



Cultural Awareness Among Management Students

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This research intends to identify the variables that affect the cultural awareness of management students in Jharkhand. These variables include socio-cultural environment, language barriers, exposure to diversity, and digital exposure. Furthermore, it is intended to determine the attitudes of the students towards cultural diversity and the impact of digital exposure on their cultural awareness.

Design/methodology/approach – Quantitative research methods were employed in the study through the use of a survey. The data collection involved 105 participants, specifically management students selected via convenience sampling. The variables analyzed were cultural awareness, digital experience, family culture, language difference, and diverse friendships. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS software in relation to descriptive statistics, correlation, and t-test for one sample group.

Findings – According to the research, sociocultural factors, including family culture, language difference, and diverse friends, have a high positive correlation with cultural awareness, while the strongest correlation is shown by having diverse friends. Digital exposure also correlates highly positively with cultural awareness. But the results of the study show that there are low levels of positive attitudes towards cultural diversity among students.

Originality/value – This research paper will help in expanding the knowledge that exists in the current literature because it combines both the socio-cultural as well as digital elements of cultural awareness into one model, especially considering the case of Jharkhand. The role played by traditional social variables as well as contemporary digital elements in the development of intercultural competence is emphasized.

Keywords – Cultural Awareness, Digital Exposure, Cultural Diversity, Language Difference, Diverse Friendships, Management Students

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, the rising interconnectedness of societies and globalization have further increased the significance of cultural awareness in general, and more specifically among management students who are meant to work in various types of organizations. This can be defined as awareness and respect for cultural differences, which is critical for effective communication, cooperation, and decision making in multicultural environments. Students are constantly experiencing different cultural influences in their academic life, particularly at those universities located in socially-diverse environments such as Jharkhand.

The first factor that affects the development of cultural awareness is the person's socio-cultural background that includes, but not limited to family culture, language, and social interactions. All these factors impact the way a person develops his/her beliefs and bias towards other cultures. Earlier research has demonstrated that people who were exposed to various cultures during the process of socialization develop better adaptation skills. Exposure to other cultural backgrounds makes people more tolerant and open-minded towards cultural differences and helps to build cultural awareness.

Language is another important factor in the development of culture awareness since besides being a means of communication, language carries the sense of culture. Students who speak multiple languages find it easier to participate in cross-cultural activities because language exposes individuals to many points of view. In a culturally rich environment such as in India, linguistic differences help learners develop cultural awareness as culture is learned indirectly through language exposure.

Apart from socio-cultural factors, another important aspect that affects the manner of experiencing cultural diversity is the fast development of technology and online media. The introduction of various technological tools and social media networks has changed the way people learn about cultural differences, making it possible to interact with global cultures and learn something new and different. Such interaction is facilitated by means of the Internet, which provides an effective means of communication with other people and their culture.

An additional dimension that is often linked with cultural awareness is students' attitudes towards cultural diversity. The presence of positive attitudes, which imply acceptance, respect, and inclusiveness of diversity, is vital for successful performance in increasingly globalized educational and professional settings. Education systems can effectively encourage the development of such attitudes through fostering inclusivity and multicultural interaction and integrating diverse education experiences. Nonetheless, the degree to which students cultivate positive attitudes towards cultural diversity depends on numerous individual and situational factors.

Even though the importance of cultural awareness is increasingly acknowledged as a skill set, scholarly literature has mainly explored cultural awareness determinants in isolation. In other words, the role of socio-cultural or educational factors as well as digital engagement was studied separately from one another. Only a few attempts to consider these factors together have been made in terms of management students from emerging regions like Jharkhand.

In an effort to fill this void, the current research presents a broad framework that analyzes the effects of background, language, and diversity experiences on cultural awareness, while at the same time measuring students' attitude towards cultural diversity as well as digital exposure effect. Through the inclusion of all of these factors, it is expected to gain insight into what is influencing the development of cultural awareness within management students. The empirical results, including the use of descriptive statistics, correlation test, and hypotheses testing, will be particularly useful in gaining such insight.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To examine the effect of background, language, and diversity exposure on cultural awareness.
- To assess students' attitudes toward cultural diversity.
- To analyse the impact of digital exposure on cultural awareness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The notion of cultural awareness is a complex phenomenon influenced by the background of the individual, his or her language skills, as well as environmental exposure. Indeed, numerous studies emphasize the importance of students' socio-cultural backgrounds in terms of their perceptions and prejudices concerning other cultures. For example, Sharma (2009) demonstrated that the cultural background of management students affects their learning preferences and behaviors.

Finally, one cannot overlook the fact that language becomes another important element in facilitating cultural awareness among individuals. Language is not merely an instrument of communication but the carrier of cultural meanings and identities as well. Students who have command over several languages often reveal greater intercultural competence and flexibility (Kiser & Scobey, 2010), which is especially true for India.

Being exposed to diversity-directly or indirectly-is among the major determinants of culture-awareness. Priester et al. (2019) found that students who have experienced diverse educational and social environments show more awareness of social inequities and less prejudice. Likewise, Wilson (2019) underlined that an organized process of multicultural interaction improves the perception of cultural norms by students and minimizes conflicts during group activities.

The educational environment plays an equally important role. Researches confirm that educational establishments, which promote culture-awareness, provide opportunities for intercultural communication and tolerance (The Impact of Cultural Diversity Awareness in Schools in South India, 2023). Moreover, diversity at schools fosters creativity and involvement in learning processes while posing certain obstacles in communication if not addressed properly (Fatma, 2024).

On a managerial level, culture-awareness is critical for successful leadership and collaboration. Managing cultural diversity involves such qualities as empathy, communication skills, and openness, which can be developed through exposure and education (Managing Cultural Diversity at Workplace, 2023). In the region of Jharkhand, where socio-cultural and language diversity is naturally present, all mentioned factors contribute to students' cultural awareness.

H1: Background, language, and exposure to diversity significantly influence the cultural awareness of management students in Jharkhand

Positive attitudes towards cultural diversity have been established as an important outcome of management education. Positive attitudes towards cultural diversity include acceptance, respect, and openness to engagement with different cultures, which are necessary for functioning in today's global business environment. Studies show that management students generally hold positive attitudes towards diversity because of their exposure and emphasis within the educational system.

Kiser & Scobey (2010) noted that students from diverse backgrounds in a culturally diverse college setting exhibited positive attitudes and awareness regarding diversity. In line with these findings, studies by Priester et al. (2019) suggest that diversity increases awareness and diminishes prejudices in students.

Educational intervention is equally important. Wilson (2019) found that cultural awareness programs and multicultural engagements create a cooperative and respectful atmosphere amongst students. Likewise, studies conducted in the Indian context also suggest that diversity fosters social integration and cultural competency among students (The Impact of Cultural Diversity Awareness in Schools in South India, 2023).

Additionally, positive attitudes towards diversity have been associated with better academic and professional results. A diverse environment fosters creativity, innovation, and critical thinking – skills that are important for management students (Fatma, 2024). In addition, employers place greater importance on hiring individuals who possess the ability to work within multicultural groups, thereby highlighting the significance of positive diversity attitudes in ensuring employability (Managing Cultural Diversity at Workplace, 2023).

Regarding the case of Jharkhand, it is clear that the existence of diversity in terms of tribes, languages, and cultures in Jharkhand creates an ideal environment for cultivating inclusive attitudes.

H2: Management Students in Jharkhand Exhibit a Significant Positive Attitude Toward Cultural Diversity

The fast proliferation of technology and social media has revolutionized the relationship of students with cultural diversity. Social media is a virtual medium of intercultural communication through which various cultural artifacts can be accessed and shared on an international level.

There is ample evidence that exposure to digital information positively impacts students' cultural consciousness by creating the opportunity to learn beyond their immediate surroundings. Kiser & Scobey (2010) assert that exposure to different viewpoints-whether virtual or otherwise-makes individuals more culturally sensitive. Likewise, according to Priester et al. (2019), increasing exposure to diversity diminishes biases and promotes awareness about social disparities.

Social media makes continuous learning possible. According to Wilson (2019), exposure to diverse cultural significance on digital platforms helps build intercultural skills. Moreover, the use of digital means makes collaboration and learning among different cultures easy (Managing Cultural Diversity at Workplace, 2023).

Education research studies emphasize the significance of the digital medium in facilitating intercultural education. The provision of varied content via digital media improves students' social development and cultural competency (The Impact of Cultural Diversity Awareness in Schools in South India, 2023). Additionally, digital diversity experience has shown positive outcomes in terms of student engagement, creativity, and effective communication in academia (Fatma, 2024).

In areas such as Jharkhand, where there might be a lack of exposure to different cultures physically, social media is an equally powerful tool that offers diverse cultural experiences. This helps in developing a global perspective among the management students.

H3: Social Media and Digital Exposure Have a Significant Impact on Cultural Awareness Among Management Students in Jharkhand

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

For the current research, a quantitative approach and a descriptive research design were adopted. The use of such a design was deemed appropriate due to its suitability for measuring and analyzing relationships among such variables as cultural awareness, digital exposure, and socio-cultural factors.

Sample and Sampling Technique

In this case, the research was done on a sample size of 105 respondents. Convenience sampling technique was employed in the selection of the sample, as the participants were selected depending on their availability and willingness to participate in the research.

Method of Data Collection

The data for this research was collected using primary data collection techniques. In particular, a structured questionnaire was used to collect data on cultural awareness, digital exposure, family culture, language difference, and diverse friendship.

Scale of Measurement

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure all the items on the questionnaire, which ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

DATA ANALYSIS

Reliability Analysis

The consistency within the scales was measured through Cronbach's Alpha. According to the findings obtained, the Cronbach's Alpha of the first scale-Cultural Awareness was found out to be .67 while that of the second scale-Digital Exposure was calculated to be .65. Such measures indicate that the measures have moderate yet acceptable levels of reliability especially in exploratory research.

Descriptive Statistics

The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, correlational statistics and inferential statistics such as the one sample t-test were used to conduct the analysis of the variables within the study.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	M	SD
Cultural Awareness	105	14.56	5.18
Digital Exposure	105	11.64	4.40
Family Culture	105	2.60	1.31
Language Difference	105	2.33	1.34
Diverse Friends	105	3.49	1.50

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

Descriptive statistics for study variables are depicted in Table 1 below. The cultural awareness of respondents is rated as being moderate (M = 14.56, SD = 5.18). The digital exposure is likewise rated as being moderate (M = 11.64, SD = 4.40).

Regarding socio-cultural factors, the family culture factor was rated with a mean value of 2.60 (SD = 1.31), while the language difference had an even lower mean value (M = 2.33, SD = 1.34). On the other hand, diverse friendship was rated with a mean value of 3.50 (SD = 1.50), indicating a moderate degree of socialization with diverse cultures.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H1: Background, language, and exposure to diversity significantly influence the cultural awareness of management students in Jharkhand

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
Cultural Awareness	14.56	5.18	-			
Family Culture	2.60	1.31	.23*	-		
Language Difference	2.33	1.34	.35**	.27**	-	
Diverse Friends	3.50	1.50	.39**	.15	.26**	-

Note. N = 105. Values are Pearson correlation coefficients.
p < .05, ** p < .01.

Correlation analysis between the variables of the study was performed using Pearson correlation coefficients. The results show that cultural awareness is positively and significantly associated with family culture (r = .23, p < .05), language difference (r = .35, p < .01), and diverse friendships (r = .39, p < .01).

Family culture is positively and significantly associated with language difference (r = .27, p < .01), while its association with diverse friendships is not significant (r = .15, p > .05).

On the other hand, language difference is significantly associated with diverse friendships (r = .26, p < .01).

H2: Management Students in Jharkhand Exhibit a Significant Positive Attitude Toward Cultural Diversity

Table 3*One-Sample t-Test Results (Test Value = 3)*

Item	M	SD	t	df	p
My college promotes cross-cultural interaction	2.38	1.40	-4.54	104	< .001
Group work teaches cultural respect	2.49	1.42	-3.71	104	< .001
Cultural differences should be accepted in college/university	2.66	1.41	-2.50	104	.014

One sample t-tests were performed to determine whether participants' perceptions varied significantly from the test value (test value = 3). According to the findings, it was evident that all three variables significantly differed from the test value.

More precisely, there was significantly less perceived agreement that college encourages cross-cultural interaction, $t(104) = -4.54$, $p < .001$, and that teamwork helps understand cultures, $t(104) = -3.71$, $p < .001$. Additionally, cultural differences acceptance was perceived as significantly lower compared to the test value, $t(104) = -2.50$, $p = .014$.

H3: Social Media and Digital Exposure Have a Significant Impact on Cultural Awareness Among Management Students in Jharkhand

Table 4*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation Between Variables*

Variable	M	SD	1	2
Cultural Awareness	14.56	5.18	-	-
Digital Exposure	11.64	4.40	.51**	-

Note. N = 105. Values are Pearson correlation coefficients.
p < .01.

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between cultural awareness and digital exposure. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between cultural awareness and digital exposure ($r = .51$, $p < .01$), indicating that higher levels of digital exposure are associated with greater cultural awareness.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this paper was to evaluate the influence of socio-cultural components and technologies on the cultural awareness in relation to management students in Jharkhand State, including assessment of the students' attitude to cultural diversity. The findings obtained during the research conducted will provide useful information concerning the way the factors mentioned interact to impact the cultural awareness levels among the students in question.

It has been found that hypothesis H1 proves to be true due to the strong positive correlations of cultural awareness with such important components as family culture, language diversity and friends of diverse cultures. Therefore, it can be claimed that the students who are culturally aware due to various factors such as family background, language diversity and friendships with people from other cultural backgrounds have higher level of cultural awareness. In particular, it was discovered that the most

powerful correlation was found for friends of diverse cultures. Hence, it can be suggested that personal interaction is important for cultural awareness.

However, Hypothesis H2 was not proved by the findings of the study. According to the results of the one-sample t-test, students' attitudes towards cultural diversity are significantly lower than the neutral standard. This means that although students are aware of cultural diversity issues, they do not possess positive attitudes towards cultural diversity. Such an observation can be explained by the lack of proper institutional involvement, absence of organized cultural diversity initiatives, and insufficient intercultural communication on campus.

Hypothesis H3 was proven as there is a highly significant and positive correlation between digital exposure and cultural awareness. This finding is important as it confirms the increasing significance of digital channels in forming students' awareness. Thanks to digital exposure, students become more culturally aware because of information coming from all over the world. In other words, digitalization helps overcome some limitations in terms of cultural awareness, especially in regions like Jharkhand.

In general, cultural awareness is impacted by not only the traditional socio-cultural factors but also contemporary technology-based exposure. As interpersonal communication and linguistic diversity increase cultural awareness, technology also aids the development of awareness. Nonetheless, the absence of positive attitudes towards diversity points out the existence of a significant deficiency in the transition from awareness to acceptance.

CONCLUSION

The current research aimed to identify the factors affecting cultural awareness of management students residing in Jharkhand and incorporated socio-cultural variables, exposure to diversity, and digital exposure in one model. The findings have confirmed that cultural awareness is a multidimensional construct that depends on various aspects including background factors, interpersonal interaction, and technological exposure.

It has been established that family culture, linguistic diversity, and diversity of friendships affect cultural awareness positively, with diversity of friendships having the greatest effect. Digital exposure was also found to impact cultural awareness positively, showing the importance of using different sources of information such as Internet and social networks to develop cultural knowledge and improve global awareness.

Nevertheless, one of the main results of the study is the low presence of a positive attitude towards cultural diversity among the respondents, while their level of awareness about culture is rather high. Thus, there is a distinct lack of connection between awareness and acceptance, which proves that cultural awareness does not imply inclusive attitudes.

In terms of literature review, the research adds value to the field by integrating socio-cultural and digital aspects in relation to cultural awareness in a specific region. Moreover, it focuses on the increased role of digital interactions as well as socio-cultural processes in enhancing intercultural competency.

To sum up, management schools should apply a more proactive approach in promoting both cultural awareness and positive attitudes towards diversity among students. In this case, diversity programs, intercultural training, and digital tools can be used successfully.

Limitations and Future Research

Some limitations of this study must be discussed in the context of the interpretations of findings. First, the sample size of this study is relatively small (N=105), and a convenient sampling method is employed in data collection. Thus, there are concerns about the applicability of the findings of this study in real-world settings. Future researchers are recommended to use a very large sample size and conduct their investigations in multiple institutions.

Second, due to the cross-sectional approach applied to this study, no information can be obtained about any changes in cultural awareness in time. Longitudinal studies on cultural awareness development should be conducted by future researchers. The use of self-reports as a data collection tool will inevitably lead to biases in the responses obtained from participants.

Apart from that, the number of variables considered in this study is not very large, and only socio-cultural factors and digital media exposure are mentioned in this regard. Future researchers are recommended to add personality characteristics, cultural intelligence, and institutional factors to this model.

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