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Cultural Competence: A tool to Augment the Education Recovery in Universities of Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper aims to develop a cross-cultural lens, build upon Cultural Competence (CC) to provide valuable insights to handle the hard hits of the much-touted epidemic on the education sector and for stimulating Education Recovery in Pakistan, which is of utmost importance in nowadays' global scenario. Pakistan with a frail technological background coupled with a financial trajectory needs to take up an intelligent direction to speed up the education loss recovery. Policy development and effective planning in universities require sound strategy and comprehensive training so to equip the teachers with all the tools to effectively handle the cultural variations in a class and develop transcultural relationships and environment in universities. Relevant information is gathered from three universities in Karachi using a purposive sampling technique through a questionnaire while the sample size includes 102 responses. SPSS was used for the analysis and instrument reliability was tested through Cronbach Alpha. The correlational Regression Model was run and findings show that the chosen constituents of Cultural Competence have a positive and significant relationship with the motivation and performance of teachers. The research concludes that CC can be used as a tool for the enhancement of faculty performance on the ground of its social and economic benefits.

Keywords: Cultural Competence, Pakistani Universities, Financial trajectory, Transcultural relationship, Cross-cultural Lens, Cultural Competence.

Introduction

Intelligent direction and smart decisions are becoming failed in the absence of effective leadership and effective leadership will bear no fruit without the perfect blend of a solid strategy so a prime and equal focus on strategy and leadership will help managing the disruptions in these present turbulent times (Kobi Peleg et al. 2021). Building upon a competence-based cultural management in universities, the present study capitalizes on the competence of stakeholders i.e. teachers to work beyond the cross-cultural variations and produce dynamic result in the form of more productive citizens (Rizwan et al.2016; Summaya and Faiza 2015; Richa Gupta 2013; Erasmus 2007). Teachers are the nation-builders and leave a far-reaching impact upon the future of youth. Sustainable youth of a country can be a useful social fabric thus changing even the long-term economic

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status of a country (UNDP Report 2018). The traditional educational system of Pakistan has not given due importance to the cultural competence in universities and hence has proven ineffective while handling students from diverse cultures. Pakistan with a weak technological background and frail financial trajectory needs to take up an intelligent direction to develop cultural competence, giving due share of comforts to diverse group of students and attracting talent pool. Policy development and effective planning in the area of international students requires sound strategy and comprehensive training so to equip the teachers with all the tools to effectively handle the cultural variations in a class and develop transcultural relationships and environment in universities (Kigali, 2006). Teachers must be prepared to recognize the needs of students coming from diversified background, develop the skill-set to address their needs in a competent manner and facilitate their academic progress and plan for a new teaching paradigm. The operational strategy then would be to develop cultural competence i.e., acquiring cultural knowledge to deliver culturally sensitive and congruent care (Shaban, 2016).

Against the backdrop of Covid-19, economies across the globe are showing up with more intensified and integrated approach. With this common purpose, the need for a system that meets the needs of a competitive, quickly-changing marketplace has intensified and for this all the stakeholders are expected to develop a cross-cultural lens, tap the opportunity to facilitate students from diverse cultural backgrounds and devise a comprehensive strategy to offer dynamic academic management (Bond, 2003; Smith 2003). Economic and social setbacks of Covid-19 seem to have no end! This calls for the immediate wake-up call of the intellects around the globe. Big and successful economies like USA, UK and Australia have emerged with numerous strategic initiatives to capitalize on this human capital and are continuously announcing incentives to encourage students at large. “USA stands to reap the rewards of a "decade of opportunity" in global higher education, as long as it makes the right moves in education around the world. Pakistan has not been a significant country to claim for best diversity management at large and education sector is not an exception (Ayub & Jehn, 2014, Homan, Greer, &Jehn, 2008; van Knippenberg & Haslam, 2003, Sadri & Tran, 2002). Universities in Pakistan are in dire need to attract talent pool for a number of reasons, including the increasing interest of young students towards advanced education the emerging importance of research output in determining funding and positioning in international university rankings.

Scope of Research

Covid- 19: The outbreak of the said pandemic has had a huge and unimaginable impact upon the quality of education not only in Pakistan but across the nations; Pakistan however presents a bleak picture owing to its low

adaptability degree to new technology-based education system. The disruption is undoubtedly swifter and more immediate than either the SARS outbreak of 2003 or the global financial crisis of 2007–08! All this requires an intelligent direction and skillful execution of Educational Paradigm and Cultural Competence may serve as a catalyst in achieving these objectives.

Rationale of Research

Augmented effect in Public Sector Universities: The situation in Private sector universities is comparatively better as education is highly paid and hence demands for more concerned initiatives towards the needs of students. A large size of students' population can't afford going to private universities due to the high educational expenses and for this they join public sector universities. This all demands a serious approach of all stakeholders and authorities to recognize the needs of students specifically in a cross-cultural setting, facilitating them and preparing them as productive and promising citizens of Pakistan.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

1. How does the cultural competence of faculty impact on Students' performance in universities of Karachi?

2. Does the cultural competence' awareness to teachers have a positive impact on cultural competence?

3. Does the attitude of teachers have a positive impact on cultural competence?

4. Does the cultural competence' knowledge to teachers have a positive impact on cultural competence? Paste here,

Objective of Research

The main objective of the study was to see the far-reaching impact of different factors of cultural competence of teachers upon the academic performance of students. Second to verify that orientation and training are the important variables to develop cultural competence of teachers.

Theoretical Framework

The research was confined only to three universities and one city of Pakistan. The study was conducted to verify the importance and need for developing the cultural competence among the faculty members.

Significance of Research

Cultural competence is the ability to recognize the differences among people from different cultural groups, respond to those differences positively, and be able to interact effectively in a range of cultural environment related to that group. (International Coalition of Sites of Coalition- 2018).

The importance of developing cultural competence is even greater in all the service sectors. The need was felt first in health sector: Madeline Leininger was one of the pioneer members who identified the need to recognize and respond to the individuals' differences back in the 1950s (Leininger, 1988). She viewed culture as "learned, shared, and transmitted values, beliefs, norms, and life practices of a particular group that guides thinking, decision, and actions in patterned ways".

Limitation of Research

The research was confined only to three universities and one city of Pakistan. The study was conducted to verify the importance and need for developing the cultural competence among the faculty members.

Literature Review

Factors of Cultural Competence:

Few elements are important while planning for the development of cultural competence and among them the most important ones comprise Awareness, attitude and knowledge. It seems imperative at this stage to take a quick synopsis of these three:

Awareness: People at large are governed by their deep-grained beliefs and values so providing awareness about the other members be it the teachers or students is very important and must be given at the initial stages so to ensure a smooth going of the competency development journey.

Attitude: The above said deep-engrained values and beliefs sets for the attitude that estimates the willingness to accept the others' differences in an organization. The attitudes are mostly governed by inner selves but also depends at times upon the environment and people we are dealing with. In other words, few individuals may be seen accommodating others only due to the positive vibes they feel for them in spite of some reluctance for the work/task.

Knowledge: This will certainly help communicating in a better style with those who show up with different cultural setting. Knowing about the important

factors will help developing the sound strategy and implementing it effectively. The underlying assumption of this approach is that the greater the knowledge one has about another culture, the greater the competence in practice.

Much of the literature available on culture and cultural competence was theoretical in nature while most of the empirical studies were found in healthcare sector and not in education. Few researches have been carried out to investigate the proposed association but most of them were qualitative and the quantitative are not encapsulating the period during the Covid-19 Pandemic (Cheryl L. Lehman Ed.D ,2017; Mary P. Curtis, 2016; Dick, Estell, & McCarty, 1994; Krater, Zeni, & Cason, 1994; Au & Jordan, 1981; Mohatt & Erickson's, 1981. Our research will show up with few important factors like internal skills, knowledge and attributes that empowers teachers to exhibit on regular basis while dealing a diverse set of students in classroom.

Cheryl L. Lehman Ed.D (2017) studied and looked at the gap between the ever-multiplying number of diverse groups of students and the degree of multicultural competence of teachers at a local university level. Qualitative Research design was employed leading to Inductive data analysis, Results indicated that faculty at university level appreciated the need for the orientation and training to develop multicultural competence including increased awareness, knowledge, and skills enabling them to deal effectively with diverse students. The researcher recommended for the inclusive approach in universities and highlighted the need for comprehensive training programs in order to orient the members involved in the development process.

Gopi Krishan (2019) Investigated the impact of cultural orientation and described the cultural competence as a very useful framework in tapping the opportunities that are coming due to the exponential rise in the cross-cultural interactions in the present global scenario. He emphasized that this cultural orientation can lead to positive change in all aspects of human life. He introduced an alternative to this framework 'culturally dynamic partnership' and recommended its use in case of conflicting situation, He concluded to take the framework as a way forward to empower all in collaborative partnerships

Mary P. Curtis (2016) emphasized upon the need to educate and develop the cultural competence among teachers and students who are now a diverse background owing to the greater number of international students to US. He furthered saying that all individuals are human beings and hence their needs must be given due recognition by teachers and university management. He suggested to mandate teaching cultural competency in "Essentials" of a university accreditation.

Amy Louise Brace (2011) investigated the association of cultural competence level of school teachers in an urban setting and academic performance & the scholastic achievement of their students as measured by standardized testing. The qualitative research design helped collecting the data through interviews with elementary school teachers in an urban area and validated the empirical link between teacher cultural competence and student academic performance mentioning the strong and improved relationships of teachers with students. Findings also discuss the themes developed to explain how urban elementary school teachers understand the concept of cultural competence.

Dorothy E. Stubbe (2020) examined the factors of cultural humility and cultural competency in health care settings. The author emphasized the need of good awareness level for health care systems and providers and also mentioned the dire need to be responsive patients' needs irrespective of diversified culture settings. Highlighting the cultural elements of family preferences, values, cultural traditions, language, and socioeconomic conditions he further urged to respect all these elements. The study concluded that cultural competence development is an ongoing journey of self-exploration and self-critique explored with a sincere blend of spirit and willingness to learn from others. An eloquent contrast cultural humility with the concept of cultural competence was presented by the author.

E. Arruzza (2020) studied the impact of cultural orientation intervention in ten different settings. Diverse approaches were taken addressing the mode, frequency, and duration of interventions. The analysis verified positive impact of these intervention upon the satisfaction, confidence and attitude of students. The researcher recommended to investigate for the missing control arms in the current literature, and to assess long-term effects.

Shepherd etal., (2019) studied the impact of cultural competence in healthcare settings highlighting the range of perception of cross-cultural educational models (e.g., cultural awareness, cultural competence) with the practical examples of how the professionals in hospitals execute the ideologies in practice. The research population include health professionals and the findings confirmed the positive impact of diligent application of cultural competence model on patients' satisfaction level. The research participants expressed their confidence in handling the patients and meeting their needs even without having received any proper training in the said cultural domain.

The proposed Environment for Universities is depicted below:



Figure:1 Source: HBR "The Othering Effect in dealing with Diversity"

The above presented model is our hypothesis that apart from the social, cultural and positive educational mutual impact of diverse students among themselves, Cultural competence of academic stakeholders in the Universities of Pakistan would not only help in harnessing a tremendous Youth dividend and broadening the academic horizons of students but also result in an important source of additional financial resources for academic institutions ultimately fueling the country's economic growth and modernization. The swelled up cultural ball indicates that Cultural enrichment is another big factor we shall give importance to as through supporting the stay and interaction of the diverse set of students and will help them communicating, learning and collaborating from each other and finally make possible to build a diversified global force. Cultural competence requires some basic structural changes and acceleration in 'decolonizing' the entire education system. Respecting the diversity of the students coming from different background, capitalizing on them and turning this diversity into opportunity is the core of Cultural competence.

Research Methodology

As endorsed by many previous researchers, the study uses Hofstede Cultural Dimension VSM-08 to check the cultural variations among the research subjects, this construct was used to check the parameters of cultural competence i.e. Awareness, Attitude through a self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to 102 subjects in three public sector universities of Karachi. Purposive Random sampling was used to focus on departments with

maximum number of students representing cultural diversity. The correlational Regression Model was run and findings show that the chosen constituents of Cultural Competence have a positive and significant relationship with the motivation and hence with performance of teachers. The reliability of the chosen variables was checked through Cronbach Alpha and that reported positive endorsing the validity of our research construct. Correlational Research Design: As endorsed earlier, correlational research method is best in educational researches help in identifying the nature of correlation, interpreting the relationship and knowing the causation element. Predictive Correlation style helped in predicting the relationship among the variables.

Research Hypotheses

H_1: The essential factors of Cultural Competence have a significant positive impact on the development of cultural competence.

H_{1a}: Awareness about the cultural difference has a significant positive impact upon the development of Cultural Competence.

H_{1b}: Attitude of faculty has a significant positive impact upon the development of Cultural Competence.

H_{1c}: Knowledge about the cultural competence has a significant positive impact upon the development of Cultural Competence.

H_2: Cultural Competence has a significant positive impact upon students' performance

Analyses and Interpretations

According to Hycner (1999) "the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) including even the type of participants." Purposive sampling, considered by Welman and Kruger (1999) was chosen to recognize the principal participants i.e. respondents.

Questionnaire: Self-developed Questionnaire to check the preferences and satisfaction level of diverse groups of students was developed that contained five broad domains encompassing almost all the important variables of students' satisfaction and achievement. Efforts were made to ensure distribution in the maximum possible departments of three universities justifying the generalization of results with high level validation. The questionnaires were distributed randomly without making any gender discrimination/ preference.

Table 1

Mean, Standard deviation and Cronbach Alpha values of the Variables

Variables	No.of respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach Alpha
Awareness	102	4.872	0.546	0.945
Attitude	102	4.789	0.745	0.912
Knowledge	102	4.923	0.625	0.879
Cultural Competence	102	4.659	0.674	0.854
Students' Performance	102	4.867	0.693	0.883

Table 1 clearly reveals the Mean values of the chosen variables which is near to its mean. The standard deviation values are small validating the selection of variables as the pivotal ones in estimating cultural competence and students' performance. Since the values for all the three factors of cultural competence are low in std. deviation and high in reliability so this shows the interest of faculty members towards building an environment which is consistent with cultural competence. Similarly, the Cronbach alpha values are much greater than 0.7 which proves the instrument's reliability.

Correlation of the Study

Following Table shows the strength of the correlation among the chosen independent and dependent variables:

Table 2

Correlation Values among the Variables

Scale	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Awareness	1			
Attitude	0.687	1		
Knowledge	0.598	0.579	1	
Cultural Competence	0.791	0.786	0.765	1

The correlational values indicate the strength of empirical association among the chosen variables of Awareness, attitude, knowledge, and Cultural competence. The values for Awareness, attitude and knowledge are .791, .786 and .765 showing significant contributions of these three factors towards building cultural competence**.**

Table 3

Correlation Values among the Variables

Scale	**1**	**2**
Cultural Competence	1	
Students' Performance	0.711	1

Table 3 clearly reveals the strong association of cultural competence and students' performance hence validating the construct.

Regression Analysis

Table 4

Regression Result of Cultural competence variable and Cultural competence (outcome variable)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Stand. Coefficients		
		Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	0.628	0.301		0.625	0.010
Awareness	0.189	0.079	0.191	0.051	0.042
Attitude	0.190	0.047	0.192	0.067	0.002
Knowledge	0.310	0.060	0.312	0.194	0.000

Dependent Variable: Cultural Competence

The findings of regression analysis show strong and positive association of all the factors of cultural competence on the development of Cultural competence in three Universities of Karachi. The P-values for Awareness, attitude and knowledge are 0.042, 0.002 and 0.000 hence it can be concluded that the main hypothesis H_1 and all the sub-hypothesis H_{1a}, H_{1b} & H_{1c} are accepted and supported from the regression analysis findings

Table 5

Regression Result of Cultural competence and Students' Performance (outcome variable)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Stand. Coefficients		
		Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	0.928	0.301		0.761	0.010
Cultural Competence	0.231	0.078	0.191	0.051	0.022

Dependent Variable: Students' Performance

Regression results with coefficient of and P-value of 0.22 helped in the acceptance of H_2 concluding that there is a strong and positive association of Cultural competence with students' performance

Discussion

Research questions formed in introduction and translated into our hypothesis i.e. H_1 & H_2 were tested and were found with a string link concluding about the positive impact of cultural competence on students' performance in three public sector universities of Karachi. In a nutshell, the findings assisted to recognize the importance of good level of cultural competence in faculty members. The construct is consistent with many other past studies conducted in service sector with a special focus on education and Healthline, Madeline Leininger was one of the pioneer members who identified the need to recognize and respond to the individuals' differences back in the 1950s (Leininger, 1988). We found evidence in the present study that higher competence of teachers has direct effect to making employees perform beyond their job scope hence elevating the student's performance. All the three factors i.e. awareness, attitude and knowledge are expected to have direct positive impact upon the development of cultural competence that in turn leaves a positive impact upon performance of students.

A strong theoretical construct is available in research for the positive link between cultural competence and performance, satisfaction of students. (Smart & Ang,2000; Tony S. Kuo,2018; Cheryl L. Lehman Ed.D,2017; Chris Lehmann, 2016; Amy Louise Brace,2011; Agyeman, J, Erickson, JS,2012). High cultural competence contributes significantly boosting the morale and motivation of employees result in achieving high level of students' performance. The motivation level of employees makes them to perform beyond the expectation (Cinzia et al.,2020; Daniel Baracskay, 2020).

Conclusion

The present study concludes that cultural competence if developed diligently can help elevating the performance of students to a greater extent. Proper orientation to teachers will help getting awareness about the cultural differences among the students and comprehensive training programs will help developing the desirable attitude of teachers and equipping them with the required knowledge hence developing the required level of cultural competence that in turn will help boosting the morale and performance of students. The upshot of this policy shift from a narrower academic perspective to a broader and inclusive one

would surely help elevating the satisfaction and achievement level of diverse students in the Universities of Pakistan thus culminating in the benefits of cultural enrichment, better & healthier social interactions and financial rewards. A wide range of involvement from all the functional departments and greater attention to the multiple facets such as provision of comprehensive orientation and training programs will surely help providing comfortable environment, increased engagement of the diverse groups of students and quality of education.

Recommendations

This implementation of this research model is recommended that will add to the growing portfolio of evidence in the context of higher education in a country like Pakistan. The effective implementation of the present model is recommended that will distil and help building a positive environment in universities through cross-cultural collaboration makes possible levels of impact that wouldn't be achievable without otherwise

The research will help increase our understanding of the relevance of the SDGs to how institutional diversity management priorities are framed (and the drivers for this).

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