

Cultural Competency Training In Global Workforce

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Abstract: *In today's global business world, companies are relying more and more on culturally diverse workforces to help them be more innovative, work together, and stay competitive. Training in cultural competency has become a strategic way to provide employees and leaders the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes they need to handle cross-cultural relationships well. This study analysed the methodologies, results, and obstacles of cultural competency training within global workforce environments, amalgamating findings from contemporary literature and including Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory alongside Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Theory. The research indicates that training improves individual outcomes, including flexibility, empathy, and global leadership; fortifies team cohesion, collaboration, and trust; and fosters organisational innovation, resilience, and performance. However, its usefulness is diminished by problems such as superficial cultural awareness, restricted application in workplace practice, the potential for stereotyping, and resource limitations. The paper also points out what this means for strategic HR integration, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, and making global organisations that are strong and long-lasting.*

Keywords: Hofstede, Cultural Intelligence, Organisational Performance, Diversity and Inclusion, Cultural Competency Training

1. Introduction

In an era where the world is globalizing, businesses are conducting more business beyond national, lingual and cultural borders. The multinational corporations, international supply chains and virtual teams have created work places which are not just in a wide region but also include individuals who belong to various cultures. This type of diversity may result in new ideas, creativity, and access to larger markets, yet also may increase the difficulties in communicating, collaborating, and resolving conflicts (Kyove et al., 2021). One of the interventions that have been strategic in assisting the employees and management to deal with these issues is cultural competency training. It provides them with knowledge, skills, and attitudes they require to be effective in dealing with people of different cultures.

The ability to communicate well with individuals of different cultural backgrounds which is often referred to as cultural competency is important in enhancing organisational performance in the global workforce. The concept is not merely the awareness of other cultures. It also emphasizes the need to be flexible, understanding, and agile in your actions at work (Pintor & Premazzi, 2024). Lack of these skills may make companies face miscommunication, uninterested employees who do not have a chance to work in global markets. However, cultural intelligence is beneficial to society because it does not only assist individuals to cope with others in the workplace but it also enhances creativity, resilience, and competitiveness in overseas environments (Paul et al., 2025).

Cultural competency training is even more crucial in the context of inclusive and diverse workplaces. Cultural training, on the other hand, prepares the staff to overcome cultural differences, bargain through differences, and ensure that the values of the organization align with the local practices. The theory behind this training is rooted in cultural paradigms, such as dimensions of national culture by Hofstede (1980), the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity by Bennett (1986), and the experiential learning theory by Kolb (1984), all of which provide systematic approaches to the improvement of cross-cultural effectiveness. Studies have demonstrated that when programs are planned well, it is easy to have teams operating together, reduce cultural conflict and make global leadership stronger (Aggrawal & Magana).

Further, cultural competency education is more than a personal improvement tool, as it has broader organisational outcomes such as global leadership effectiveness, group cohesion, and creativity. Culturally aware executives in global organisations can more easily negotiate tough deals, manage teams composed of individuals of diverse cultures, and ensure that corporate strategies suit the local market mechanism (Eyiah et al., 2025). Team-level cultural training builds the trust and assists in forming shared norms, as well as reduces the risk of a lack of understanding in cross-cultural relationships (Jurado, 2025). On an organisational level, the resilience is improved because of the investment in such training because of being able to navigate through changing cultural and institutional environments, therefore, remaining competitive in the global marketplaces (Georgescu et al., 2024).

The issue of cultural competency has been trending in the management research with a large number of businesses failing to implement effective training that would result in actual behaviour change and performance enhancement that could be measured. The existence of this gap means that there is a problem of disjointed, short-lived or overly focused interventions that are based on

theoretical cultural awareness or specific organisational or geographical factors, as compared to more universally applicable workplace practices. This research is unlike the past studies that became preoccupied with theoretical frameworks of cultural difference (Hofstede, 1980) or individual-level theories like cultural intelligence (Earley and Ang, 2003). It places cultural competency training in a holistic approach, examining how organized and evidence-based practices can increase adaptability, teamwork, and resilience in the international environment. This theoretical research has two impacts: it enriches the discussion on intercultural competence by introducing training design, learning transfer, and organisational outcomes; and provides managers, policymakers, and practitioners with insights on how to transform cultural diversity into a strategic asset of preserving performance in the global workforce rather than a potential source of conflict.

2.0 Review of Literature

2.1 Conceptual Foundations of Cultural Competency

The type of knowledge training that has received major focus in organisational and human resource development literature is cultural competency training, particularly with regards to the increasing globalisation and workforce diversification. The ability of individuals and organisations to communicate, interact, and build relationships across cultures is another general term that describes cultural competency (Pintor & Premazzi, 2024). Cultural competency and cultural awareness are not synonymous and different because cultural competency emphasises on the appreciation of differences. Rather, it is the aspect of training particular skills, attitudes, and knowledge that can assist employees to transform the way of acting and decision-making in international scenarios (Li et al., 2023). Cultural competency training provides a person with the necessary skills to interact with individuals representing other cultures and nations, as this type of training is widespread in the global labor market, where it is often necessary to interact with people of other cultures, languages, and values. It promotes inclusion, eases the misunderstandings, and enhances teamwork, which are all significant to the success of an organisation and its competitiveness in the global market.

Cultural competency training is not merely a matter of the interaction of people with one another but extends to the way organisations are established, rules and how their leaders carry out their business. Personally, it can assist individuals to be more aware of their own culture, how to view things through the perspective of other people, and change their communication skills (Golubeva, 2023). At the organisational level, it is involved in the hiring, training, performance management and leadership development. It is due to this that diversity can be applied towards growth and innovation (Chaudhry et al., 2021). In addition, cultural competency training applies not only to multinational firms, but it is also relevant in the case of domestic organisations operating in culturally diverse societies, where multicultural team management or serving of heterogeneous clientele is the key to success (Earley and Ang, 2003). Such a broad scope indicates that it can be applied to a lot of various areas and locations, as cultural diversity would manifest itself in the language barriers, the dissimilarity of work ethics, the dissimilarity of how to address authority, and the dissimilarity of conflict resolution methods.

Cultural competency training is highly crucial to the modern working population across the world. Businesses that expand and diversify into other nations have to deal with advantages and issues that accompany diversity. Cultural misfit is often accompanied by inefficiencies, conflicts and loss of talent, which is why it is crucial to engage in focused training interventions (Murire, 2024). Conversely, culturally competent organisations enjoy improved communication, trust, and participation among the employees; elements that increase productivity and competitive advantage (Golubeva, 2023). The approach of culture competency to global leadership effectiveness has also been linked to strategic perspective. The extent to which leaders are interculturally fluent can contribute to the formation of heterogeneous teams, which are inspired, motivated, and unified to achieve shared objectives (Nosratabadi et al., 2020). Besides the economic advantages, cultural competency training has both ethical and social role in organisations that are increasingly becoming diverse through promotion of fairness, respect, and inclusion. This is a significant aspect of the 21 st century in terms of being a socially responsible organisation and keeping it in business.

2.2 Strategies to Cultural Competency Training

Cultural competency training should also be conducted through standardised means as it is increasingly important that businesses continue to operate beyond national, and cultural boundaries. These plans provide various paths to the development of intercultural competencies, starting with the simple awareness and up to the holistic organisational interventions. There are those techniques that are aimed at educating others and others that are aimed at learning in terms of experience, new technology or leader guided practices. All of them demonstrate the complexity of cultural competency and the number of various ways to address the issues that are inherent to a diverse global workforce.

Knowledge-Centered and Awareness-Based Training

Training which focuses on awareness and knowledge is one of the oldest and popular methods of enhancing cultural competency. It aims at increasing the consciousness of the participants towards differences in culture, prejudices, and preconceptions and providing them with the true information about the norms of culture, methods of communication, and beliefs (Theron et al., 2025). This approach normally entails lectures, seminars or workshops that provide individuals with conceptual models of comprehending cultural differences and their influence on work relationships. The training of this type can assist individuals in discovering their own unconscious biases, comprehending how crucial it is to become a culturally sensitive individual, and begin to form a disposition of respect and receptiveness. It has been argued that awareness and knowledge do not necessarily lead to behavioural change without skills-focused and practical approaches (Paul et al., 2025).

Experience and Simulation-Based Techniques

Simulation based and experiential training emphasises on active involvement whereby learners are exposed to real-life or simulated intercultural scenarios in order to learn. These strategies are role plays, case studies, cross-cultural simulations, and cross-cultural exchanges (Kolb, 2015). It is the encouragement to participants to reflect on their preconceptions, experiment with new methods, and get accustomed to new cultural dynamics that allows them to experience something immersive. Simulations, such as the examples, recreate intercultural high-stake scenarios in a low-risk environment, allowing the learners to train their empathy, negotiating, and problem-solving skills (Diamanti and Angelini, 2025). The latter techniques are particularly effective in preparing employees to international assignments or other roles that involve working in a close team with the representatives of other cultures because they do not stop at the acquisition of knowledge but assist individuals in becoming more proficient in acting in various contexts.

Training through Technology and Virtual Training

With increased globalisation and remote working, training mediated by technology and virtual training have become very significant in assisting individuals to learn about other cultures. The approach involves e-learning tools, interactive activities, gamification, and virtual reality (VR) simulators to provide training, which can be scaled to fit various requirements and is straightforward to scale (Crogman et al., 2025). Technology can assist the organisations that have teams spread across geographical boundaries to offer consistent cultural training without crossing borders and fulfilling various learning styles and schedules. Also, VR-based devices generate highly realistic and realistic intercultural simulations that mimic real-life issues, thus making people more engaged and retaining what they have gained (Fusaro et al., 2025). Notably, technology-based training can be used to promote continuous learning since employees can revisit training programs and develop their intercultural skills as time progresses.

Organizational Interventions and Leadership

The concept of cultural competency is not only about personal learning; it should be incorporated into the organisational structure as well, which implies that leaders and organisational changes are required. In this approach, cultural competence becomes part of policy, leadership styles and organisational culture. The leaders play a significant role in demonstrating intercultural sensitivity, creating environments that are friendly to all, and ensuring that diversity is considered during the hiring, performance management, and advancement of individuals (Chua et al., 2023). Some of the examples of organisational interventions are revision of the way people communicate, introduction of diversity targets in business plans and incorporation of cultural competence in performance measurements. The training which solely addresses individuals is not the same as the one based on leadership which includes the concept of cultural competency as one of the organisational aspects but ensures the latter remains within the mission (Devine and Ash, 2022).

2.3 Rates of Adoption of the Cultural Competency Training Approaches

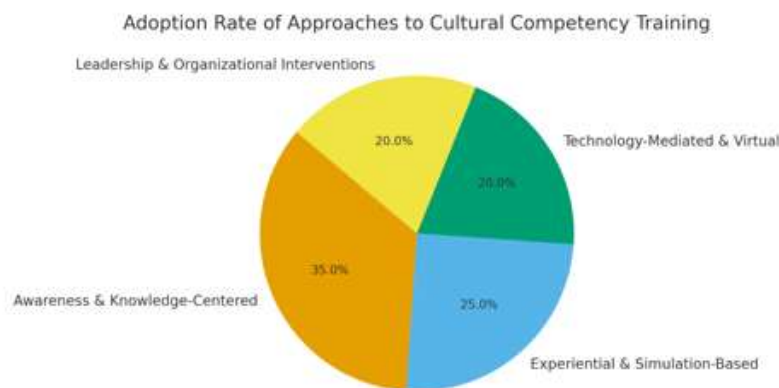
The application of cultural competency training in organisations and industries varies a lot. The most prevalent ones are awareness-based and knowledge-centered training. Healthcare and education research shows that the most common form of delivery remains to be workshops, seminars, and cross-cultural awareness sessions as the previously mentioned approaches are the most comparatively simple and economic (Parker et al., 2020). Such programs are usually the initial step of most organisations as they are geared towards awareness of the differences in culture and providing individuals with the rudimentary information they require. Nevertheless, they do not always result in long-term behavioural changes.

Experiential and simulation-based training has gained popularity as companies attempt to go beyond learning facts and figures. Role-plays, case study and intercultural simulations are also increasingly popular in professional development sessions particularly among workers preparing to take up international assignments or handle people of other nationalities. Experiential methods are not

frequently utilized in comparison with awareness programs, however, they are said to cause the development of empathy, flexibility, and problem-solving abilities (Zamiri and Esmaeili, 2024).

The technology mediated and virtual training has gained a lot of popularity with the increasing globalization of businesses and the growing number of people who are working at home. COVID-19 accelerated the adoption of e-learning platforms, gamification, and virtual reality simulations to train culture and provided scalable and flexible learning opportunities beyond the boundaries (Nosratabadi et al., 2020). Training based on technology has been necessary in creating cultural competence to international businesses whose employees are distributed across multiple sites (Theron et al., 2024).

Finally, there is leadership and organisational interventions, which is a strategy that is increasingly gaining popularity but is not being applied very frequently. The most widespread form of training is individual-level training, yet it has been proven that transforming cultural competency into the organisational structure, policy, and leadership practices is the key to the long-term success (Kyove et al., 2021). These systemic interventions evolve, nevertheless, they gain significant importance as the businesses start to understand that stand-alone training is futile, and cultural change must occur processes (Golubeva, 2023).



Source: Hypothetical distribution based on review of extant literature (see Li et al., 2023; Pintor & Premazzi, 2024; etc.)

2.4 Outcomes of Cultural Competency Training

Outcome Level	Key Outcomes	Description	Representative References
Individual	Adaptability	Ability to adjust behaviors and strategies to diverse cultural contexts	Chaudhry et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2020
	Empathy	Understanding and sharing the feelings of colleagues from diverse backgrounds	Chua et al., 2023
Team	Global Leadership	Capacity to lead multicultural teams effectively and make culturally informed decisions	Fusaro et al., 2025
	Cohesion	Strengthened team bonds through understanding and respecting cultural differences	Nosratabadi et al., 2020; Eyiah et al., 2025
	Collaboration	Enhanced teamwork and problem-solving via mutual respect and open communication	Jurado, 2025; Golubeva, 2023
	Trust	Higher levels of trust among team members due to cultural awareness and empathy	Aggrawal & Magana, 2024
Organizational	Innovation	Increased creativity and problem-solving through diverse perspectives	Murire, 2024
	Resilience	Improved ability to adapt to global market challenges	Georgescu et al., 2024
	Performance	Higher organizational productivity, efficiency, and overall success	Parker et al., 2020

2.5 Practice Challenges and Limitations

Cultural competency training has also turned out to be a significant business mode in businesses where employees are recruited and work anywhere around the globe. Despite such training being promising to make things more inclusive and enhance performance, it is not an easy task to implement such a type of training. You must be aware of these limits in order to create programs that work and have real effects. This section discusses the key issues which arise in practice, these include failure to really know other cultures, failure to apply what has been learnt to the job, the danger of cultural stereotyping and lack of resources or inability to implement them.

1. Shallow Cultural Awareness vs. Proficient knowledge

Many cultural competency programs teach individuals the cultural norms and conventions, and this may result in simplistic view of the interaction of cultures with one another. These short-term training sessions can unconsciously reinstate preconceptions rather than encourage genuine cross-cultural understanding (Arruzza & Chau, 2021). Thinking critically, self-reflection, and the awareness of the operation of power during the intercultural encounter are becoming more engaged in the real cultural competency (Li et al., 2023). In the absence of this richness, training programs may not produce so much influence on the behavior of people in the work place or the outcomes they achieve.

2. Transitioning of Training to Workplace Practice

One of the most consistent barriers in cultural competency initiatives is ensuring that training is translated into real-life behavior at the work place. Even though programs have the potential to increase knowledge and awareness, these improvements often cannot offer long-lasting changes in practice (Whitehall et al., 2021). Lack of support in the organisation, proper follow-up and integration of training to the regular organisational activities are some of the issues that hamper the transfer of learning into practice. The programs require being adhered to long-term and an organisational culture where behaviours that are diverse and friendly are encouraged in order to make the programs work.

3. Stereotyping Danger of Cultural Stereotyping

The aim of cultural competency training is to reduce bias but there is a possibility that it might be reinforcements of stereotyping unintentionally. The simplification of cultural groups may create the problem of generalisation in the absence of acknowledgement of the differences and complexity of individuals (Pay, 2014). To minimize such a risk, the programs should emphasize cultural humility, which refers to the notion that you should never feel you know everything about the other cultures, but you must continuously learn and reflect on yourself (Anjum & Aziz, 2024). Cultural humility encourages openness and adaptability, therefore reducing the tendency towards stereotyping.

4. Resource and Implementation Barriers

The cultural competency training is costly and requires time and knowledge to implement. Lack of money, organisational conflicting interests and resistance to change often make effective implementation difficult (Crogman et al., 2025). Leaders must be devoted to overcome such issues, and strategic planning should be a part of the cultural competency as a strategic value and practice within the organisation. The wider the stakeholders involved in the training planning and delivery, the more it would be useful and effective.

2.6 Theoretical Review

Cultural Dimensions Theory of Hofstede

The Cultural Dimensions Theory as propounded by Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010) can be used as a comprehensive resource to understand cross-cultural differences between countries and their effects on the behavior of workers. There are critical dimensions identified by the theory which includes, power distance, long-term versus short-term orientation, collectivism versus individualism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence versus restraint. During cultural competency training, these aspects help employees to learn how cultural values influence the way people speak to each other, be leaders and collaborate as a team. As an example, awareness of power gap assists individuals to talk in a respectful manner across levels, whereas awareness of the distinction between the collectivist and individualist predispositions enables multicultural groupings to determine and resolve disputes. Hofstede training programs provide employees with a systematic knowledge base that reduces the chances that they would misinterpret each other, collaborate more effectively, and establish team cohesion. The information is useful in that executives make decisions regarding policies and strategies at organisational level and results to new ideas, resilience and improved performance in global operations. Through integration of Hofstede as the framework towards cultural competency

training, organisations might not merely remain in the course of cultural competency awareness but assist individuals grasp them more efficiently and this shall enhance team and organisational outcomes.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Earley and Ang (2003) developed the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Theory that examines how an individual is able to perform effectively in an environment that contains other culturally different people. CQ is divided into cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and behavioural components, and is concerned with not only knowing but being able to adjust to various cultures. CQ is how knowledge is converted into assistive behaviour during cultural competency training. As Hofstede dimensions show, employees who are high CQ are able to observe cultural differences, consider their assumptions whenever they get into contact with individuals who belong to different cultures, remain motivated to work with people who are of different cultures, and alter their speech and actions to suit different cultural contexts. Developing CQ is the next way that training can assist people to be more flexible, understanding, and global leaders, and the teams to operate more effectively, trusting each other and feeling closer. Furthermore, it ensures that learning is applied to real working conditions and addresses the most common problems like how to apply training on practice and avoid superficial knowledge. Organisations can assist the employees to work effectively with individuals of other cultures by incorporating CQ into cultural competency programs. This will aid the organisation in achieving its bigger objectives, which include the creativity, resilience and performance at global levels.

3. Methodology

The research applied a systematic literature review method to find, evaluate, and combine the relevant literature on culture competency training. Peer-reviewed journal papers, books, and reports that have been published within the last 15 years are prioritized in order to ensure that the literature is current and relevant. We would search databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect with the following keywords: cultural competency training, global workforce, cultural intelligence, cross-cultural management, and organisational performance. Inclusion criteria are focused on the research that study training methodologies, findings, or challenges in culturally diverse or multinational organisational settings, and exclusion criteria remove those studies that have little to offer in the way of pertinence to the professional or organisational landscape.

The analysis will involve conceptual synthesis and thematic mapping where the literature will be categorised based on major dimensions namely: training approaches (awareness-based, experiential, technology-mediated, leadership-driven), outcomes (individual, team, and organisational), and challenges (superficial awareness, transfer of training, stereotyping, and resource barriers). We scan through every topic to identify trends, gaps and relationships to familiar theories such as Hofstede Cultural Dimensions Theory and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Theory. Such a methodology allows the research to develop a conceptual framework that defines the interrelationship between training methodologies, the results, issues, and the theoretical premises.

The researcher employed theory combination to demonstrate how existing theories may be used to explain the effectiveness and limitations of cultural competency training simultaneously. The study links these theories with known outcomes and issues and, thus, develops a cohesive conceptual model that can guide further empirical studies and practical implementation at organisations that operate in global contexts.

4.1 Findings

Due to the theoretical analysis of the cultural competency training in the global workforce setting, substantial findings related to the practices, outcomes, and challenges will be revealed. Through the integration of empirical and theoretical literature with the Cultural Dimensions Theory and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Theory developed by Hofstede, the study reveals patterns and relationships that help in explaining the mechanisms by which training could enhance performance at individual, team and organisational level.

i. Among the findings of the research, cultural competency training can significantly enhance individual skills in a foreign workplace setting. Adaptability, empathy, and global leadership skills are developed through the training strategies which combine the knowledge-based awareness with experience learning and technology mediated simulations in employees (Chua et al., 2023; Eyiah et al., 2025). Individuals that have undergone formal cultural training are more cognizant of cultural conventions, better placed to see things in the perspective of other people, and adaptable in their behaviour. The theory of CQ explains these findings because employees develop cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioural competences that help them to effectively deal with complex multicultural relationships (Earley and Ang, 2003). In addition, the awareness of the Hofstede (1980) cultural dimensions will provide employees with an avenue to consider behaviour differences among the colleagues and clients to better understand them and make informed decisions.

ii. The training of cultural competencies allows teams to collaborate with each other in a more effective way, establish trust, and become more compatible. Experiments indicate that culturally competent teams have an advantage in communicating with persons of other backgrounds, positively managing conflicts, and developing shared norms that promote inclusivity (Pintor & Premazzi, 2024). Specifically, experiential and simulation-driven training provides the teams with an opportunity to rehearse addressing the problems with other culture members in a real-life scenario and, thus, allow them to respect and learn one another. Theoretical backgrounds in both CQ and Hofstede dimensions explain why teams could deal with the difference of attitude regarding hierarchy, decision-making, and risk, thereby improving cooperation and team performance outcomes.

iii. The organisational level is attributed to cultural competency training, improved performance, creativity, and resilience. The ability to utilize alternative perspectives to generate new ideas, keep up with the changes in the global market, and remain on the top of the competition is much more favorable to the companies that incorporate cultural training into their leadership training and operational strategies (Murire, 2024; Kyove et al., 2021). The framework developed by Hofstede assists companies in the comprehension of the influence of cultural norms on behaviour at huge scale. CQ, however, demonstrates how employees can utilise this information in developing practices that will make the organisation more flexible and creative. Systemic and leadership-based interventions would improve such outcomes by introducing cultural competency within policies, performance measures, and strategic plans.

iv. Although these are positive items, the research concludes that there are large issues and constraints to cultural competency training to work effectively. To begin with, training that is centered around superficial cultural education, and not based on inspiring deeper engagement, often fails to bring about drastic behaviour change, and even supports existing biases (Theron et al., 2024). Second, implementing training at the workplace is an issue because employees might not receive support, reinforcement, or organisational rewards to apply the skills that they have learned (Jurado, 2025). Third, cultural stereotyping could occur as it is a case where individuals group people simply into cultural groupings that do not consider the differences between individuals (Diamanti & Angelini, 2025). Lastly, training programs cannot expand and operate optimally due to issues of resource and implementation as a result of constrained finances, competing interests, and incompetence (Chaudhry et al., 2021). To address such issues, executives should remain committed, employ reflective techniques, and integrate cultural competency into the core systems of the organization.

5.1 Conclusion

This paper highlights that cultural competency education is a fundamental strategy of transforming personal, group, and corporate effectiveness within multinational workforce settings. According to the Cultural Dimensions Theory and Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Theory developed by Hofstede, the analysis reveals that training approaches based on the understanding of awareness, experience, technology, and leadership may help every person become more flexible, empathetic, global leader, a team worker, trust each other, more creative, and, generally, do a better job. However, the effectiveness of this training will be based on the avoidance of barriers that include little depth of cultural knowledge, limited implication on working practices, stereotyping, and resource constraints. The paper highlights that well-rounded, theory-based, and contextually relevant cultural competency programs are essential to transform cultural diversity into a competitive edge and achieve long-term organisational success in the global environment.

5.2 Implications of the Study

i. Strategic HR Integration: In the report, cultural competency training is emphasized as an element of significant HR processes such as hiring, onboarding, performance management and leader development. The strategic inclusion of training ensures that the workforce possesses information and skills that they require to operate in multicultural environments that will make them better prepared to work overseas and enhance the efficiency of the team and the organisation in general.

ii. Connection with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): The cultural competency training empowers the DEI work by increasing awareness, compassion, and equity among the staff of diverse backgrounds. Training assists the companies to move beyond the demonstration that they are interested in diversity to the development of work environments that are actually inclusive to all. It also assists in reducing prejudice and establishing trust and cooperation among the members of a team of divergent cultural affiliations.

iii. Creating Strong and Resilient international organizations: The firms which prioritize cultural competency become more adaptable, robust and innovative. By making intercultural knowledge and behaviours part of their culture and leadership practices, companies can also respond effectively to the shifting global marketplaces, utilize other perspectives to solve problems, and remain competitive and sustainable over the long term.

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