

## **Trust and Cross-Cultural Dissimilarities in Corporate Environment**

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** Latin American corporate executives are faced with a serious problem the low trust and peer confidence. The factors of criticism at workplace, increased corporate controls, and growing expectations for improved performance and accountability have accompanied this decline in trust. Traditional approaches to corporate governance epitomized by organizational behavior theories have focused on short-term profits and organizational systems which fail to achieve desired results. This paper presents the analysis of behavioral dimensions of cross-cultural team performance in corporate environment in Mexico.

**Methodology/Approach:** This study is based on literature review of previous research contributions focused on the managers of multinational companies operating in Latin American countries in a cross-cultural environment. The success of the corporate ventures in Mexico has been evaluated from the perspectives of economic and relational attributes. The discussion in the study revealed that the degree of fit between a corporate parent and venture affects the success of the venture.

**Findings:** Corporate venturing as a strategy for international business development has become significant in view of the process of globalization resulting into the free trade and business development opportunities for multinational companies. The success is associated with high levels of commitment, competitive skills and dynamics in functional management of the venture. In the study the variables of economic and relational dimensions of external and internal fit have shown greater association with venture success. It has also been found that ventures opt for

greater autonomy and less economic dependency with their parent ventures for leading success and this finding make an intuitive sense.

**Implications:** The success in corporate venturing is associated with high levels of commitment, trust, group dynamics and skills in functional management of the venture. The discussions in the paper offer analytical insights to the managers to develop an operational balance in the team to achieve higher performance.

**Originality/Value:** The thesis of the paper is developed around the issues of the cross-cultural variables affecting workplace environment in reference to trust, team work and gender sensitivity required for achieving efficiency in a business ventures. The paper explores and maps the symbiosis between the cognitive drivers of team member personality and organizational work culture.

**Keywords:** Low trust, culture and personality traits, team working, gender sensitivity, venture management

Culture refers to the distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complete 'design for a living'. For ethnologists, folklorists, anthropological linguists, archaeologists and social anthropologists, culture is always a point of departure or a point of reference if not invariably the point of emphasis (Kluckhohn, 1951). Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditioning elements in a future action (Balazs, 2002). The influence of cultural values on business negotiations have been diagnosed by Geert Hofstede (1991) by conducting research in 66 countries to measure the cross-cultural impact. The four cultural dimensions observed by Hofstede include individualism which focuses on self reference criterion, power distance index which leads to authority orientation, uncertainty index which refers to the attitude of risk avoidance, and Masculinity /Femininity Index which focuses on assertiveness and achievements. Most existing frameworks tend to want to discard the current situation in favor of a new corporate culture, thus discarding the best of what already exists. Changing an organization's culture is a contradiction in terms. This is because cultures act to preserve themselves and to protect their own living existence (Trompenaars and Wooliams, 2003).

The organizational reforms are introduced by many multinational companies in view of changing scenarios in the global marketplace and nature of competition. As markets globalize, the need for organizational reforms towards workplace management, operating systems, and work culture emerges. However, the balance between consistency in the changes and adaptation is essential for

corporate success (Trompenaars, 1993). As long as there are not imbalances in the change process, may be by introducing the new systems and its rate of adaptation of the change culture, there may not be any threat to the organizational management. The human value system is a synergy of societal values, family values and individual values generated through the influence of culture. The personality traits are largely evolved through the family value and societal values that govern the family value paradigm. Such process may be described as a pyramidal paradigm of personality and values which has a large base of societal culture in the bottom of the pyramid, groomed into the family values and ultimately shaping the personality at the top of the paradigm (Rajagopal, 2004).

### **Diagnostics of Team Culture (Mexican-American)**

‘Team’ conceptualizes group of people engaged in delivering a common task. In ideal situations the individual and group behavior in a team is integrated towards the common objectives and the task delivery process is shared which leads to set the group dynamics (Rajagopal, 1999). The basic attributes of a good team include clear identification of goals, clarity of roles, common feeling, motivation, commitment and collaborative attitude. The efficiency of group approach is a function of many behavioral factors which may be expressed as (Rajagopal, 1994):

$$p = f(m, a, g)$$

Where,  $p$  denotes the degree of performance,  $m$  represents motivation,  $a$  exhibits the abilities of the individuals associated with team and  $g$  is expressed to realization of goals. The team may not function effectively if any of the above factors or associated variables thereof are disjointed. The reward and punishments issues in a team emerge as a post-process synergy of all associated variables and are largely governed by the factors common feeling, motivation, commitment and collaborative attitude (Rajagopal, 2006<sup>a</sup>). Hence teams are collections of people who must rely upon

group collaboration, if each member is to experience the optimum success and goal achievement. The changing technology and markets have stimulated the team approach in multinational companies for performing the organizational tasks. Further more the complexity of the society and human needs devised to meet augmented needs have endorsed the team spirit as a significant tool in managing the corporate tasks (Dyer, 1987). The team management is employed largely in the organizations where activities are less repetitive and predictable. Such an approach demands effective liaison, appropriate delegation of powers, judicious allocations of roles of team members, sharing of information and accuracy in evaluation of team performance (Harris and Moran, 1999).

#### *Personality Traits in Team Performance*

Though there are many variables that affect the individual and group behavior of the team members while contributing their roles, the critical issues (Harris and Moran, 1999) have been discussed in the following section in reference to the teams with Mexican and American members:

- American team members would feel comfortable to a group environment which is open for expression but organized in a formal manner and remain judgmental. However a fully relaxed environment for working in a team may not be very convenient for them as the group members may perceive that relaxation beyond a limit may weaken the individual and group performance on the assigned task (Goody, 1996). On the contrary, it is observed that the Mexican team members may feel comfortable with the informal and relaxed group environment as it may trigger the scope of lateral thinking and gradually initiate the group dynamics. They may like to review their performance in several rounds.

- The tolerance limit for any ambiguity and uncertainty in the team work may be very narrow for the American while working in a team as they largely abide with the principles of management by objectives. This attitude of Americans also reflects with their consciousness to the time frame associated with the task of the team. The Mexican participants in a team may be tolerant to the ambiguities in the team work; they may prefer to work with underlying and implicit meaning, which may sometimes affect the team work negatively.
- As regards taking interest in the achievement of each member as well as of the group, the American team members follow a systems approach which provides the framework or organizational principal for evaluating task in parts (Cummings, 1980). Mexican team members would also work on consolidating the efforts and results related to the task periodically and derive correctional measures to follow ahead.
- The members of the American team hold the capacity to establish the intense, short-term relations and also to apply the relevant results to the on-going team project (Oldham and Cummings, 1996) while the Mexican team members would also be able to establish short-term relations with the team members to critically appraise the individual and group performance. However, The Mexicans may not be comfortable to adopt the new task with the same team. It has been observed in the real corporate situations in Mexico that the teams working in an existing fashion resist to any innovation. Such an attitude has been evidenced by *ING Comercial America in Mexico* when it desired to implement the sale automation as a team project for its agents and promoters (Rajagopal, 2005<sup>a</sup>). The sales force of the company had lack of motivation to use the non-conventional tools in teams or individually for improving their performance and contribution to the company in terms of incremental growth in profit in all the business lines.

- As regards keeping group communication on target and schedule, with effective listening, the American and Mexicans differ in terms of explicit communication style of the former and implicit communication style of the latter. The power axis for American may reflect on speaking independently while for Mexicans like Japanese would reveal on interdependence with the other members of the team (Haru, 1997).
- The American team members admire to have confidence, trust and commitment to work in a team while Mexican member rely on the facts more revealed from the antecedents and precedents than trust to carry on the team work. However, Mexicans like to achieve confidence once the project rolls-on, than measuring the confidence before beginning the team works (Harris and Moran, 1996).

The Mexican individuals working in a team may improve their efficiency following the Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1965) of cognitive learning in reverence to evaluation, synthesis, analysis, application, comprehension and knowledge. It may be required to fix the criteria for the team members to work in the team on the assigned tasks, set judgmental framework and detect fallacies. It is may also be necessary to produce a new combination of roles considering originality or creativity to protect individualism and reduce any assertiveness in the team process. The team work process would be effective provided the roles for the members are clearly identified and logical expressions are made for proper arrangement and relational layouts to help distinguishing the facts from fictions. The common understanding may be used as filter to analyze the solutions to the problems emerging in a team work. The information flow should be streamlined for drawing suitable interpretations, inferences and implications (Rajagopal, 2005<sup>b</sup>). It is also necessary to provide the teams with more factual information and ideas to share among

the team members. This would develop rationale in the interactions among the team members and would help in drawing transparent arguments. Hence management teams which challenge one another's thinking, develop a more complete understanding of their choices, create a richer range of options, and make better decisions (Eisenhardt, 1997). Such team tactics would better work in Mexican environment as they keep conflict focused on issues and not on individual members; cultivate collaborative, rather than competitive, relations among team members; and create a sense of fairness in the decision-making process.

### *Discussion Process in Team-Brainstorming*

The brainstorming exercises in business arena are used as a tool to defreeze the ideological barriers, emphasize the core issues and filter the process of negotiation. Many companies use brainstorming as a tool for innovation and strategy development (Scharge, 2001). The process of brainstorming involves six major stages- setting objectives, defining core issues, laying discussion protocol, filtering the shared information, synthesizing the discussion and evaluating the outcome in reference to the set objectives. In conducting cross-culture brainstorming session following considerations (Vidal and Gomez, 2004) may be necessary to organize the session with a group of both American and Mexican it:

- Attire, respect to culture, greetings
- Warming-up discussion
- Clarity on the issues of discussion
- Availability of information

- Antecedents and precedents
- Transparency in information sharing
- Discussion protocol-scheduling speakers, turnover time, listening, argument interruption, and question session, discussion streamlining, discussion documentation
- Time management
- Language and expressions
- Synthesizing the debate
- Wrapping-up the meeting

The brainstorming session with the group of both Mexican and American should be carefully managed as American business culture is based on the work culture of transparency, time oriented and strategic decision. The SMART variables may be considered to manage such brainstorming sessions. The SMART variables include-strategy orientation, measurability, approach, reality and time frame. The strategy orientation would drive the brainstorming discussion to result orientation and the measurability would count on the success of the deliberations (Rajagopal, 2005<sup>c</sup>). It may be necessary to follow a mutually suitable brainstorming approach respecting the individual and corporate cultures with real and open facts. However, respecting the timeframe for discussion is another important issue to be considered in the brainstorming session failing to it may end up the discussions with unfinished decisions.

## **Cultural Congruence at Workplace (Mexican-Japanese)**

The similarities between the Mexicans and Japanese may be observed largely in the social institutions that cultivate the business culture in them. However, there are differences in the material culture comprising technology and economy in these regions. The interdependence defines the relationship of Japanese business players as they feel comfortable in team work either in a family or in an organization. Their business generally emerges from a family pedigree (Haru, 1997) so as in traditional Mexican companies. A good example is of Donfer Alimentos of Mexico which had emerged as a family business and standing in the Mexican market for the last six decades dealing in manufacturing and marketing of sausages (Rajagopal, 2003<sup>a</sup>). Japanese, and Mexicans both believe in knowing their counterparts before starting to work with and such meetings are held in a common place to get acquainted with their counterparts. Another similarity between the Mexicans and Japanese is the promising behavior intending to offer a pleasant, positive and rewarding scenario of the situation under discussion and the unpleasant consequences are kept undisclosed (Hodgson et al, 2000). Japanese, particularly are indicative of their polite conversational style refraining from the use of *no* and facial gazing (Fields, 2000) which is similar to Mexicans as they too avoid any negativity in their conversation as far as possible.

Besides the similarities discussed above there are many obvious differences that lead to managerial challenges in getting along with the Mexican and Japanese counterparts on work. One of the typical work cultures that Japanese have may be described as 3-T power-grid which comprise a synergy of task (commitment), thrust (driving force) and time (punctuality). These attributes of the Japanese distinguish them from most of the existing work cultures across the countries in the world. This has reflected into the material culture (technology and economy) of Japan toward continues

improvement (*kaizen*). In fact Kaizen is a social culture which has been later adapted by the Japanese organizations (Rajagopal, 2006<sup>b</sup>). Mexicans have yet to grow to adopt the 3-T concept in order to be at par with Japanese work culture. Language is another barrier for the persons of both the countries- Japan and Mexico- as the common language for conversation always remains foreign for them. Under such circumstances establishing perfect relationship between them by a manager would be an up-hill challenge (Varner, 2000). Besides the differences discussed above, the non-verbal behaviors, values and process of thinking and decision making are also different for both the groups of people. In many respect Mexican behavior has been observed as an anthology of Latin American share culture and Adapted American culture which does not have a strategic fit with that of Japanese (Cateora and Graham, 2003). Japan is a more centralized society that lays emphasis on Darwinian philosophy of evolution-survival of the fittest, which sets more rigid standards of work culture leading to *kaizen* (Haru, 1997). Japanese are generally challenging and risk averse unlike Mexicans whose cultural attitudes towards risk some time are influenced by fatalism (Hoover et al, 1978). Hence it would be a challenging task for the manager to choose a Mexican in assigning a risk averse and time bound schedule as against a Japanese counterpart. Japanese are formal and reserved and boast the strongest work ethic (Kanter, 1991). The differences in learning and thinking patterns influence the way people process information, as demonstrated in their natural responses to business communications. Audience differ in the way they perceive and value concepts of time, space, money, relationships, power, risk, and even the protocols of gender roles. Culture is an omnipresent evolution of social behaviors that continually transforms over the spatial, temporal and demographic sub-groups (Rajagopal, 2005<sup>d</sup>).

In a work environment it would be challenging for a manager to understand and adapt to individual behavior of different cultural groups and use a yardstick to soften the communication

gap. Japanese believe in implicit communication with a thumb rule of implied is better than spoken and appreciate interdependence to work in teams (Haru, 1997). However the similar may be the case with Mexicans in communicating with others as they prefer to hide either negative communication or ignorance on the issue. A study in relevance to the management of emerging challenges of cross-cultural issues associated with the persons involved in an organization discusses Mexican managers construct their own social reality with rules and norms bounded primarily by the existing organizational. It has been emerged out of this study that if adequately balanced; individualism-collectivism may be a good source of intercultural fit while building shared leadership protecting mutual values. Such managerial outlook would help in reconfiguring individual and cultural orientations and styles of persons of different origin in the design of management teams to build high levels of social effectiveness in the work environment (Carlos, 2005). In my opinion, managing the cross-cultural challenges in the workplace may be made easy by developing a strategic fit of values in the organization with flexibility in individual values and shared personality traits.

### **Personality Traits and Employment (Mexican-American)**

The human value system is a synergy of societal values, family values and individual values. The personality traits are largely evolved through the family value and societal values that govern the family value paradigm. Such process may be described as a pyramidal paradigm of personality and values which has a large base of societal culture in the bottom of the pyramid, groomed into the family values and ultimately shaping the personality at the top of the paradigm (Rajagopal, 2004). The Mexican societal values have emerged through the learned culture over historical ages. Mexicans are relaxed, hospitable and warm people who may relate their personality traits with the

cultural heritage. They have high interdependence on family, friends and colleagues at the workplace. Such personality traits develops ambiguity in performing at workplace as they would like to hide disagreements, unveil mutual weaknesses and stand accountable on the organizational or personal decisions. The attitude to bend truth or retain information to uplift the feelings of others may be another personality train which drives the behavior of a Mexican towards driving himself individualistic to be comfortable at the workplace and concentrate on achievements. Such personality trait builds the avoidance behavior and may like to refrain from applying a job where his relatives or friends are also willing to. The North American view of Mexicans toward their self control is emotional, volatile, and passive and slow in performing tasks (Harris and Moran, 1999). In the family oriented societies there exists a high degree of generalization of social trust and consequently strong propensity of spontaneous sociability. The family and kinship constitute the primary form of association for Mexicans as against the voluntary associations followed by the Americans (Lester, 1993). However, such societal cultural issues may not support the workplace culture, which appeals the Mexican to refrains from any interface ambiguities at points. For Mexican relationship-based cultural protocol is strongest yardstick to emphasize the social, personal aspects with the people they interact at the workplace. In Latin American cultures people stand and sit close to each other and keep the body contact which may not be appreciated in different organizational work culture (Kras, 1995). All the above mentioned cultural traits are the main reasons why it is difficult for a Mexican to apply for a job that his/her friends are applying to. On the contrary Americans may not hesitate to apply for a job where his friends are applying as there personality traits are very different from the Mexicans. The dominant traits of Americans may be described as independent thinkers and decision makers, goal and achievement oriented freedom loving and self relevant, work oriented and efficient, competitive and aggressive (Stewart, 1998). Hence, for an American job seeker it is immaterial who is competing for the same job- friend, family or foe.

Personality of an individual matters for gaining confidence within and facing the extrinsic environment. The personality traits are largely groomed through the cultural settings observed in the native education, etiquette, language, expression ability, family and friends. The native environment is also an important factor of influencing the personality traits of a person (Onedo, 1991). When a person could not appraise his personality to the best of his satisfaction, he tends to feel difficult in getting adjusted with the new culture and may like to confine to his native culture. The problems associated with the Mexicans as against Americans may be described accordingly. However, culture has many complex dimensions to define in simple terms. It seems that each anthropologist has defined the culture from his own perspective. However, certain anthropological thinkers had agreed-on fundamentals, as may be seen from the description provided by Hoebel (1969) as culture is the integrated sum total of learned behavioral traits that are shared by members of a society.

The major problems that Mexican may face in presenting their candidature in comparison to Americans for an employment may be due to the lack of confidence in cultural adjustments, poor command in foreign language, underestimation of competence, poor self appraisal on potentials, weak measurement of knowledge on core and peripheral subjects, low competitive strengths and other macro and micro socio-cultural parameters. Another important factor significant to mention in the context of Mexicans' job search may be the lack of clear perception of how their work fits into the grand corporate scheme, which they are aiming for. Such complex personalities frequently prevent young, high-powered, and capable candidates from gaining competitive positions in companies (Ghoshal and Bruch, 2004). A profile of the problem personality reveals a dynamic, challenging, complex, abrasive or passive despite intelligence, analytical, hard working

traits. Hence managing talent by putting the right person in the right job has always been challenging because humans are complex and difficult to predict (McPhail and Brousseau, 2005). In cultures where status disparities are obvious and significant like any developing economies including Mexico, problems arise in identifying jobs of high profile. However the level of optimism associated with the Mexicans also affects the process of job selection. In Latin America growth of a person is explained by immigration factors. The Hispanic population is moving highly metropolitan, a far culture to reach. However the communication with the foreigners makes the task of cultural adjustment difficult and the language of any country largely speaks its culture (Rajagopal, 2003<sup>b</sup>). However Mexicans tends to be very competitive, set on pursuing individual goals and needs for recognition. The individualism of Mexicans reflects in the importance of having a job that allows sufficient time for a full person or family life. Perhaps such dimension of individualism has ranked Mexico lower than collectivist Japan in the cross-cultural study of Greetz Hofstede (1984). On the contrary it may not be difficult for a mainstream American to present his candidature for a job of his choice as he holds no personality disorders, confidence to adjust with the given work culture, strong self appraisal of positive and negative personality traits and overrules the language barrier. Americans are close to the job market demands and can easily push themselves to an employment.

The job searches among the persons of developing countries such as Mexico is motivated by a combination of push and pull factors. The push process reflects to the current demand in life or work situations in terms of economic gains, status and job satisfaction while the pull process reflects the demand of the market in offering the jobs. The critical aspects of job search process include amount of information sought, nature of information sought and the source of information. It seems for Mexicans complying with these critical aspects is difficult which might

push them off the mainstream unlike Americans. Job applicants typically assign greater credibility to informal than to formal sources of job information (Rynes, 1991).

### **Low Trust Determinants at Workplace (Hispanic-American-Asian)**

Dealing with the concept of trust now appears to be significant in the environment of globalization in varied cultural settings to build relationships among the individuals and organizations. In view of this process the trust may be defined as the confidence among the people which rests in mutual goodwill (Ring and Van, 1992). Trust is a collective behavior which emerges over a period through the personality traits of individuals in a community. When trust is damaged community as a whole suffers in dealing with any matter- business, social or personal. However, in general trust is a situational feature. When trust is low in a cultural setting it affects the confidence of the people and so depletes their responsiveness to the given situation. If a businessman relies on trust and it is not reciprocated, he will suffer from substantial harm (Butler, 1991). Thus, the conditions under which trust seems most likely to be a factor in organizational behavior and any damage to it would not only affect the negotiations but may also up-root the interpersonal relations. Trust is not accorded at the outset and then tested. It is grounded in direct experience and fits with overall emphasis on relationship (Weiss and Stripp, 1998).

In the low trust cultures the interpersonal relationship remains obscure and business dealings are largely bureaucratized and tagged with evidences. Such negotiation approaches slow down the process of getting the work done and also may cause retrenchment from the business scenario over time. Thus, it is necessary to identify the right and responsive people who could be relied upon as well as qualify on organizational parameters to build future relationship continuum

(Bridgewater et al, 2004). In low trust culture countries the business negotiators try to measure the good intentions on the other side in terms of the motive of involvement in business, fairness in information sharing, refraining from any unethical behavior like foul play in pre-and post negotiation stages, respect the terms of negotiation and extending cooperation all through the business process. These indicators determine the trust level in the low profile countries (Mead, 1998). The trust is also measured by the previous experiences –antecedents and precedents. Trust is largely culture borne and so the degree of trust is a community or country bound issue. Russians respond to unknown persons with fear and suspicion but interact with strong loyalty to those outsiders with whom they are successful in developing personal relationship. But in particularistic culture, where one judges according to the particular nature, a trustworthy person may be one who respects the terms of relationship (Rajan and Graham, 1991).

However, judgment on personal relations or organizational negotiations can often be reduced to patterns and rules and truly inspired decisions seem to require an ability to see similar patterns across regions. Since trust is an opaque entity as it has built over subjectivity associated with the human nature than objective traits of the event, can easily cloud intuitive decision making (Hayashi, 2003). Hence it is necessary to run business in low trust regions with more objective determinants than leaning towards personal relations or biases over the people. The facts of information, endorsed commitments (contracts), pilot observation on the committed tasks, previous track records of the people getting associated in the business from the low trust regions, setting legal implication and the like may be appropriate strategy to conduct business with the people of low trust countries. However development of trust can best be carved by a balanced and coordinated set of activities designed to enhance both cognitive and behavioral aspects (Sharif, 2005). In low trust societies the family values are also found at the lower end which reflects in

the cognitive behavior of the people largely leading towards opportunism. Under such situations, it has been found that family businesses emerge as a solution in view of exercising controls to equalize low trust syndrome. The mutual interdependent relationships are perceived as difficult to sustain in the low trust cultural setting and so bureaucracy breeds under such societal situations. The bureaucracy is followed as a system to run business by the foreign entities as the family businesses are secured for the natives of the low trust societies. In traditional Korean societies the primary loyalty remains confined in the family. As in the case of China, Korean family structures appear to be more individualistic than Japan though the individualism therein largely reflects the competition among families. However, the labor relations tend to suffer with such a strategy- bureaucracy or controls imposed by the family business (Fukuyama, 1995).

In the low trust societies an in-depth understanding of the various dimensions is essential. The long held psychological perceptions are transformed in to social attitudes and the self perceptions begin at the micro level. Such perceptions are largely oppressed by the families towards the external entities. However, lack of inclination towards change and adaptations to externalities restricts the low trust societies to stay in the web of economic and cultural barriers (Rajagopal, 1995). One of the American firms –Granny’s Goodies which emerged as a family business run by the two brother, may be a good example of low trust organization. The owner of this company had very low trust on employees and had imposed very high control to cope up the low trust syndrome. This company has been reluctant in recruiting new people and to work in an informal environment and this attitude pushed back the growth of the company (Korman, 2000). Thus the best options to run business in the low trust societies may be to establish collaboration with foreign venture in phased manner for competitive advantage, nurture family business with

increased cross-cultural approaches or reducing the family control and gradually adapting to the change by introducing automation in business in a phased way.

### **Gender Sensitivity Issues at Workplace**

As workplace diversity has gained attention inside companies, it has taken on ever-growing dimensions. Among those dimensions is a relatively recent focus on religion - specifically, on how companies and employees are developing policies and practices that respect and accommodate employees' beliefs and practices in a fashion that does not undermine a company's ability to conduct business. The need for companies to address this issue has never been greater. The globalization of companies, shifting immigration patterns, the need to hire workers from more diverse backgrounds, and a renewed spiritual awakening among some segments of the population have combined to put religion on the front burner of many businesses. Some companies have recognized that there are benefits to policies and practices that support and encourage employees to participate in and express their religious convictions. There exists in every country a *culture screen*, which provides an overall screen that, through cognitive and affective influences, shapes the interpersonal and personal determinants that form the consumer behavior of its members. International marketing must be more multi-local than global and that differences in international markets are more critical than similarities. In other words, *one size fits all* will not succeed in most cases. Hence, marketing strategies must be shaped to fit every targeted culture (Rajagopal, 2006<sup>b</sup>).

Gender sensitivity has become one of the prime concerns in the developed countries to provide equal social and economic rights to the women. Over the period many developing countries have

also shown their commitment to enhance the role of governments in improving the gender equality. The international communities including political consortiums have made strong commitments for women's equality and empowerment at the world summits and global conferences of the 1990s. It has been argued strongly that women's empowerment is central to human development. Human development, as a process of enlarging people's choices, cannot occur when the choices of half of humanity are restricted (UNDP, 2002). Gender is an issue to be considered at all levels in any workplace environment as gender balance within the organization significantly influences the organizational culture and work efficiency. Gender imbalance may also be described as gender segregation in an organization where perhaps women work in distress due to minority. Many multinational companies like Unilever formalize organizational disciplines such as job ladders not only to create equal opportunities to in respect to gender, race and religion but also to solve the gender segregation issues (Perry et al, 1994). However beliefs about appropriate age or level of attractiveness may be meticulously examined by the companies while implementing the gender related policies towards improving the workplace environment. To help the gender sensitivity in the workplace the organizations may consider allowing women to re-enter the workforce without being marginalized for the rest of their lives. Strategies for building such connections include creating reduced-hour jobs, providing flexibility in the workday and in the arc of a career, removing the stigma of taking time off, refusing to burn bridges, offering outlets for altruism, and nurturing women's ambition (Huelete and Luce, 2005). However, Managers who pride themselves on giving employees what they request may be shortchanging women, simply because men ask for a lot more than women do. This may not only be expensive for companies but also cause gender abuse, and it requires management intervention (Babcock et al, 2003).

For success, a women may need a title that gives her immediate credibility in the culture in which she is living or and a support structure to perform in the given workplace. In corporate houses the bias against women managers is found as they may not be able to accept the work assignments at par with men. However when a women manager receives training and strong backing of the firm, she may be able to perform the given assignment. Hence it has been observed that the most difficult aspect in gender issue associated with the workplace is giving an assignment but not succeeding once given (Nathan at al, 1999). Though globally most of the organizations intend to revive their gender policies, a vast majority of managers and expatriates in multinational companies are still male (Rossman, 1990). The American cultural values still favor males, however, both sexes are treated similarly as American females consider themselves equal to males and societal values are changing in that direction. In the other parts of the world also there are gender issues as may be observed from Japanese, Middle-eastern, African and Asian societies which are largely male dominated (Fatehi, 1996). It has been thus proposed that the government, public and private sector organizations should be imparted with appropriate training on the gender issue to take corrective measures towards implementing the gender equality policy. Training in gender awareness to demystify the concept and to raise the level of gender-responsiveness has to be conducted across organizations (UNDP, 2002). This task can be shouldered either by the government, NGOs or corporate sector as a project of corporate social responsibility.

A study conducted with human resources professional from US Fortune 500 companies with business in Latin America undertaken during 2001-2003 on the basis for reporting on women's advancement programs in Latin America reveals that women's initiatives adapted on American standards are likely to suffer several shortcomings unless modified to accommodate several

common cultural attributes of Latin American work organizations (Maxfield, 2005). Perhaps to take corrective measures it is necessary to redefine the gender roles. According to Hofstede the countries which have highest masculinity index include Japan, Australia, Venezuela, Italy, Switzerland, Mexico, Ireland, United Kingdom, Germany and Philippines. Such cultural and perceptions divulgence also leads to gender abuse at work place and family. However, the cultural theory of risk assumes that individuals selectively credit and dismiss asserted dangers in a manner supportive of their preferred form of social organization (Kahan et al, 2005). On the contrary the highest feminine value countries are Nordic group of countries except Iceland, Netherlands, Chile, Portugal, Thailand, Peru and Spain. Although there are considerable cultural variations in gender-related behaviors, there is a growing concern about the gender equality amidst the developed and developing countries (Greets Hofstede, 1984).

## **Conclusion**

Corporate venturing can be an important source of technological innovation for corporations by providing a window on emerging technologies, market opportunities, new business models, and distribution channels,. However, effective implementation requires a clear view of the objectives, dedication to understanding the process, and discipline. The success in corporate venturing is associated with high levels of commitment, trust, group dynamics and skills in functional management of the venture. In the study the variables of economic and relational dimensions of external and internal fit have shown greater association with venture success. It has also been found that ventures opt for greater autonomy and less economic dependency on their parent ventures for leading success and this finding makes an intuitive sense. It was observed during the study that the parent-venture relationship does not differ between the high and low performers. It

appears from the analysis that though economic dependency on parent decreases with the ageing of the venture, managerial accountability increases in the organization. The level of economic change across the phases of venture maturity has not been significantly different between high and low performers. Mexican managers view authority balance as a positive contributor to alliance performance, while authority advantage to the benefit of the Mexican partner at the expense of the U.S. partner is viewed as having a negative impact on performance of the corporate ventures. The best ideas have languished in many corporations, either because of internal resistance or an inability to execute on the initial insight. This study is based on observations made by the previous contributors in the area of trust in corporate relationships; there still exists the need for more longitudinal research studies in the area of corporate venturing with focus on parent-venture, strategic fit between external and internal factors and analytical frameworks of venture performance indices in reference to the developing countries.

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