

A Holistic Approach of Cross-Cultural Management with Insight from Neuroscience

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Abstract : This paper incorporates insight from various models, studies and disciplines to construct a framework called the Inverted Pyramid Model. It is argued that such a framework has several advantages: (1) it reduces the shortcomings of the problem-focused approach that dominates the mainstream theories of cross-cultural management. With contributing insight from neuroscience, it suggests that training in business cross-cultural awareness should start with potential synergy emerged from differences instead of the traditional approach that focuses on the liability of foreigners and negative consequences of cultural distance. (2) The framework supports a dynamic and holistic way of analyzing cultural diversity by analyzing four major cultural units (global, national, organizational and group culture). (3) The framework emphasizes the role of individuals –an aspect of culture that is often ignored or regarded as a non-issue in the traditional approach. It is based on the notion that people don't do business with a country, but work (in)directly with a unique person. And it is at this individual level that culture is made, personally, dynamically, and contextually. Insight from neuroscience provides significant evidence that a person can develop a multicultural mind, confirm and contradict, follow and reshape a culture, even when (s)he was previously an outsider to this culture. With this insight, the paper proposes a revision of the old adage (Think global – Act local) and change it into Think global – Plan local – Act individual.

Keywords : static-dynamic paradigm, cultural diversity, multicultural mind, neuroscience

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