

Studying the Relationship between cultural intelligence and career success

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ABSTRACT

The current paper surveys the relationship between cultural intelligence and its dimensions (include knowledge, motivation, behavior and strategy) with employees' career success. For the purpose, 2 questionnaires were designed about cultural intelligence and career success. The results show that cultural intelligence and its dimensions have positive and meaningful influence on career success. Meanwhile no relationship was found between employees demographic characteristics with career success. Finally the result of applying Binomial test illustrates all variables apart from motivation were placed in favorable level.

KEYWORDS: cultural intelligence, knowledge, motivation, behavior, strategy, career success.

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Among past decade, globalization has overwhelmed an enhancing number of researchers, challenging them to rethink basic paradigms on what factors can be considered for successful employees. As the world is shrinking through globalization, more and more individuals live and work in foreign countries and thus they continually come into contact with who coming from much different cultural origins, involving language, norms, beliefs, values, etc. (Vedadi et al, 2010).

All employees increasingly run into problems of people interaction in different cultures and painful results of misunderstandings and erroneous relations. So most organizations require managers who immediately coordinate themselves with other cultures. Creating proper work situation and application warranty in multicultural conditions is a basic managerial challenge and achieving success in the managerial challenge is related to cultural intelligence (Eskandarpur et al, 2013).

Behnoosh Company is one of the most powerful ones in beverage industry in Iran. Its materials are supplied from all around the country. So it needs people who have high levels of cultural intelligence to be able to understand suppliers bargaining power. Indeed it is a vital key for managers to utilize employees with high levels of cultural intelligence. It leads to organizational profitability and productivity. Also organizational profitability affects on employees' growth and development and make most of the more successful. So the main question of the current research can be considered as:

Is there any relationship between cultural intelligence and career success of employees?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Cultural intelligence

Cultural intelligence is considered as skill of establishing the effective communication with individuals who have various cultural perceptions and different backgrounds (Rezaiee Kelidbari et al, 2012).

The concept of cultural intelligence was considered at the first time by Earley and Ang from London business school. They defined cultural intelligence as an ability to learn new templates in cultural interactions and responding appropriate behavior to the templates (Earley and Ang, 2003).

They believed that it is difficult to find familiar signs for communication in interaction to new cultural situations. In the cases, people should codify common cognitive framework attending to existing information, much as the framework is not comprehensive in local norms and behaviors (Earley and Ang, 2003).

Cultural intelligence points set of skills (from elementary to advanced) which allow some one to do their best by passing from a culture to another one (Brislin et al, 2006). The emphasis on cultural intelligence is on abilities for interaction with others at cultural heterogenic (Ang et al, 2004). Interaction and learn to work together in a group is a basis of cultural intelligence (Mushtaq et al, 2012).

Indeed cultural intelligence is ability for mutual and affective reflect against people who have different cultural background. This kind of intelligence like other ones (social and emotional intelligence) has different levels. It makes people to distinguish cultural diversities by knowledge and awareness and behave correctly in different cultures (Dyne & Ang, 2005).

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2.1.1. Cultural intelligence dimensions

Earley and Ang (2003) conceptualize cultural intelligence into 4 dimensions include: cultural knowledge, strategy, motivation and behavior.

- ❖ **Knowledge of cultural intelligence:** It is the knowledge which explains people understanding about cultural diversities and similarities and illustrates an individual general awareness and cognitive plan of other cultures. This dimension is based on identifying existing economic and legal systems and norms at social interaction, religious belief, aesthetic values and language in other cultures.
- ❖ **Motivation of cultural intelligence:** It explains individual’s tendency to experience other cultures and connect with other people from other cultures. Motivation includes people’s internal values for multi cultural interactions which allow them to do effective in different cultural situations.
- ❖ **Behavior of cultural intelligence:** It shows people capabilities to compatibility with verbal and non verbal behaviors which are appropriate to encounter different cultures. Behavior of cultural intelligence is set of logical behavioral responses which are utilized in various situations.
- ❖ **Strategy of cultural intelligence:** It means that how an individual understand intercultural experiences. Strategy explains some processes which people use for acquire and understand cultural knowledge. It happens when people judge about self and others’ intellectual processes. Strategy of cultural intelligence includes strategy formulation before intercultural interactions and considering assumptions throughout interactions (Earley and Ang, 2003).

2.2. Career success

Employees’ growth and success is one of the most important roles of leaders in third millennium (Taleghani & Rezaee Mehr, 2013). Career success has been defined as the perceived prosperities which people have achieved as a result of their work experiences over the span of working life (Judge et al, 1995).

Career success is of concern to people and also organizations. Researchers continue to identify some organizational and individual factors which promote employees’ career success. Also a lot of researches have taken in base of multivariate approaches to identify career success predictors, but no large-scale systematic attempts have been to summarize the existing literature (Saeedi et al, 2012).

Career success is a field which has become increasingly relevant for both employees and employers. Economic and technological developments in organizations and societies have resulted in working careers becoming more unpredictable attending changing work opportunities. A permanent job with one employer, preferably for the all span of people’s work life, can no longer be considered the normal work pattern. Nowadays career opportunities tend to be seen in the light of employability (Van Dam, 2004), recognizing that career development frequently goes beyond the boundaries of one organization which Arthure (1994) named boundaryless careers (Arthur, 1994).

Career success can be understood as an enumeration of consecutive jobs and training. Today there has been increased emphasis on the employees’ active role and level of involvement with respect to their career. This is reflected in concepts such as personal initiative, employability or preparedness to change (Kuijpers et al, 2006).

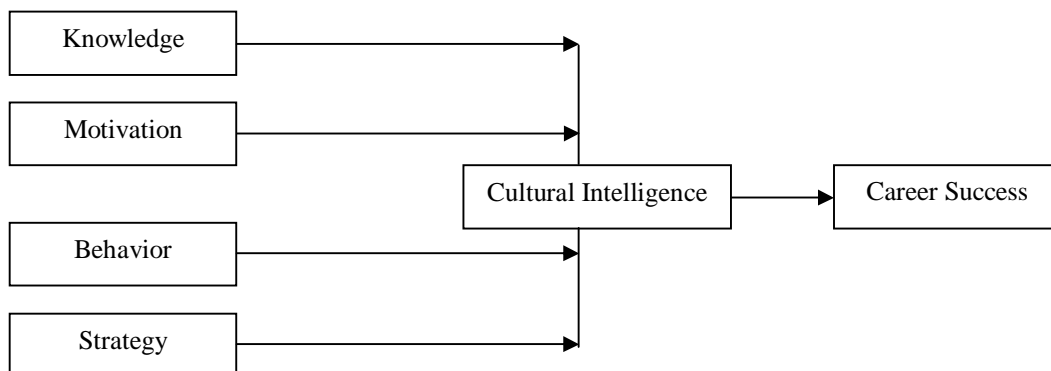
Most of researchers in organizational behavior field have divided career success into extrinsic and intrinsic components (Aryee et al, 1994; Bretz and Judge, 1994; Judge et al, 1995; Gattiker and Larwood, 1990, 1988; Korman et al., 1981; Poole et al, 1990).

Extrinsic success is relatively objective and observable consists of highly tangible outcomes such as payment, salaries, rewards and etc (Jaskolka et al, 1985).

Also intrinsic success is defined as people subjective evaluation of their success and almost it is commonly illustrated in terms of job, career or life satisfaction (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chart below presents the effect of cultural intelligence consist of knowledge, motivation, behavior and strategy on career success.



Conceptual Framework of research

1. There is a positive and meaningful relationship between cultural Intelligence and career success.
- 1.1. There is a positive and meaningful relationship between knowledge and career success.
- 1.2. There is a positive and meaningful relationship between motivation and career success.
- 1.3. There is a positive and meaningful relationship between behavior and career success.
- 1.4. There is a positive and meaningful relationship between strategy and career success.

The study was done in a society involving 597 employees of Iran Behnoosh Company. As this number seems to be too much, so sampling strategy was done (Sekaran, 1992):

$$n = \frac{NZ^2 \frac{1-\alpha}{2} pq}{Z^2 \frac{1-\alpha}{2} + N\epsilon^2} \Rightarrow \frac{597 \times (1.96)^2 \times (0.05)^2}{(1.96)^2 + 597 \times (0.05)^2} \cong 234$$

So the number of statistical society decreased into 234 employees.

The current research can be considered as a descriptive survey if to view from data collection aspect and as an applied research if to investigate the goals of the research. To collect the data library method (to refer to books, articles, libraries, etc...) and fieldworks (questionnaire) was being utilized.

For gathering data, 2 questionnaires were designed.

The first one was about cultural intelligence includes 20 questions and the other one about career success with 12 ones in 5 point likert scale.

To analyze the data SPSS 17 and Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Spearman, Friedman, Chi-square and Binomial tests were utilized.

The management experts were being required to evaluate the validity of questionnaires. For this mean, the questionnaires were given to some professors and experts in management, and after their modifications were being utilized and they confirmed it, the questionnaires were given to the participants.

To determine the questionnaires' reliability, the 'Cronbach Alpha technique' was asked. For this purpose, 35 people were selected by random (from the participants) and the questionnaires were given to them. The 'Cronbach Alpha' values for all variables were calculated:

Table 1: the results of reliability

Variables	Cronbach Alpha
Cultural intelligence	0.78
Career success	0.74

These values support the reliability of questionnaires, because the calculated results for Cronbach's alpha are more than 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

To survey normality of statistical society, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied. The results are shown in table 2:

Table 2: The results of using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Variables	Cultural intelligence	Career success	Knowledge	Motivation	Behavior	Strategy
Sig	0.011	0.059	0.019	0.024	0.021	0.033

As table 2 shows, most of calculated errors are less than research error (0.05), so normality of the society is proved. Therefore some non parametric tests were utilized for testing the hypotheses.

4.2. Spearman test

To investigate the relationship between cultural intelligence and its indices with career success, this test was applied. The results are shown in table 3:

Table 3: the results of using Spearman test

Variables	Spearman r	Sig	Result
Cultural intelligence	0.609	0.006	Positive relationship
Knowledge	0.573	0.025	Positive relationship
Motivation	0.645	0.000	Positive relationship
Behavior	0.578	0.004	Positive relationship
Strategy	0.593	0.015	Positive relationship

As table 3 shows, there are positive and meaningful between cultural intelligence and its dimensions with employees' career success ($\text{sig} < 0.05$).

4.3. Friedman test

To prioritize cultural intelligence dimensions, Friedman test was applied. The results are presented in table 4:

Table 4: results of using Friedman test

variables	Mean Rank
Knowledge	2.29
Motivation	4.73
Behavior	2.45
Strategy	3.12
N= 234, $\chi^2 = 114.728$, d.f= 2, Sig= 0.000	

As table 4 shows, knowledge is the most important dimension of cultural intelligence and behavior and strategy were chosen in second and third places.

4.4. Chi-square

To survey the relationship between employees' demographic characteristics and their success, Chi-square test was utilized as:

Table 5: the results of using Chi-square test

Demographic characteristics	Standard error	Sig	Result
Age	0.05	0.311	No relationship
Gender	0.05	0.142	No relationship
Educational level	0.05	0.176	No relationship
Job experience	0.05	0.095	No relationship

Table 6 shows that there are no meaningful relationships between demographic characteristics – includes age, gender, educational level and job experience- with employees' success.

4.5. Binomial test

Binomial test has been utilized to measure the “career success”, “cultural intelligence” and its dimensions in statistical society. The results are shown in table 6:

Table 6: The results of applying Binomial test

Variables	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Sig	Result
Cultural intelligence	0.7	0.5	0.012	Favorable level
Knowledge	0.7		0.000	Favorable level
Motivation	0.3		0.161	Unfavorable level
Behavior	0.6		0.022	Favorable level
Strategy	0.8		0.000	Favorable level
Career success	0.8		0.008	Favorable level

As table 6 shows, all variables apart from motivation are placed in favorable places.

5. Conclusion and suggestions

The current study with the purpose of examine the relationship between cultural intelligence and career success was done in a society includes 234 employees of Behnoosh company. The results of applying Spearman test showed that there are positive and meaningful correlation between cultural intelligence and its dimensions with career success which is consistent to Eskandarpour et al (2013) research which surveyed the influence of cultural intelligence on commitment. Meanwhile the influence of knowledge and behavior was more than others. It means that more cognition of participants about economical and legal systems, cultural values and beliefs, divorce and marriage systems and non verbal behaviors of other cultures lead to more career success. So managers and leaders should encourage their employees to gain more information about other cultures and therefore promote their career success.

Also it is important to mention motivation of cultural intelligence has the least influence on career success (which is consistent to Rezaiee et al research) and its level is unfavorable. As well as no relationship was found between demographic characteristics and career, so the managers are advised that paying more attention to other dimensions of cultural intelligence.

To improve strategy of cultural intelligence managers are suggested to make their employees capable to apply appropriate strategies in various cultural interactions which lead to more career success.

Behavior of cultural intelligence is another affecting factor on employees' career success. So people should control their feelings and behaviors in interacting people from different cultures.

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