

Cultural Sensitivity and Conflict Handling Styles in Cross-Cultural Settings

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Abstract

In the globalized world it is a challenge to manage diversity. One such challenge is managing conflicts especially across national boundaries. There exist multiple sources of conflict and owing to cultural differences i.e., disparity in beliefs, understandings and misunderstandings of values and assumptions leading to increased intercultural conflicts. And effective management of conflicts not only requires conflict resolution skills but also, cultural sensitivity failing which may lead to increased chances of conflicts and difficulties to manage them. Cultural differences emphasize the important role of understanding and adapting to not so familiar environments and perform.

To have good trade relations, it is essential that the two countries involved in trade are aware and sensitive to the culture of their foreign counterparts. India and Kuwait have been trade partners for a very long time and petroleum is one significant trade commodity traded between these two countries. The objective of the project is to compare and analyze the cultural sensitivity and conflict handling style of the employees working in the petroleum industry of India and Kuwait. The paper aims to understand the relationship between cultural sensitivity and conflict handling styles. For this purpose, a questionnaire was prepared that measured the cultural sensitivity as well as the conflict handling styles of employees working in the petroleum sector. Results demonstrate the complexity involved in the preference styles to resolve conflicts in cross-cultural set-ups and cultural sensitivity. The result presented the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles of employees and discusses the limitations and practical implications of the results.

Keywords: Cultural Sensitivity; Conflict Handling Styles; Cross-Culture; Culture; Cross-Cultural Differences.

Acknowledgement: The Infrastructural support provided by FORE School of Management, New Delhi is greatly appreciated.