Using Collaborative Project for Learning Effective Ways of Working Harmoniously with People from Different Cultures

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Abstract

The paper discussed an original collaborative project in the area of intercultural business communication and cross-cultural understanding. Persuasive digital technologies were used to enable intercultural competencies among students across two different courtiers in teams and helped them find ways to work harmoniously with the people having different cultural backgrounds. **Methodology** - The task involved selection of commercial ads (preferably national ones), in which students were expected to find cultural differences in the interpretation between the two countries, India and Austria. Findings were presented in a form of short reports.
Finding - The paper concluded that collaborative projects can be used as an effective tool for developing cross-cultural competencies among students.
Implications - This article provides the rationale for using collaborative projects for better understanding of the cultural diversity in classrooms.
Future Research - The present research may initiate more researches in the area of developing structured exercises like the one mentioned for practical understanding of cultural diversity, better methods for providing interfaces among different cultural groups, selecting standard software packages, etc.

Keywords: Communication, Cross-Cultural Relations, Global Collaboration, Global Teams, International Business, International Management, Leading Teams

Learning Objectives

- Understanding assumptions when communicating with global colleagues.

- Understanding the cognitive, and behavioral responses to cultural differences.

- Understanding cultural nuances and promote mutual trust.

- Understanding how to better manage the flow of cross-cultural communication.

Introduction

Work teams in the corporate sectors have become more globalized with the advent of media and internet. Employees are expected to communicate more effectively and productively irrespective of what native language and culture they share. Collaborating among workers with diverse cultural background is common with challenges; some are visible and can be handled easily, while others may only be recognized after a misunderstanding has already done damage to the business and relations. This has made multicultural team effectiveness an important topic in a period of globalization and researchers worldwide are exploring ways to help multicultural teams reach project success (Matveev, 2004). Project managers worldwide have reported encountering cultural differences which interfere with the success of collaborative projects (Anbari et al., 2004). The authors Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner in their book *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*, argued that there are major cultural differences between nations and that they affect the process of doing business

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