorists and academicians in the past. For instance, GLOBE project and the work done by Trompenaars is built on similar lines. The literature review of this research looks deeply into the work done by Professor Hofstede. However, there exists criticism and shortcoming in his work, which may reflect in the overall outcome of the research. Williamson (2002), warns the research on culture on the following grounds: (1) "There is the danger in assuming that all members of a culture homogeneously carry the same cultural attributes; (2) Seeing individuals as 'cultural dopes', about expecting individuals' values or behavior to be wholly determined by their cultural background; (3) Third danger is of confusing scores for cultural dimensions with cultural constructs for which they are but approximate measures" (Williamson, 2002, p. 373). All the three points of criticism are very relevant to the research and there is a possibility of them being reflected in this study too.

## 7.2 Sample limitations

The mode of research undertaken is qualitative in nature. In all, the researcher interviewed fifteen professionals from the information technology industry (See Appendix 7.7). These samples vary in age, gender, nationality, designation and years of work experience. This was done with an intension to bring a diverse set of opinion to the study. However, this can also be taken as lack of uniformity and hence could create a bias in the result of the research. Also, the time period was limited, and the researcher believes that a lot more could have been done if there was more time and resources available (Bennett, 2004, p. 69). The researcher was not successful in getting any Chinese professional interviewed. This restricts the research from having a holistic approach since Chinese citizens have a major role to play in the development of the IT world and is one of the fastest spreading cultures on the planet today.

## 7.3 Counter effects of creating a 'Culture Training' Module

It is apparent that cultural differences occur between any two people, even if they are from the same region. This is because no two persons can be brought up in exactly the same manner and since every individual is unique, there ought to be differences in beliefs and values. Therefore, having a mono-culture may not be possible in any team. In such a case, using the culture training module in every sector may be helpful, however this may not be possible.

Also, the training module will have its own implications. A significant drawback to a 'Culture Training' module is that it may end up stereotyping people of a similar culture (Steele, 1997, p. 619). This may result in increasing workplace conflicts as people might expect their teammates from a particular culture to behave accordingly.

Also, there can be some ambiguity on who the ideal target audience is for a 'Culture Training' module. Giving this kind of a training to the junior employees or to the workforce working on purely technical assignments may not add too much value to the overall business of the organization. Giving this training to the mid and senior level executives may add a lot of value, but one can argue that if anyone has reached the mid/senior level position in the company, chances are they have already learned to be culturally aware purely out of their experience of interacting with so many cultures. Another important point is at this stage a lot of baby boomers are retiring and millennial are entering the business. The level of awareness about the world affairs and different cultures is much higher in the millennial unlike the baby boomers. Most of the credit for this goes to the transparency and accessibility in the web world today.

**7.4 Inference**

In spite of all these limitations, one cannot deny the fact that a total lack of cultural awareness has some demerit. Also, one cannot completely learn merely by experience. There is a lot of merit in training people who already might have picked up a little bit from experience. It is surprising how easily we accept the different cuisines from other parts of the world and also would not mind listening to the music but when it comes to facing routine cultural differences we may shy away or avoid the conflict. With this fast changing global world, it is become the responsibility of every organization and its employees to make an effort towards creating an inclusive workforce. Creating awareness of the benefits of being culturally aware and making it a competent skill to possess, will motivate the employees work on it naturally.  Hence, even after acknowledging the limitations of the research, it is still worth going that extra mile to make organizations a better place to work in.

**Chapter 8**

**Appendix**

**8.1 Reflection on Learning**

**8.1.1. Introduction**

Reflection on learning is a way to track the personal growth of the researcher during the process of the study. The key to this section is focusing on the objective learning that occurred along with analysis on the same. It is not merely a descriptive dairy but an opportunity to make an insightful reflection on the learnings that have occurred due to the challenges and prospects. Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell (1986) advocate that a record of reflective learning should, in addition to learning itself, include feelings, thoughts, ideas and behavior. Hence, the researcher will highlight on all the light bulb moments which caused a shift within, leading to a progress.

According to the learning styles one can be an activist, reflector, pragmatic or theorist. All these qualities reflect in us in varying proportion however one of these is dominant than the others. On taking the Honey and Mumford test on the learning styles during a lecture on personal development in college, I discovered that I am a reflector. I clearly exhibit signs of being a reflector. This is because I think from many different perspective, I ponder in depth on a topic for longer than necessary sometimes. I also tend to work with all the past and present learnings that I have gathered. I adapt an inclusive approach (Honey, 2014).

**8.1.2. Learning styles**

According to Kolb (1984) the cycle experimental learning consists of four adaptive modes-concentrate experiences, reflective observation, reflective conceptualization, and active experimentation. The experimental learning cycle model is given below:

Figure 11: Kolb's learning styles
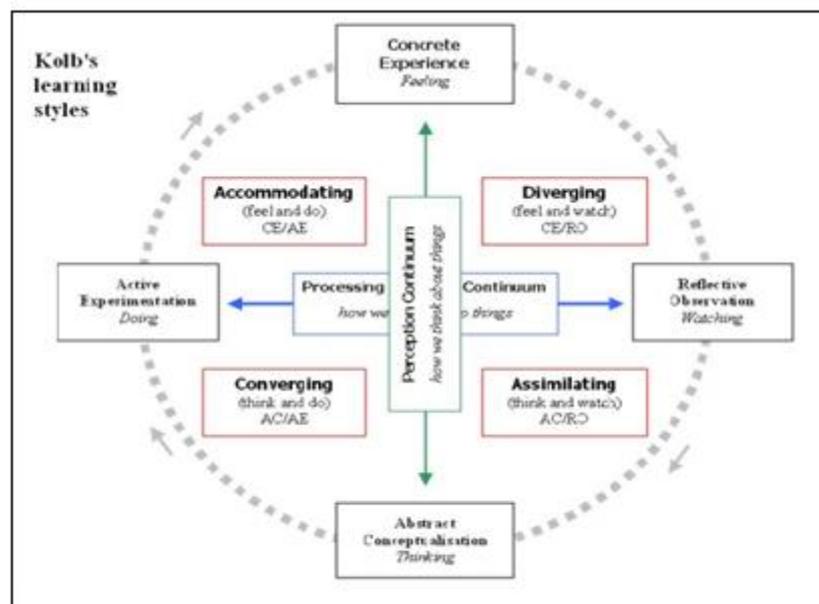
**8.1.3. Action Research**

The action research plan by Saunders's is the third section of theory used for the purpose of reflection. A cycle of planning-acting-monitoring-reflection. Development can be followed by a lot of postponement which can bog a person down hence, it is important to make realistic targets and keep working on them(Waters-Adams, 2012).When working on a long term project it is extremely important to keep the momentum. For this purpose, I used the action research plan which kept helped me strategize my actions. It is a simple cycle of four steps which includes, identifying the problem/topic, carrying out the research, creating an action plan and then reflecting on the process.

Figure 12: Action Research
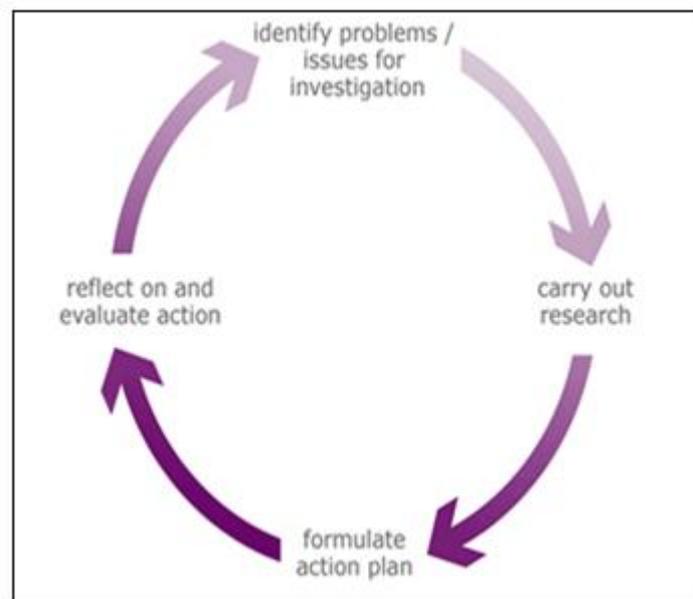


Source: (Waters-Adams, 2012)

**8.1.4. Self-Appraisal**

I potentially started working on thesis after having the third meeting with my mentor on 21st of May'14. By this time I had brainstormed my idea with her and was feeling confident about my topic. This three month span was a huge learning process. I struggled a lot at the start of the study, however once I got into the flow I enjoyed it thoroughly. There is a theme running throughout the research. The study is not merely descriptive but includes an analysis and input of the researcher constantly. Certainly, there are some sections which I feel more confident about than others, but overall I am satisfied with my work.

The most important part is that I did not regret the topic I chose at any point. I felt my research is capable of adding value. I believe, I have done a fare job of structuring the study well and using a lot of references. I was astonished, because I could complete my final draft within the deadline I had set for myself. This gave me a good piece of time to proof read the material twice and allowed me to make the necessary changes before handing over the final set.  However the fact cannot be denied that there is always a room for improvement. I have witnessed myself grow from the very first assignment I worked on in Octorber'13. On the

objective side, I recognize my writing skills have improved, I have developed research and analytical skills, and also I feel more comfortable using the different software's involved in making a project. On the subjective side, I have learned to work in a group and work individually. This is because when one is working on a long project all by themselves, it becomes difficult to judge the work done. Also, I learned to stop comparing myself with others because that would either stress me out or make me complacent. Hence, I started comparing and setting deadlines myself.

### 8.1.5. Problem Solving

### 8.1.5.1. Breaking the pattern

Under any project taken, or rather as a fact of life, it is inevitable to face challenges. Similarly one of major challenge was the constraint I felt to express myself. As I was so passionate about the topic, I often found myself drifting away from the directed methods of doing the research. Since it is the first time that I was writing a dissertation and especially the education system back in India is very different from what I experienced here. For instance, I am a reflector and I observe the events around me naturally. I believe this is one of the best ways to learn. The same observations were getting in my way as worked on my literature review. This is when my mentor Ms. Claire, corrected me and made me realize I was losing the track. Although it felt unnatural initially but following the guidelines gave my research a structure and once, I got into a flow I started enjoying the academic writing style.

### 8.1.5.2. The difficulty in moving on

Being a reflector I easily got swayed by many articles trying to perfectly establish a point or getting too much in depth. I often found myself getting too engrossed in one section and was nervous to decide where to draw the line. During one of the meetings I had with Ms. Claire, she strongly advised me to just leave the current section and move on. I was so stressed that I did not even realize I was feeling lost and should move on. I was reminded again by her that "Imperfection is expected and accepted, and never speak low of yourself", these were the words that constantly motivated me. As I proceeded, I realized that I faced challenges in completing the literature review initially because the nature of the approach I took was such. Under inductive approach, the researcher starts with collecting the data and then builds up on the theory. However, I was doing the other way. Hence, when I proceeded with research methodology and data collection, my research gained a momentum and it kept going smoothly from there on. This also made me realize the importance of the academic literature available to guide a dissertation process.

### 8.1.5.3. The technical complications

Philip Lewis's book on 'Research Methods for Business students' emphasizes the importance of transcribing the audios and videos collected (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003, p.127). The reason for doing this is to ensure that no data is lost. As a pattern I would record all my interviews and in spite of the interview being recorded I would make some notes as the participant kept talking. On one of the incidences, I deleted one of the most enriching interview that was conducted. I was very upset with myself because by mistake I forgot to attach the interview copy in that email. It was too late and I tried to learn a few software's to recovery the deleted media from my phone. However, nothing seem to work out. I was

thankful that I had made three pages notes on that particular interview and it served the purpose. This made me realize one should always have a backup.

Due to the distance, most of the interviews were conducted on Skype. On many occasions the respondent could hear their voice echo. This made them very uncomfortable and I had to put my headphones on to avoid the disturbance. However, this restricted me from recording the interviews. This made me learn that in spite of the most advance technology, how difficult it is to communicate over a distance.

### 8.1.6. Summary of added values

An individual can be driven out of motivation/positivity/love, fear or greed. On doing this reflection exercise I realized that I was one who was driven out of positivity. This is also true in my workplace. I am doing a part time job of being a sales colleague, I realized that when my manager tried to get work done through using fear as a tool, it back fired and I could not perform at all. Whereas when I am in a flow and feeling natural I can be much more productive. It is good to be driven by self-motivation however, I need to learn to work under adhoc situations and deliver results in such unpleasant situations too. As soon as I started doing well with my thesis project and I was not feeling lost anymore, I found the same clarity and confidence reflect in my personality at work and in personal life too. It is so much easier to do the task rather than to think of doing the task.

I would be anxious about doing the thesis and doubt my capability for the same. However, this year of MBA and this project on thesis has brought about such a holistic change within. Such a reflection exercise has helped to reveal these changes to myself.  It has changed the way I perceive things and made me more pragmatic in nature. Reaching the solution without panicking is yet another important lesson learnt.

### 8.1.7. Plan to apply sustain the learning

Yes there has been immense amount of learning however, this is just the beginning. The main challenges will begin when one will need to apply it. All these analytical, research and problem solving skills developed will be tested in the corporate world. It takes a lot of practice to break an old habit and build a new one. I plan to sustain the learning of working in any situation without tagging myself as a particular person which restricts the possibilities. Also, the need to keep moving forward before it is too late is a huge learning. This is because at a later stage in life I may or may not have someone to guide me. Most importantly, I plan to sustain the habit of reflection as it will just make me grow as a more efficient employee in future, and a better human being.

**8. 2 "Lunch is like the West and Dinner is like the East."**

Devdutt Pattanaik, the author of management sutras in India gives an example of cultural differences by narrating an incident. Steve, wanted to enter a joint venture with an Indian company. So Rahul, his partner decides to take him out for lunch in a hotel in New York. They were served a four course meal, and there was cutlery for every dish accordingly. In the evening Rahul took him to an Indian restaurant where they served 'thali' (A plate which has everything served together). Here, all the items were served simultaneously the sweet, the sour, the main course and the dessert. This is when Rahul explained Steve, that lunch is like the West, highly organized and dinner is like the East (India) highly customized to the consumer's need. It was to make both realize that the joint venture will be a union of two different cultures and they will always be unique (Pattanaik, 2013, p.173).
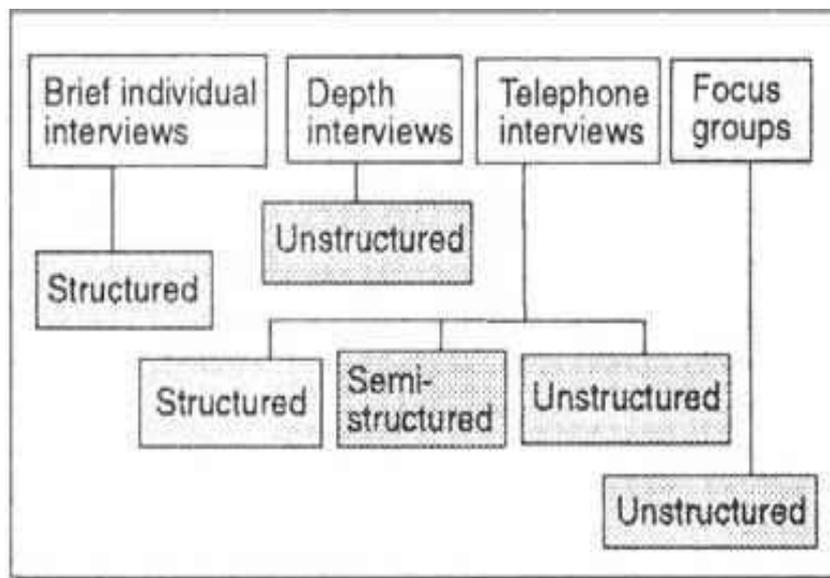
**8.3. Sample Size**
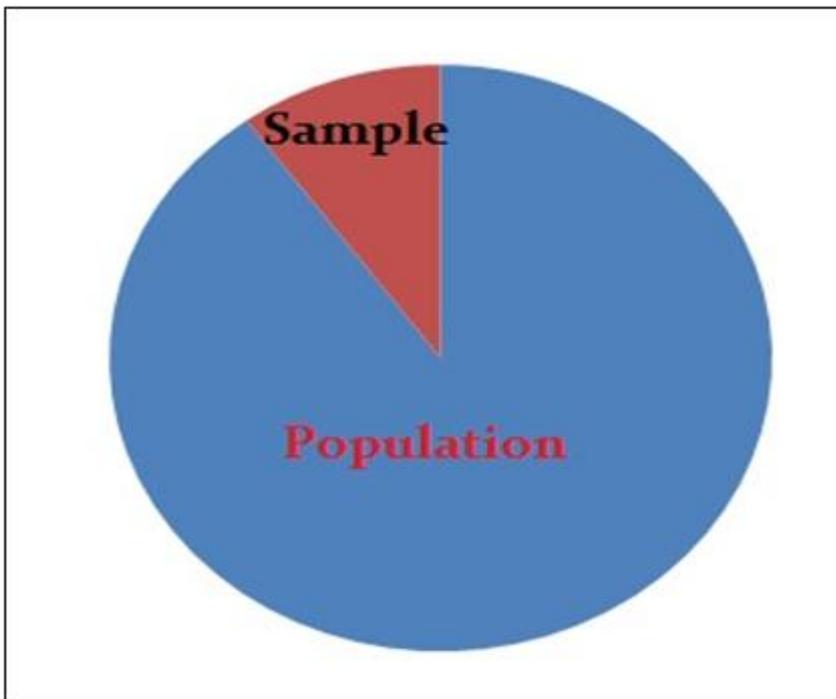


Source: (Statistics How To, 2012)

**8.4. Sampling methods**
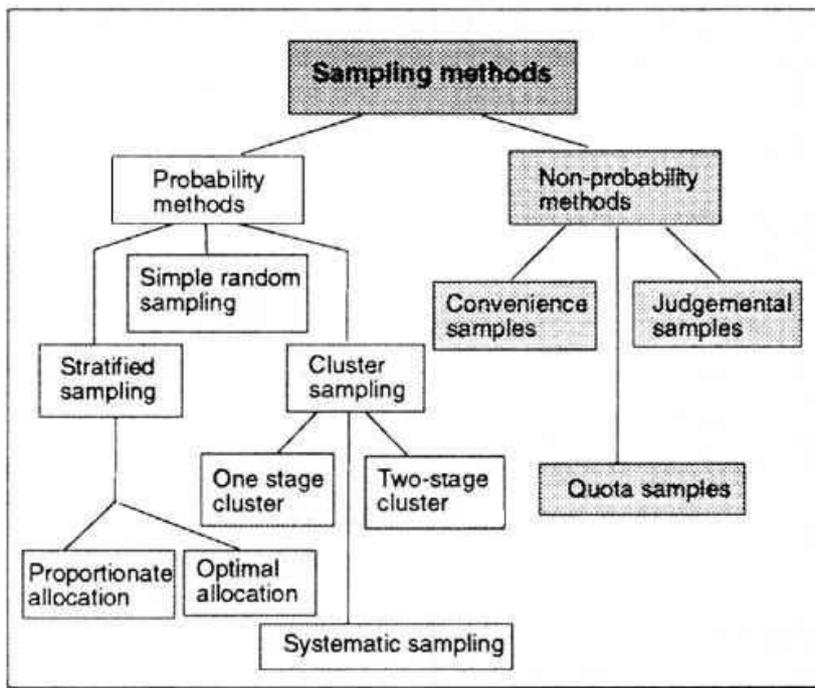


Source:  (Fao.org, n.d.)

**8.5. Types of Interviews in a qualitative research**



Source: (Foa.org, n.d.)

**8.6. Questionnaire**

**Personal Details**

- **Full Name:**
- **Company where you work:**
- **Designation:**
- **Phone No:**
- **Email:**

**Questions:**

1) For how many years/months have you been in the IT sector?
2) In your work experience so far, have you worked with people/teams from different nationalities and different cultures?
3) Can you please name a few different nationalities/cultures you have worked with?
4) Out of the different nationalities you have worked with, which nationality have you worked the most with?
5) Have you ever travelled to this country whose people you have worked the most with?
6) On a scale of 1-10, where 10 is the highest/best and 1 is the lowest/worst, please rate the nationality you worked with on the following parameters: (suppose China/Chinese):
   a. Friendly:
   b. Professional:
   c. Punctual:
   d. Organized:
   e. Polite:
   f. Cooperative:
   g. Communication Skills:
   h. English speaking ability:
   i. Email etiquette:
   j. Dressing Sense:
   k. Their knowledge about your culture:
7) Were you comfortable working with different cultures/nationalities?
8) Please talk about the top 3 challenges you faced while working with people from different nationalities/cultures? What did you do to overcome these challenges?
9) Please talk about the top 3 positive experiences/leanings/achievements while working with people from different nationalities/cultures?
10) Can you remember any incident when your culture was respected/acknowledged and that gave you a boost to perform better? Please describe it in detail.
11) Have you ever felt that other people did not understand your culture?
12) Have you ever been in a situation where someone from a different cultural background has knowingly ridiculed/insulted your cultural believes? How did you feel then and what did you do?

13) Have you at any instance felt culturally challenged? Meaning have you found yourself in a situation where you did not know how to respond to your teammate because you did not understand/know about his/her culture?

14) Do you feel your performance was impacted positively or negatively because of your good or bad cultural understanding of your teammates?

15) If given a chance to choose between working in a multicultural team and a team where everyone is from the same culture, which one will you opt for and why?

16) Have you undergone 'Soft Skills' training at your workplace? If yes, what were the contents of this training? Did you enjoy it?

17) Was 'Culture Training' part of the 'soft skills' training that you had? Have you ever been trained about how to deal with people from different cultures?

18) Have you ever made any effort from your side to learn about different cultures (relevant to you at your workplace)? If yes, what did you do? Were you successful in this endeavour?

19) Do you believe that having a 'Culture Training' module would help you in your workplace to perform better?

20) Can Culture awareness be a core competency in the IT multinationals?

## 8.7. Power Distance between U.S. and China



Source: (Hofstede, 2014)

## 8.8. List of the interviews

| Sr No | Name | Designation | Experience (in years) | Company Names | Location | Email address | Interview Duration |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Janet Felicia | Software Test Engineer | 2 | Amazon | India | allwinfernandez@yahoo.com | 22.08 |
| 2 | Nithish Chandra | Business Analyst | 3 | HCL Technologies | India | nithish@ymail.com | 21.32 |
| 3 | Allwin Fernandez | Cloud and Security Consultant | 3 | Computer Science Corporation | India | janetfelishia@gmail.com | 30.49 |
| 4 | Sarran Manivannan | Systems Engineer | 3 | Tata Consultancy Services | New Jersey, USA | sarransaaim@gmail.com | 45 |
| 5 | Siddharthan Arul | Senior Programmer | 4 | Accenture, Hertz | Dublin Ireland | siddharthlura@gmail.com | 20.49 |
| 6 | Krishna Sundaram | Team Lead | 5 | Wipro | India | krishkumar_skk@yahoo.co.in | 18.51 |
| 7 | Aravind Kumar | Senior Systems Engineer | 5 | Tata Consultancy Services | India | aravind.psg@gmail.com | 21.36 |
| 8 | Sashikrishna Asokan | Business Analyst | 5 | Deloitte, Qubera Solutions | London, UK | sashiasokan@gmail.com | 40.20 |
| 9 | Aditya Datey | Vice President | 9 | J.P. Morgan | Seattle USA | adityadatey@gmail.com | Written answers |

| 10 | Brian Carver | Senior Manager | 10 | Amazon | Seattle USA | bcarver@amazon.com | Written answers |
| 11 | Preeti Wadekar | Team Lead | 10 | KPMG | New York, USA | preetiwadekar@gmail.com | 45.20 |
| 12 | Krista Rosemarry | Vice President | 13 | New Tech Wen, Inc. | Seattle USA | krista@newtechweb.com | Written answers |
| 13 | Krista Hendershot | Sr. Business Analyst | 14 | T-Mobile | Seattle USA | Matt_krista@comcast.net | 25.20 |
| 14 | John Silver | Overseas Manager | 15 | T-Mobile | Seattle USA | silverjohn1969@hotmail.com | 35.33 |
| 15 | James Kavanagh | Director Operations | 35 | Automobile Associates | Dublin Ireland | shamiekavanagh@gmail.com | 60 |

## 8.9 Timeline of the Research

| Tasks | May | June | | | | July | | | | August | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Weeks | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Reading Literature | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Draft the Literature | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design the Research methodology | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Developing the Interview questions | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Validate the questions | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Conduct the Interviews | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data Analysis of both the interviews | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Comparing with literature and drawing Conclusions | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drafting the left over sections | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Proof reading | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Final Consolidation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Submission | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Chapter 7**

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