CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIORS OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES IN THE LATIN AMERICAN WORKPLACE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The level of direct investment abroad by United States corporations has increased during the past 15 years. International commerce is vital to the United States. Today, 80% of the United States economy faces international competition. The growing interdependence of economies has created a demand for U.S. business professionals sophisticated in international business and skilled in working with people from other cultures (Adler, Doktor and Redding, 1986). Every year tens of thousands of business people venture abroad on international assignments. Some of them stay for a few days, while others stay for a longer period of time ranging from weeks to years. All seek to accomplish some task or mission of importance to the organizations they represent (Bird and Dunbar, 1991).

Along with this growth has come an increasing need for U.S. business professionals who can operate effectively in foreign cultures. When placed in these new cultures, however, many U.S. business professionals lack the appropriate skills to function effectively. According to McEnery and Desharnais (1990), U.S. business professionals often lack the appropriate background knowledge or cross cultural experience to function effectively in the new environment. This deficiency may be partly rooted in the idea that top executives do not believe that cross cultural training is necessary or effective.

Despite the arguments for the use of cross cultural training, its use in business organizations in the United States is not very widespread. Studies have found that only 30 percent of business professionals who are sent on expatriate assignments receive cross cultural training before their departure (Black and Mendenhall, 1990). Various reasons have been cited by business organizations for the low level of utilization cross cultural training. The most prevalent of these is that such training is not thought to be effective (Black and Mendenhall, 1990). Top executives sees no need for the training and is unwilling to support it, financially or otherwise. Essentially, U.S. top executives believe that a good U.S. business professional in New York will be effective in Tokyo. This is illustrated not only by the absence of training provided but also by the use of the domestic track record as the primary criterion for selecting candidates for overseas assignments. Such a culturally insensitive perspective may be a reason for many faulty international human resource practices and the high expatriate failure rates (Black and Mendenhall, 1990).

Estimates of the number of international assignments ending in failure range from 25 to 50 percent. Moreover, estimates of failed assignments do not include instances in which the assignment was completed but at a minimally acceptable level of performance. It has been estimated that an additional 30 to 50 percent of U.S. business professionals continue in their international assignments but are regarded as either marginally effective or ineffective by their organizations (Bird and Dunbar, 1991). According to evidence accumulated over the past 20 years, only approximately one in three business professionals sent overseas gets the job done the way headquarters wanted it done. And, despite all the talk about globalization, there is no clear indication that the situation is improving much (Bird and Dunbar, 1991).

Many studies have also found that negotiations between businessmen of different cultures often fail because of problems related to cross-cultural differences. The cost of these failed cross cultural interactions and failed expatriate assignments is high (Dowling and Schuler, 1990). Specifically, according to Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991), the average cost of an individual failure ranges from $40,000 to $250,000. And these figures do not represent the intangible costs like the good will or business opportunities irretrievably lost to the firm, nor do they consider the personal, psychological, and financial costs to individual employees and their families.

During recent years top executives have begun to recognize that technical competence is a necessary but not sufficient condition for successful performance in international job positions. Cross cultural interpersonal skills, sensitivity to foreign norms and values, the understanding of differences in labor practices and customer relations, and ease of adaptation to unfamiliar environments are just a few of the managerial characteristics most multinational firms should be considering in order to design and select cross-cultural training programs (Dowling and Schuler, 1990). One fortunate result of expatriate failure has been the research which has begun to be conducted about training methods which effectively facilitate learning, enhance understanding, develop behavioral skills, and create positive relations.

Recent research in cross cultural management has investigated the behaviors of people interacting within and between organizations around the world. It describes and compares organizational behavior across cultures and, perhaps most important for managers, seeks to understand and improve the effectiveness of personal interaction with colleagues from other cultures. Cross cultural management expands domestic management knowledge and practice to encompass international, global and multicultural spheres (Earley, 1987).

On the other hand, studies in cross cultural training have focused upon training methods that seek to impart factual information about the foreign culture and provide appropriate behavioral skills. The training methods incorporate various types of approaches which range from cognitive to experiential (Earley, 1987).

This study responds to the need for creating a sense of cross cultural understanding and awareness with respect to the qualities of effective colleagues, workplace meetings, conflicts and solutions in the workplace and some of the inappropriate behaviors in the workplace in Latin American countries. This study is directed to U.S. business professionals who need to go to Latin American countries in order to work or conduct business.

The results of this study are expected to have not only a conceptual significance but also a practical one, in the sense of providing feedback helpful for the design and conduct of more effective cross cultural training programs.

Statement of the Problem

The problem which has led to this study is that many U.S. business professionals have been perceived to demonstrate inappropriate behaviors in international settings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics and behaviors of effective professional colleagues in the workplace in Latin America.

The study describes the qualities of effective colleagues, the characteristics of workplace meetings, the causes of and solutions for workplace conflict, and some of inappropriate behaviors in the workplace, according to 15 professionals from seven Latin American countries. Savich (1988) stated that U.S. business professionals who go abroad need more than professional qualifications in order to succeed. They should also have an ability to perform effectively in unfamiliar surroundings and to adapt easily to new environments. In order to lower the incidence of failure and raise the probability of success, they have to make certain adjustments that range from personal to professional levels. These adjustments result in part from cross cultural understanding.

Cross cultural understanding, according to Grove (1990), provides an awareness of the assumptions, values, ways of thinking and patterns of behavior that underlie the daily life and work of people in each region and locality of the world. In other words, a cross cultural understanding helps one to appreciate the differences between the values and behaviors of the expatriates and those of the local nationals.

Significance of the Study

Recent trends suggest that there is a growing number of people who must interact with others of different cultural backgrounds. "American business is now global business" (Staff, 1985, p.77). This brings cross cultural training to the forefront of business interactions. Therefore, it is important that U.S. business professionals understand the need for cross cultural awareness and its potential positive effect upon their growth. Cross cultural training deals with problems that have become central to today's world, like living and growing with others from various cultural backgrounds.

Cultural understanding provided through cross cultural training helps to break down the walls of ethnocentrism. Horan describes ethnocentrism as "any culture's view of other people using their own group customs as a standard by which to judge all people" (Horan, 1976, p.27). When cross cultural training is addressed, it must be realized that most people are ethnocentric. "The history of the world is replete with examples of authors that have seen themselves as the centers of the world and outsiders as not quite human" (Triandis, 1983, p. ix). Once the walls of ethnocentrism begin to crumble, people can appreciate the knowledge and values of other cultures. This is the purpose of cross cultural training.

Cross cultural training prepares students for exchanges with other countries, travelers for sojourning, and business professionals for overseas assignments. An important principle of cross cultural training is to become aware of the underlying value structures that form other cultures (Staff, 1985). If people are not aware of varying value structures, then communication can break down. Actions, words and non verbal body language are open to misinterpretation and mixed messages. To control these problems, cross cultural training can assist individuals in understanding other cultures.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were the following.

1. What are the qualities of the business professional

which contribute to collegial relationships in the Latin American workplace?

2. What are the characteristics of workplace meetings in Latin America?

3. What are the causes of and solutions for workplace conflict in Latin America?

4. What behaviors are inappropriate in the Latin American workplace?

Assumptions of the Study

1. Inappropriate behaviors lead to reduced effectiveness for U.S. business professionals working abroad.

2. Inappropriate responses to workplace conflicts lead to reduced effectiveness for U.S. business professionals working abroad.

3. The participants in this study gave accurate and truthful perceptions regarding the characteristics and behaviors necessary for professional colleagues to perform work successfully in Latin American countries.

4. The interview schedule used to gather the data did not contribute to bias in the responses of participants.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was restricted to Latin American graduate students at Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma City University and the University of Oklahoma.

2. The study was restricted to Latin American graduate

students who had had professional work experience in their own countries and who had been in the United States for more than one year.

3. The population for the study was relatively small, and only one female was identified for this investigation.

4. An effort was made to identify as many people as possible in central Oklahoma who qualified for this study. However, thorough records which accurately identify Latin American graduate students did not exist.

5. Semistructured interview was the only method used to collect the information.

Definition of Terms

Consultants: "Professional men or women, or groups of such individuals, who -for a fee- lend their services, expertise, experience, objectivity, and skills to client companies to help analyze management problems, recommend solutions, and if needed, help implement their findings and suggestions. Their methods generally involve moving in with the client company, almost on an on-staff basis, to observe, question, analyze, and make conclusions" (Bittel, 1978, p.208).

Cross culture: Dealing with, or offering a comparison between, two or more cultures (Miller, 1979).

Culture: "Everything that people have, think, and do as members of their society" (Ferraro, 1990 p.18). According to Ferraro (1990), the verbs 'have', 'think', and 'do' help to identify the three major structural components of the concept of culture. That is, in order for a person to have something, some material object has to be present. When people think, ideas, values, attitudes and beliefs are present. When people do, they behave in certain socially prescribed ways. Thus, culture is made up of 1) material objects; 2) ideas, values, and attitudes; and 3) normative or expected patterns of behavior.

Latin America: Mainland Hispanic America, from Mexico to Chile.

Manager: A person who plans, organizes, directs, controls, or supervises any organizational or business project or activity with responsibility for results (Sharplin, 1985).

Professional: A person who follows career occupations after earning at least a bachelor's degree. Business professionals who work internationally may be managers, trainers or internal or external consultants. In all cases, their effectiveness depends in part upon their abilities to function in collaborative ways as professional colleagues of those with whom they are working.

This study was divided into five chapters. Chapter Two consists of a literature review related to various cross cultural issues. Chapter Three presents the research design in terms of sample, instrument, procedure and analysis of data. Chapter Four provides the research results. Chapter Five presents a discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The internationalization of business and the emergence of multinational corporations have been growing trends in recent years. Direct investment abroad by the United States makes it the largest parent of multinational corporations (Robock, 1984). From 1966 to 1980, the level of investment abroad increased more than 400 percent from $50 billion to more than $220 billion (Survey of Current Business, August 1986). Many major U.S. multinational corporations, such as IBM, Coca-Cola, Ford, and Exxon have placed at least 25 percent of their net assets in foreign operations (Megginson et al., 1987). Competition has escalated.

In many industries, the performance of a few U.S. business professionals abroad can make or break the organization. Having the right people in the right places at the right times could be the key to a company's success in the international arena (McEnery and DesHarnais, 1990). Given the magnitude of such multinational operations, the need for U.S. business professionals who can operate effectively within a different culture and for training procedures which can ensure better performance abroad is increasing steadily (Grove, 1990). OK

U.S. business professionals are sent to foreign cultures in order to supervise operations for their parent organizations. When moving to a new country, U.S. business professionals must give up or alter some behaviors that were appropriate to their previous roles. Work responsibilities differ and reporting relationships change, as do the expectations of a new set of superiors, subordinates, and colleagues.

However, the tendency is to evaluate and make sense of the new role using an understanding of the old one. Memories of the old one frequently serve as an anchor, providing an apparent source of stability to a new situation, but also inhibiting adjustments to new behavioral and sense making modes. Reliance upon old role experiences may be useful when the new role does not differ much from the old one, but the new role generally differs unexpectedly.

Roles are likely to change in dramatic and significant ways (Bird and Dunbar, 1991). As a result of ignorance about changes in roles, problems arise from differences between U.S. business professionals and foreigners in educational backgrounds, cultures, values, leadership patterns, and concepts of business administration (Davis OK and Rasool, 1988).

Such differences require greater understanding and cultural empathy. Fortunately, since the 1970's cross cultural training programs have been developed using a range of approaches to address the variations in culture, job, and person.

Cross Cultural Training

Cross cultural training refers to short-term programs designed to prepare people to live and work in a culture other than their own (Brislin, 1979). Generally, the goals of these programs are to encourage participants to learn about another culture in order to live and work effectively, with minimal loss in efficiency, once they actually encounter the other culture (Foxman and Polsky, 1989). Specifically, according to Brislin et al (1990), successful adjustment should be seen in relation to good personal adjustment, interpersonal relations with hosts and task effectiveness.

Adjusting to a new culture involves the gradual development of familiarity, comfort, and proficiency regarding expected behavior and the values and assumptions inherent in the new culture, all of which are different from the individual's native culture (Black and Mendenhall, 1990).

Some of the problems encountered by U.S. business professionals abroad include difficulties in coping with the rules of the host culture, adjusting to the new climate and geography, being outside the mainstream of society, and experiencing culture shock (Brislin and Pedersen, 1976). Furthermore, if U.S. business professionals have to work with local nationals, they need the appropriate educational or technological background which allows them to deal with local attitudes, accept new ideas about what constitutes good management, and resist following traditional procedures used by the home office (Brislin and Pedersen, 1976).

Although American corporations recognize the importance of providing cross cultural training programs to employees who are sent abroad, the use of these training programs has been less extensive in corporate settings than in other types of cross cultural situations (Brislin, 1979). Because of sheer numbers, the cultural adjustments of foreign students have been the focus of much of the research in the area. Also, the military and Peace Corps have received attention because of the number of personnel they place in foreign locations and their funding capabilities. The more limited focus on corporate settings is surprising, given the several hundred thousand corporate employees living and working abroad (Brislin and Pedersen, 1976), the potential problems of adjustment and interaction they encounter, and the funding capabilities of their employers.

Wexley (1984) suggests that the lack of cross cultural training may partially account for the previously stated problems and the high rate of failure (approximately 30%) among Americans abroad. Tung (1981) surveyed 105 U.S. companies operating abroad and found that only 32% had formal training programs of some type to prepare employees for working abroad. The remaining 68% reported having no training programs at all. According to Tung (1981), one of the main reasons companies gave for not having training programs was that they doubted the effectiveness of such programs. So, although there is clearly a need for cross cultural training that prepares the growing number of managers for assignments abroad, it appears that even existing programs have not been well received.

Training Approaches

Of the approaches used to prepare managers for work abroad, very few have been empirically tested to determine their effectiveness (Barrett and Bass, 1976). A recent review of personnel training (Wexley, 1984), found that the few research studies that do exist were conducted in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Some of the cross cultural training approaches can be roughly divided into three groups emphasizing cognitive factors, behavioral factors and affective factors respectively (Albert, 1983).

Cognitive approaches emphasize facts about the host country and information about what commonly happens to sojourners, persons temporarily visiting or living in another country. Typical methods include lectures, group discussions, presentation of written materials, and question-answer sessions with "old-hand" sojourners who have been in the host country for several years (Brislin et al., 1983). In general, cognitive approaches focus on providing factual information about other cultures. Programs of this type are the most common of the three (Brislin, 1983).

Behavioral approaches aim to teach persons how to behave in ways that are appropriate in another culture (Albert, 1983). Programs of this type look at the role of rewards and punishment in a sojourner's life. Typical methods involve asking sojourners to visualize what is rewarding and what is punishing for them in their own culture. They would be asked to learn about the host culture in terms of obtaining the rewards and avoiding the punishment (Brislin et al., 1983).

Affective approaches focus on teaching people about another culture by influencing their feelings (Albert, 1983) in addition to their cognitions (Brislin, 1979). An example of this approach is experiential learning in which trainees learn what it is like to be a member of another culture. Administering such experiences, however, usually involves considerable planning, preparation, time and money (Hall et al., 1982).

Other common cross cultural training approaches offered to sojourners are experiential approaches that put an emphasis on activities in which trainees participate. Typical methods include role playing potentially problematic situations, such as negotiations between a boss from one culture and a subordinate from another. Simulations of other cultures have been designed in which trainees live for up to two weeks. Field trips into other cultures are also frequently found in experiential training (Brislin et al., 1983).

Cultural self-awareness approaches focus on trainees learning about the importance of culture by examining common experiences people have in their own countries. Typical methods include group discussion in which Americans might discuss the roots of the value placed on individualism, and Asians might discuss the value placed on collectivity. These discussions often stimulate an expansion of people's thinking, as when Americans bring up examples where the collective good is paramount, and when Asians discuss those aspects of their culture where a premium is placed on individuality (Brislin et al., 1983).

Attribution approaches emphasize trainees learning about how people make judgments concerning the causes of behavior. The assumption behind this kind of approach is that much misunderstanding stems from differing perceptions, or attributions, of the same event (Brislin et al., 1983)

There is no one ideal type of approach. Most good orientation programs will use more than one of the approaches mentioned above. Some current cross cultural training approaches focus primarily on cognitive and affective factors by increasing trainee awareness of cultural differences rather than emphasizing behavioral factors by developing managerial skills in dealing with foreign employees.

Training Programs

Another frequently used training program (excluding language training) in preparing individuals for foreign assignments is purely cognitive and known as an area studies program (Tung, 1981). This approach includes environmental briefing and cultural orientation programs designed to provide the trainee with factual information about a particular country.

Another program to cross cultural management training is the case study. Bass (1976), developed it using situations dealing with such things as individual and group perceptions of company objectives, salary administration behavior, planning, risk taking, personal goals, and inter group relationships. Basically, this program was designed so that managers can make an individual diagnosis of a managerial problem and then meet with other managers to arrive at a group decision (Wexley and Latham, 1981). These programs have been conducted in over 40 countries, thus providing a data bank for prospective cross cultural managers to individually compare their attitudes, values and behaviors with managers from other cultures (Barrett and Bass, 1976).

An additional cross cultural program, developed in Great Britain, is a two week program which combines a group of multicultural participants, an international group of trainers, and multinational training materials (Wexley and Latham, 1981). This experiential learning program is designed to create an actual cross cultural situation in which culturally different participants meet and discuss actual organizational cases involving intercultural conflicts and decision making. Trainers serve as resource persons in helping trainees discover alternative ways to handle intercultural situations. This experiential approach attempts to increase the trainees' awareness of other cultural bases of behavior and, through interaction, influence their feelings about being a member of another culture (Wexley and Latham, 1981).

Another program is the cultural assimilator. This cognitive approach is a programmed learning technique developed by Fiedler et al., (1971). It is designed to expose members of one culture to the basic attitudes, customs and values of another culture within two to five hours.

Since training is culture specific, a different assimilator is developed for each pair of cultures. That is, assimilators are designed so that members of one culture (e.g. United States) learn about another (e.g. Mexico) (Brislin and Peders en, 1976). Basically, the cultural assimilator requires trainees to read a series of short descriptions of intercultural incidents involving a given country that have been labeled as problem situations by previous visitors to that country. Each incident describes an interaction between a sojourner and a native. The incident is followed by four alternatives, including one deemed the most appropriate by host nationals. Incidents are verified by additional host nationals who provide the correct response without receiving any of the explanations.

Trainees respond to each incident by choosing one of the four plausible answers. After the trainee makes his/her choice, the program gives an explanation of why the choice was correct or incorrect. If incorrect, the trainee must reread the material and choose again (Wexley and Latham, 1981).

However, independent of the approach or methods used to prepare U.S. business professionals going abroad, the training programs need to recognize the importance of culture in order for the U.S. business professional to adjust successfully abroad. The cultural effects should be seen not only with respect to the country in which the U.S. business professional is going to live, but also according to his/her native country.

Cross Cultural Preparation

Difficulties inevitably arise whenever there is extensive cross cultural interaction. People are socialized in their own culture to accept as appropriate and desirable a relatively narrow range of behaviors. Those behaviors not labeled as good are perceived as less desirable and, in extreme cases, as absolutely wrong. Further, persons who engage in those less desirable behaviors are seen as ignorant. In everyday words, people become accustomed to doing things (eating, courting, working, interacting with others) in certain ways, and the behaviors surrounding these activities are seen as proper. But when they interact with people from other cultures, those proper behaviors are not always forthcoming from the others. In addition, behaviors that people consider improper may be practiced on a routine basis by those from other cultures. Common responses to this confrontation of past learning with present experiences are intense dislike of culturally different others, leading to prejudice, negative labels and discrimination (Brislin et al., 1990).

The reactions of prejudice, stereotype and discrimination occur even with people who, voluntarily and with the best of intentions, move into cultures other than their own. People of good will who live in other cultures will inevitably encounter differences in behavior that are at odds with their expectations.

They must adjust their own behavior so as not to be discriminatory or judgemental. However, there are many adjustments to be made. The "other people" make friends in different ways. They have different work and eating habits. They do not communicate their desires in familiar ways. And they come up with decisions in ways that boggle the mind.

The demand upon the sojourner to make so many adjustments is one reason for the phenomenon commonly called "culture shock". No one demand is overwhelming. People make adjustments every day to new pressures or to new information in their own culture. But the multiplicity of demands, coming within a short period of time, cause frustration during extensive cross cultural interaction. That frustration occasionally leads to negative feelings about members of other cultures, no matter how egalitarian the cross cultural adjuster happens to be (Brislin et al, 1990).

Knowledge about culture is important to a manager's adjustment in another culture. It helps to provide insights into the learned behaviors of groups. It helps to gain awareness of what makes a people unique with respect to their customs and traditions, their values and beliefs, attitudes and concepts, hierarchies and roles, time and space relations, and verbal and non verbal communication processes. Information in these areas enables managers to become more cosmopolitan, to cope more effectively abroad, and to reduce stress and resolve conflict more readily in international business arenas (Harris & Moran, 1987).

Predictors of Success in Abroad Assignments

During the processes of recruitment, selection and training, the appropriate candidates to fill positions in companies abroad, a series of variables need to be considered in order to decide who should be employed for a particular job.

Tung, cited by Dowling and Schuler (1990), grouped the variables that contribute to expatriate success into four areas: 1. technical competence on the job, 2. personality traits or relational abilities, 3. environmental variables, and 4. family situation. In all, eighteen variables, or criteria for selection were identified. Criteria such as maturity and emotional stability, technical knowledge of the business, and communication ability were found very important for all four general areas.

Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) identified four key dimensions involved in the expatriate adjustment process: 1. self-oriented, 2. others oriented, 3. perceptual and 4. cultural toughness.

The self oriented dimension is concerned with activities and attributes that serve to strengthen the expatriate's self-esteem, self-confidence, and mental hygiene. It is composed of three subfactors: 1.

reinforcement substitution, 2. stress reduction, and 3. technical competence. Reinforcement substitution involves replacing pleasurable home culture activities and interests with parallel substitutes in the host culture. Thus, an expatriate who is able to adapt his/her interests in food, sports, and music is more likely to be successful in adjusting to the new culture.

Stress reduction refers to the need to engage in temporary withdrawal activities, such as keeping a diary or engaging in favorite activities or hobbies. This allows the expatriate to gradually adjust to the demands of a new cultural and physical environment. The final subfactor is technical competence. Expatriates are expected to accomplish their assigned tasks. Possessing the necessary expertise and confidence in their abilities to achieve this goal has been shown to be an important part of expatriate adjustment.

The "others oriented" dimension encompasses activities and attributes that enhance the expatriate's ability to interact effectively with host country nationals. Two subfactors are involved, relationship development and willingness to communicate. Relationship development refers to the ability to develop long lasting friendships with host country nationals. This ability is of assistance to an expatriate in the same way that a mentor is able to assist a new employee. Willingness to communicate refers to the expatriate's confidence and willingness to use the host country language in order to show the host country nationals his/her desire to understand and relate with them

(Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985).

The perceptual dimension refers to the ability to understand why foreigners behave the way they do. The ability to make correct attributions about the reasons or causes of host country national behaviors is important because it allows the expatriate to predict future host country national behaviors. This reduces the stress of uncertainty in interpersonal relations. Well adjusted expatriates tend to be non judgemental and non evaluative in interpreting the behavior of host country nationals, which leads to clearer information exchange and better interpersonal relationships between expatriates and host-country nationals (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985).

The cultural toughness dimension refers to how well the expatriates adjust to their experiences in the country of assignment (Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985).

A model presented by Ronen, cited in Dowling and Schuler (1990), includes five categories of attributes of success:

1. job factors, which include technical skills, acquaintance with host country and headquarters operations, managerial skills and administrative competence;

2. relational dimensions, which refer to the following: tolerance for ambiguity, behavioral flexibility, non judgementalism, cultural empathy and low ethnocentrism, and interpersonal skills;

3. motivational states, which focus on issues such as belief in the mission, congruence with career path, interest in experience abroad, interest in the specific host country culture and willingness to acquire new

patterns of behavior and attitudes;

4. family situation, which includes the willingness of spouse to live abroad, adaptation and support of the spouse, and stable marriage; and

5. language skills, in which the emphasis is on host country language and nonverbal communication.

Finally, Bird and Dubar (1991) affirm that expatriates, in order to perform appropriate new job assignments, have to prepare themselves mainly in the following five core job dimensions: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback.

1. Skill variety refers to the degree to which a job requires a variety of activities to do the job.

2. Task identity refers to the degree to which the job requires the completion of a specific segment of a work.

3. Task significance refers to the degree to which the job affects the lives or work of other people in and outside of the workplace.

4. Autonomy refers to the degree to which the job provides freedom and independence in planning and doing it.

5. Feedback refers to the degree to which doing the work activities results in obtaining clear and direct information about the effectiveness of it.

Viewing Work in Cross Cultural Perspective

It has been suggested that people experience a disorientation when they enter a new workplace. This is due to the fact that there is a lack of congruence between people's prior socialization and the new organization's demands. For instance, people socialized to interact cooperatively with peers will become disoriented if they accept jobs where rewards are distributed individually and on a competitive basis (Brislin et al., 1990).

In the cross cultural setting, individuals bring with them particular ways of interacting and particular expectations of others that may be quite different from the behaviors and beliefs of others in the organization. For instance, for people of many Latin American countries, work and social relationships are closely intertwined. A considerable amount of emphasis may be placed upon socializing with fellow workers during and after the work day (Brislin et al, 1990).

Each culture has its expectations for the roles of boss and subordinate. What one culture encourages as participatory management, another sees as managerial incompetence. What one values as employee initiative and leadership, others consider selfish and destructive of group harmony (Copeland and Griggs, 1986).

In many countries, authority in business and government is inherited. Key positions are filled from certain families. Authority is vested in the person rather than in the position. Elsewhere, a manager may command respect by virtue of position, age or influence, or through achievement or fair handling of subordinates (Copeland and Griggs, 1986).

In an organization, working style and individual interactive style are critical factors which must be identified and understood if workers from two cultures are to interact effectively.

For some cultures, the worthiness of the job's activity is narrowly measured in terms of income produced, or the worth of the individual is assessed in terms of job status. Where a religious view of work still prevails, work is viewed as an act of service to God and people, and is expressed in a moral commitment to the job or quality of effort. In some cultures, the loyalty to family is transferred to the organization that employs the person and to the quality of one's performance, as expressed in work group participation, communication and consensus. (Harris and Moran, 1987).

Handy (1976) identified a variety of factors in the organizational setting that may vary from culture to culture. They include:

1. different beliefs about the way in which work should be organized;

2. the manner in which authority should be exercised;

3. the amount of planning and time perspective applied to one's work;

4. how rewards, reinforcements, and controls are carried out;

5. the degree to which conformity and initiative are expected; and

6. the physical setting of the work environment.

Hofstede (1980) found large cross cultural differences with regard to work values in four areas:

1. power distance, which refers to the amount of

preferred psychological distance between workers and managers (Mexico and Venezuela are examples of countries with a high power index);

2. uncertainty avoidance, which includes the perceived freedom one has in breaking company rules, the level of stress on the job, and the perceived length of an employee's stay with a certain company;

3. individualism, which refers to the amount of freedom people have in making decisions related to their work; and

4. masculinity-femininity, which refers to the goals traditionally preferred by males (advancement, earning and training) and those traditionally preferred by females (friendly atmosphere, position security, desirable physical conditions and positive relationships).

Communication in a Cross Cultural Perspective

People working internationally and participating in intercultural experiences have learned that there are many problems when working or living in a foreign environment. Communication across cultural boundaries is difficult. Culture poses communication problems because there are so many variables unknown to the communicators. As the cultural variables and differences increase, the number of communication misunderstandings increases. Differences in customs, behavior, and values result in problems that can be managed only through effective cross cultural communication and interaction (Ferraro, 1990).

Effective communication is important when dealing with various cultures, races, and genders. People are required to adapt to a world and workforce where cultural diversity is the majority instead of the minority (Abramms-Mezoff, & Johns, 1989).

In assessing communication channels with employees, expatriate business professionals need to have the appropriate skills, perspectives and approaches to a culturally diverse workforce. First, business professionals should assess their own cultural traditions and then be educated on other cultures and how it translates into daily interaction at work. U.S. business professionals should seek to understand different cultures, thereby lending perspective to attitudes of employees, colleagues, managers and supervisors (Abramms-Mezoff, & Johns, 1989).

For expatriate business professionals working and communicating in a multicultural environment, Harris and Moran (1987) affirm that attention must be paid to the following observations about the process of communication.

1. All behavior is communication because all behavior contains a message, whether intended or not.

2. Agreement by two individuals that they are communicating with each other does not mean that they have understood each other.

3. People cannot take back their communication. It can be explained, clarified, and restated, but it cannot be wiped out, although people may sometimes wish that it could.

4. People cannot ignore the context of communication

that occurs at a certain time, in a certain place, using certain media. Such factors have message value and give meaning to the communicators.

5. Communication is not static and passive, but rather a continuous and active process without beginning or end. These statements outline several important characteristics of intercultural communication. If they are well internalized and understood, they will result in more effective communication.

According to Ferraro (1990), negative attitudes, stereotypes, prejudices, and ethnocentrism are four major interrelated barriers that impede the understanding necessary to cross cultural communication. However, behaviors generated by attitudes and beliefs that determine the success of cross cultural interaction are the following: courtesy, cooperation, consistency, tact and loyalty.

Milhouse and Henderson (1987) affirm that verbal communication is the most important component of cross cultural interaction. People who live in similar cultures agree that certain sounds, grunts and gibberings made with their tongues, teeth, throats, lungs, and lips systematically stand for specified things or conditions. The people of all cultures utter sounds in hope that the persons who receive them will be in common agreement about their meaning. Anyone who has traveled abroad knows that words are full of human relations traps. Their meaning can be distorted. In extreme cases, managers' distortions of a client's words have cost them sales and, in some instances, their jobs.

Words are helpful, harmful, or neutral in their effects. The ability to understand foreign words and their meanings determine to a great extent how well successful managers can relate to clients abroad. But it is erroneous to assume that acquiring language fluency or using an interpreter is all that is needed for managers to communicate across cultures. Language and culture are inseparably bound together, and it is impossible to understand one without understanding the other. Expatriate business professionals who understand the nature of a host country's economy but do not understand its basic sociohistorical aspects are only half-prepared to succeed in the host country's business world (Milhouse and Henderson, 1987).

In crossing language barriers one often find words, phrases, or concepts not found in one's own language or viceversa. Learning to use these new meanings correctly can be difficult. International business professionals should be forewarned about using phrases that have multiple meanings. These may be readily understood in their own society, but their use may have disastrous effects in another society where the listener chooses a meaning that was not intended. Colloquialisms and slang terms should be used with great care, if not avoided altogether (Ferraro, 1990).

While nonverbal communication, or body language, is a very important form of delivering messages, it should never be considered an acceptable substitute for words. Milhouse and Henderson (1987) provide a general guide for effective cross cultural communication. This general guide emphasizes that speaking should be clear and brief and done at a pace and volume compatible with the host country's normative behavior. When the host country person's words or nonverbal behavior are not clear, the expatriate business professional has to ask for clarification. Also, it is recommended to use simple, accurate words to discuss business activities. When doing business, it is important to provide enough information so that the host country persons can put the message into proper perspective. Finally, the expatriate business professional should ask about what the recipients of the message understood in order to validate the communication. U.S. business professionals should not ask the recipient of the message whether he or she understood it. Rather, they should ask what he or she heard them say.

Doing Business and Working with Latin Americans

In order for U.S. business professionals to work successfully in Latin America they need to arrive with knowledge about culture, society, the economy, commerce, politics and language. Specifically, some of the areas that need to be understood by Americans prior to working in Latin America are interpersonal relations, work attitudes, and perceptions of space, time and authority of the Latin American people as well as their political, business and social etiquette.

Introductions

Before U.S. business professionals travel to Latin American countries, they may contact the company by letter. The form of the letter should be simple and straightforward. The letter should include detailed technical information as an attachment. If the letter can be translated into Spanish or Portuguese, the probability increases that the letter will be received by the appropriate people. Once the contact is established, further correspondence should be in Spanish or Portuguese. After arriving in the country, the U.S. business professionals should try to make contact personally (face to face) and with a person who is in a high position in the organization.

U.S. business professionals need to hire a native person from the country to help with the bureaucratic process.

As a general rule, U.S. business professionals should try to conduct business in person as much as possible. They should try to build and maintain a continuous working relationship. One way of doing this is to be sensitive to other people's feelings, beliefs and behaviors (Copeland & Griggs, 1985).

Concept of Time

One of the several items that U.S. business professionals need to consider before starting a job or doing business in Latin America is how time is managed and perceived by the people. In Latin America time is approached in a more relaxed and flexible way than in the United States. People are not enslaved to or dependent upon a clock. Latin Americans think that what is not achieved today will be achieved "mañana".

Interruptions and delays are part of normal business procedures. For example, if a meeting is set up at eight o'clock, it can mean that people will arrive and meet between 8:15 and 8:30. In general, the people who arrive within this interval of time use it for greeting others and talking about casually. It helps the people to feel more relaxed and to build a comfortable environment before the formal meeting starts.

Meetings don't go directly to the business. A "rush job" can be counter productive. The pace of negotiation in Latin America is slower than in the United States and is based much more on personal contact (Henderson & Milhouse, 1987). The establishment of appropriate interpersonal relationships is important for success in business because meetings begin with extended social acquaintance and the establishment of social rapport over many cups of coffee or tea (Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

When appointments for meetings are established, U.S. business professionals can ask tactfully whether a meeting is going to be on "American time". Still, patience is paramount (Copeland and Griggs,1985). In doing business one should always maintain eye contact, establish friendly rapport, and dress conservatively.

Personal Impressions

Success in business is due in part to impressions that people leave with each other. Because impressions are received as a basis to evaluate people, Americans with a good academic and intellectual background and knowledge of the specific country visited and the world at large are appreciated by Latin American people, and this will help to present the appropriate image from the start (Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

Presentations should be made with flair. Latin Americans appreciate enthusiasm and personality in business dealings. And it is important to use expressive speech during business meetings. (Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

Work Attitudes

In order to get the desired performance out of the workforce and managers, it is important to understand their attitudes about work. For Latin Americans, business and work are just one of the many aspects of life which also include family, friendships and the church. Business among friends is relaxed and done sympathetically. Trustworthy relatives and friends are hired. Cooperation is important in the workplace. Money is not the only incentive. Sometimes issues affecting honor, dignity and the family are more important (Copeland & Griggs, 1985). U.S. business professionals should approach individuals in the company not only as corporate people but also as complete individuals, as multidimensional social persons (Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

In the United States, organizational information is often generated by many workers and flows from them to the manager. In Latin America, where the authority is more centralized, the manager must take the initiative to seek out information, and workers take less responsibility to keep managers informed (Henderson, 1989 and Henderson & Milhouse, 1987).

Latin Americans tend to work not for a company or for a job, but for an individual. People strive for personal power. Relationships and loyalties are much more personalized, and managers can get performance only by effectively using personal influence and working through individual members of a group. Employees tend to be evaluated upon their loyalty to superiors more than upon actual job performance (Henderson and Milhouse, 1987).

Work Relationships

When U.S. business professionals need to have contact with customers or employees within the company, their interpersonal relations with these individuals should be characterized by showing personal concern for them as well as understanding. Also, they need to be available, accessible and personal. One way in which U.S. business professionals can demonstrate a warm, personal approach is by going to parties and games, walking to work areas and listening to and talking with employees about topics not related to work problems. (Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

However, in interpersonal relationships U.S. business professionals should keep a certain psychological distance from employees so that they understand their status. Other clues that help to denote authority over others are wearing formal dress, showing impeccable appearance, and exhibiting fine and educated manners and behaviors that imply "high culture". In this way, problems related to loss of respect and violation of privacy can be avoided, and levels of authority can remain established. In addition, when working with employees, a formal authority needs to be exercised in order to obtain an adequate job performance.

The processes of decision making and delegation of responsibility cannot be abdicated to the employees. However, employees with adequate rank, knowledge and involvement in the issues can participate in making decisions and some responsibilities can be delegated to them. In general, these processes are only for a few people and remain centralized. (Copeland & Griggs, 1985).

In business and work relations, Latin Americans prefer a more continuous working relationship which implies a long-term commitment. They are not accustomed to making fast and infrequent business contacts. In addition, they expect that business services derived from negotiations will be assumed by U.S. business professionals. It is advisable to conduct the business in Spanish or Portuguese because English might not be well spoken by Latin Americans. So an interpreter is often necessary. Specifications and technical data should be in the metric system (Henderson & Milhouse, 1987 and Copeland & Griggs, 1985).

Business Etiquette

In general, business should be avoided from mid December to the end of January, when people are on vacation because of the holidays. Working hours are from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday for most businesses. Many close for a two to three hour lunch and "siesta" beginning between 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm. Negotiations start late in the morning and could be prolonged until late in the evening. Business after hours is very common. The best time to make business calls is between 10:00 am and noon, and 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm. (Brooks,1991 and Henderson & Milhouse, 1987).

Another example of business etiquette that should be considered by U.S. business professionals when working is to avoid controversial subjects like politics, sex, money and religion. Family matters can be discussed only if they are brought up by the Latin American counterpart. It is not proper to continue talking about business in social settings like a business lunch. Also, U.S. business professionals should avoid contradicting, criticizing and correcting in front of their colleagues. U.S. business professionals need to be cautious with words and phrases that might be considered rude or harmful in the other culture. In general, U.S. business professionals should keep the conversation general and impersonal, following the lead of the host. (Copeland & Griggs, 1985 and Kennedy

Center & Brigham University, 1988).

U.S. business professionals should interact with Latin Americans by addressing their first or last name along with the proper title (Senor Alvaro/Doctor Alvaro) or by addressing them by profession and name. They can call them by their first name only if specifically invited to do so (Henderson, 1989 and Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

Social Etiquette

In all kinds of social events introductions are initiated by the host and hostess, who welcome and extend their hands to shake with the foreign guests. Latin Americans are accustomed to providing warm greetings and they feel comfortable interacting with people in close spaces. Latin Americans stand closer together when conversing than U.S. people . In general, U.S. business professionals should shake hands with everyone present, even close acquaintances whenever they see them, and even if they have shaken their hands earlier in the same day. Latin American handshakes are not as firm as U.S. handshakes. Women usually kiss each other on the cheeks (Kennedy Center & Brigham University, 1988 & Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

Besides shaking hands, when meeting and leaving from social or business events U.S. business professionals need to take time to go around and say the appropriate good evening or good-bye to every one. Guests should not leave directly after a meal. Also, during these events it is not appropriate to take food or drink until it is offered, or to be seated until after being invited to do so by the host or hostess (Henderson, 1989 and Copeland & Griggs,1985).

When greeting individuals from a distance, it is impolite to call. Raising a hand and smiling are more appropriate. Women are not likely to talk to strangers without being properly introduced. And one should always greet another person before asking questions (Henderson, 1989).

In Latin American countries social events during the evening, such as dinner, are scheduled for a later hour. Some invitations may suggest arriving according to "American" time, which means punctually. Otherwise, one should try to arrive between 30 and 45 minutes later so as not to embarrass the hosts by arriving before they are ready. Gifts are not necessary, but a box of candy, bottle of wine or a basket of fruit is appreciated as well as sending flowers the next day. Visitors are expected to stay at least two hours or more (Kennedy Center & Brigham University, 1988 and Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

Along with the standards that have been mentioned previously, it is necessary to wear formal clothes, even in hot climates, for business and social events. Also, while on business U.S. business professionals should be good tourists. It is important to take pictures in respectful ways which make the people feel proud and bring honor to the local religious and national monuments. U.S. business professionals do not need to buy expensive gifts. They should buy things that will be meaningful to the person who receives it. U.S. business professionals may allow the

Latin Americans to give presents first, except when the Latin Americans are extending hospitality (Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

As a general rule, U.S. business professionals should be more respectful, formal and polite than they might normally be at home (Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

It is important for U.S. business professionals to pay special attention to the cultural differences which they find in Latin American countries. An awareness of and the learning of these differences are two of the prerequisites for succeeding in international professional relationships.

Summary

The literature revealed that U.S. business professionals who work abroad should receive cross cultural training in order to succeed in their work assignments. During the last 15 years researchers have developed several types of cross cultural training programs: cognitive, behavioral, affective, experiential and attributive. Several predictors have been found to be important for successful work abroad. They include technical competence, language skills, communication ability, family situation and emotional stability.

In cross cultural preparation, trainees should address how views of work and communication vary from one culture to another with respect to personal distance, power and relationships between supervisor and subordinate. Also, differences in customs, values, attitudes and behaviors should be included in cross cultural preparation in order to reduce communication misunderstanding.

When U.S. business professionals need to work with Latin Americans they should be aware of differences in interpersonal relationships, work attitudes and perceptions of space, time and authority, as well as political, business and social etiquette.

Chapter Three presents the research design in terms of population, instrument, procedure and analysis of data. Chapter Four provides the research results and Chapter Five presents a discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study for practice and for additional research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics and behaviors of effective professional colleagues in the workplace in Latin America. This investigation is a qualitative study which analyzed the perceptions of 15 Latin American graduate students in the United States who had worked under the influence of U.S. business professionals in their own countries. In a qualitative study the focus of attention is upon the understanding of the perceptions and experiences of the participants, regarded as a valuable task of science (Locke, Spirduso and Silverman, 1987)

Because of the exploratory nature of this study, the face to face, semistructured interview was selected as the method for collecting the data for this study. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1984), through the qualitative interview the researcher is directed toward understanding participant experiences or situations as expressed in their own words.

Population for the Study

The participants in this study were Latin American graduate students. They had been in the United States for at least one year, and they had had at least one year of work experience in their own countries, performing professional or management work with private or government organizations. They worked under the influence of U.S. business professionals in their countries.

The participants were selected from a list of Oklahoma State University graduate students provided by the university's international student program. The other students were selected from Oklahoma City University and from the University of Oklahoma. These students were selected by referral because a formal list of Latin American students did not exist. They were from the following countries: Colombia (3), Ecuador (2), El Salvador (1), Honduras (1), Mexico (2), Nicaragua (1) and Venezuela (5).

Interview Design

A face to face semistructured interview schedule was developed for this study. (See Appendix A). The semistructured interview provides some specific questions specified, but some latitude is left for the interviewer to explore other areas of concern (Walizer and Wienir, 1979).

The semi structured interview was selected due to the exploratory nature of this investigation and because it helps to document the perceptions of the participants without leading them to specific or desired answers (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984).

A face to face interview permits the gathering of data of greater depth and in more detail than may be provided through a questionnaire or other written instrument (Isaac and Michael, 1981).

Personal interviews were conducted to gather information about the qualities of effective professional colleagues in Latin America, characteristics of workplace meetings, causes of and solutions for workplace conflict, and some of the inappropriate behaviors found in the Latin American workplace. Personal interviews are flexible and dynamic (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). This flexibility and dynamism allows the interviewer to explore particular remarks made by the participants in an attempt to gain as much information as possible.

During the personal interviews open ended questions were used. Questions that were developed for the interview schedule were based upon those that were found in the review of the literature. Open ended questions do not have particular answers that participants can select. Open ended questions allow the gathering of broad kinds of responses and numerous ideas, and allow unexpected responses which may reveal unanticipated significant information (Rossett, 1987).

Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are qualitative criteria proposed for this study in place of the external validity, reliability and objectivity used for quantitative research.

With respect to credibility, research must be conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject is accurately identified and described. The research attempts to adequately state the parameters of the research setting, population, and theoretical framework in order for the research to be valid.

Transferability takes the place of generalizability. As complete a data base as is possible is provided so that those who wish to apply this study to their own situations may make their own transferability judgments (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Transferability can be achieved if the investigator provides sufficient descriptive data to identify the characteristics and behaviors that the U.S. business professionals need to have and perform in order to work successfully in Latin America. However, the results of this study cannot be validated for the whole population because of the limited number of subjects.

With respect to dependability, methodological changes and shifts in instructions are expected products of an emergent design dedicated to increasingly sophisticated constructions. Far from being threats to dependability, such changes and shifts are hallmarks of maturing and successful inquiry (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

Confirmability is concerned with "assuring that data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the evaluator and are not simply figments of the evaluator's imagination" (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p.243). Data sources must be documented and interpretations of data must flow logically.

These four criteria are expected to be achieved through member checking and audit trail.

Member checking is the process of ascertaining that the researcher's interpretations of what a respondent said are truly what was meant by the respondent. Member checks were conducted at the end of each interview so that respondents could clarify, offer additional information, or confirm facts and interpretations (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

The audit trail consists of interview transcripts and tapes and additional interview notes and documents.

Finally, demographic data such as country, job position and years of work experience were collected.

Procedure

A list was obtained with the academic majors, addresses and telephone numbers of the Latin American graduate students at Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma City University and The University of Oklahoma. These students were contacted by phone and those who fulfilled the requirement for this study were interviewed personally.

At the time that each student was contacted, the purpose of the study was explained as well as the procedure for the interview.

The voluntary nature of participation in this study was explained and confidentiality was guaranteed. Permission to tape the interview session was granted by each participant.

A pilot study of the interview was conducted with three Latin American graduate students.

Each interview took place in a quiet room where the only people present were the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes.

Once the data were collected and transcribed, a classification of the information was developed according to themes or subjects.

Analysis of the Data

The data analysis technique for this study was induction. Induction is a generalization process which enables the researcher to move from specific facts or data to general conclusions. Induction is an open process that "goes beyond the bounds of the particulars, making assertions that presumably apply not only to its generating particulars but to all other similar particulars" (Guba and Lincoln, 1985 p. 113). This process results in the creation of probable inferences from the data collected (Guba and Lincoln, 1985).

In addition, pattern coding was used in order to sort out the information through the identification of subjects. Pattern coding is a way of grouping information into a smaller number of overarching themes or constructs (Miles and Huberman, 1984). Pattern coding acts to pull a lot of material together into more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1984). Pattern coding accomplishes these functions. First, it reduces large amounts of data into a smaller number of analytic units. Second, it gets the researcher into analysis during data collection, so that later data collection can be more focused. And third, it helps the researcher build a cognitive map, an evolving schema for understanding what is happening locally (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

According to Miles and Huberman (1984), codes can be used at various levels of analysis, ranging from the descriptive to the higher inferential. Also, they can be used at different times during analysis. Finally, they help to pull a lot of material together which permits analysis to take place.

Miles and Huberman (1984) define code as "an abbreviation or symbol applied to a segment of words -at most a sentence or paragraph of transcribed field notes -in order to classify the words" (p. 56). Codes are retrieval and organizing devices that allow the researcher to spot quickly, pull out, and then cluster all the segments relating to the particular research problem (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

Coding brings themes to the surface from deep inside the data. The themes are at a fairly low level of abstraction and come from the initial research question, concepts in the literature, or new thoughts stimulated by immersion in the data (Neuman, 1991). It is important for researchers to see abstract concepts in concrete data and to move back and forth between abstract concepts and specific details (Neuman, 1991).

Descriptive codes were used. These types of codes, state Miles and Huberman (1984), provide an attribution of a class of phenomena to a segment of text.

There are various methods of generating descriptive codes. One is the "predefined" coding which emphasizes the creation of a "start list" of codes prior to fieldwork. That list comes from the conceptual framework, research questions and variables. Another method is called "postdefined" and consists of coding after the data have been collected. A third method is the "accounting scheme guided" coding which is the compromise between the two methods mentioned above. This method creates a general accounting scheme for codes. It is not content specific but points to general domains in which codes must be inductively developed. However, modifications in coding are usually done by the investigator as the research continues because either some codes don't work or no field material fits them, or there is a need to create new codes (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

Neuman (1991) and Miles and Huberman (1984) state that researchers can generate coding themes not only before the information is collected but also while reading data notes. Also, it stimulates the researcher to find themes in future coding. Finally, researchers use the list to build a universe of all themes in the study, which they reorganize, sort, combine, discard, or extend in further analysis.

Notes should be coded before more information is gathered. Every item in the notes does not have to be coded because there may be material that is irrelevant or unrelated to the research questions (Miles and Huberman, 1984). In addition, Neuman, (1991) states that researchers vary in how much detail they code. Some code every line or phrase. Others code paragraphs and argue that much of the data are unrelated and should not be coded. The degree of detail in coding depends upon the research question, the richness of the data, and the researcher's purposes (Neuman, 1991)

Pattern coding helps to organize the raw data into conceptual categories, and creates themes or concepts which they can then use to analyze data.

The data in this study were coded according to the postdefined method.

Example of Pattern Coding

The data were analyzed in two ways. First, from the written notes, each single statement was taken and classified in a column. Second, after all single statements were classified in several columns, a name was provided for each column.

From the written notes, single ideas or statements were taken and placed in columns. Each single idea or statement was classified in different columns according to a common theme. The number of columns corresponded to the number of different themes that were identified.

Following is an example of the pattern coding process used for this study. The 12 statements are quoted from raw data which were transcribed from recorded tape. A portion of these raw data are from the second interview question, which dealt with work meetings.

1. Meetings were cordial and informal. The environment

was flexible. Participants told jokes or they talked about the political or economic situation of the country or the company. The talking during the meeting was not restricted to the job or topics of the work.

2. Meetings were informal. Many times these were carried out through breakfast. The conversation during the meeting was not related only to work issues but also to other kinds of personal issues.

3. The environment was informal in the sense that participants talked about things unrelated to the work issues. Participants made comments that did not have anything to do with the topics that were discussed during the meetings.

4. The environment was informal because some of the talking was not strictly related to the work topics.

5. The meetings were pleasant because some participants comments were informal and sometimes they told jokes.

6. During the meetings participants talked about inconsequential issues unrelated to the work.

7. The meetings were informal and pleasant. In other words, sometimes participants spoke about issues not related to the job or issues not related to the topics that were under discussion.

8. Meetings passed in a pleasant and peaceful manner. The tone of voice of the participants was smooth.

9. Meetings passed in an environment which was informal. Before or after the meetings, participants talked about other casual issues such as football, parties or recreational events.

10. Participants tried to conduct the meetings in an informal and pleasant manner.

11. Meetings were semi formal. Participants could tell jokes.

12. Meetings were informal and pleasant. Before or after the meetings or during the break, participants talked about other casual topics such as football, parties and weekend events.

In the example above, there were 12 single ideas or statements that were placed under the same column because they shared a common theme.

Once each single statement was classified in a column, a name was given to the column. The names of the columns were given based on the similarities shared by the single statements. In the example provided above, all 12 single statements shared in common the ideas about how the conversation and the environment around the conversation were before, during and after the work meetings. So this column was named "informal environment" and is the sixth category in the second question of the interview schedule.

The same procedure described above was used in order to classify the information that was gathered from the interviewees from the four questions that were in the schedule interview.

Data Reduction by Response Themes

This section provides a justification for why the raw data were not coded according to each question addressed in the interview schedule.

The raw data were coded according to the themes that emerged during the interviews rather than according to the specific questions. This procedure was followed because semistructured interview is intended to provoke broad responses and in this study participants responded beyond what the questions were asking. Coding by response themes was also followed because participants responded with similar answers to different questions.

A combination of mostly quotations and some paraphrasing was used to extract the information from the recorded tape rather than transcribing each entire response. The combination was used for the purpose of capturing the full spirit of the responses, some of which were so long that full transcription would have diluted their meanings.

This chapter described the population and procedure followed for this study. It also explained and provided an example of the methodology used for this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics and behaviors of effective professional colleagues in the workplace in Latin America. The data for this study were collected from a target population of 15 Latin American graduate students who had been living in the United States for more than one year and who had had professional work experience in their home countries in companies which employed U.S. business professionals. A face to face, semistructured interview was designed to collect information about the qualities of effective professional colleagues, characteristics of workplace meetings, causes of and solutions for workplace conflict and some of the inappropriate behaviors in the workplace in Latin America. The data were analyzed through a process of pattern coding in order to sort out the information provided by the respondents.

Description of the Population

The population included 15 respondents residing in

Oklahoma City, Norman and Stillwater, Oklahoma. There were nine students from Oklahoma State University, four students from Oklahoma City University and two students from The University of Oklahoma. Respondents are listed on Table I by country in alphabetical order and within each country by age from youngest to oldest. Respondents represented North, Central and South American hispanic countries, and ranged in age from 25 to 39 and in home country work experience from 1.5 to 13 years. Work experience was at the managerial level in private (6), government (5) and semiprivate (4) organizations. There were 14 males and one female. (See Table I).

Report of the Data

First Research Question

What are the qualities of the business professional which contribute to collegial relationships in the Latin American workplace?.

This question attempted to get information about what the interviewee found effective regarding to personal relationships, strengths, attitudes, values, behavior, emotions and temperament. The answers from the 15 interviewees were classified into two categories: personal and performance qualities. The qualities are listed in alphabetical order and are not weighted by importance. (See Table II).

TABLE I

DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION: LATIN AMERICAN BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

Country	Gender	Age	Job Position Home Country	Organzn Type	Years of Work Home Country
Colombia	Male	25	Assistant System Manager	Private	1.5
Colombia	Male	28	Director of Chemical Engineering	Private	1.5
Colombia	Male	35	Coordinator of Research	Semiprv	4
Ecuador	Male	25	Accounting Executive	Private	2
Ecuador	Male	29	Business Manager	Private	3
Salvador	Male	39	Coordinator Research & Agriculture Extension	Govrnmt	3
Honduras	Male	31	Assistant Manager of Admin.	Private	4
Mexico	Male	28	Senior Economist	Govrnmt	2
Mexico	Male	32	Coordinator of Research	Govrnmt	9
Nicaragua	Male	37	Manager of Personnel	Semiprv	5
Venezuela	Female	30	Supervisor Purchasing	Govrnmt	6

TABLE I (Continued)

Country	Gender	Age	Job Position Home Country	Organzn Type	Years of Work Home Country
Venezuela	Male	31	Supervisor Inventory	Govrnmt	4
Venezuela	Male	35	Supervisor Integral Security	Private	7
Venezuela	Male	36	Supervisor Environmnt Protection	Semiprv	5
Venezuela	Male	38	Manager of Purchasing	Semiprv	13

TABLE II

QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES IN LATIN AMERICA

PERSONAL	PERFORMANCE
1. Charisma	1. Communication Skills
2. Empathy	2. Interference control
3. Extroversion	3. Dependability
4. Humanity	4. Professional Development
5. Humility	5. Work Quality
6. Integrity	6. Work Relationships
7. Introversion	
8. Self Control	
9. Socialization	
10. Self Control	

Personal Qualities. Personal qualities consisted of responses about the qualities of the person in terms of the influences that he/she exercises upon the company and the fellow workers. The answers that fell under this category included the following.

1. Charisma: This individual was perceived as someone who was admired, respected and popular among his employees and colleagues because of his personality and excellent job performance. He was perceived as a leader because of the above and because of his confidence in himself and the belief that his ideas were appropriate. He was also respected due to his strong and unique personality. He was a person who displayed himself in his work performance as someone who was innovative, enterprising, risk taking, intelligent and entrepreneurial. Part of his intelligence was revealed in his speedy analysis of the information presented to him, in his resourcefulness and in his skills in problem solving. As an individual he was dynamic and had clear vision of the daily goals at work. He was recognized for his high professional aspirations and success and for his wish to reach new professional and personal goals.

2. Empathy: Other workers felt a sense of identification with and attraction to this person and felt that the person understood them.

3. Extroversion: This individual was perceived to feel comfortable in being himself in front of his coworkers. He was someone who did not try to hide his emotions, but rather liked to share his thoughts and feelings and was open to others. He was talkative, positive and optimistic

with a tendency to think that all was for the best.

4. Humanity: This person seemed to display genuine interest and consideration not only toward employee job problems but also toward employee conflicts in interpersonal, familial or financial matters. He showed understanding, and demonstrated sincerity and the willingness to alleviate uncomfortable and painful employee situations. Also, he was a person concerned about the employee's personal and family life because he believed that a personal crisis could negatively affect the employee's job performance. He viewed his employees not only as workers but also as a human beings.

5. Humility: This person was characterized as uncomplicated, noble, kind, generous and respectful toward others. He treated his superiors and subordinates with equal kindness. He approached them as people who had the same personal needs without looking at the work position that they had within the organization's hierarchy. He was someone who had power but never used it in order to damage the personal integrity of others. Also, he did not take advantage of others mistakes for personal purposes and he accepted and recognized his own mistakes. Finally, he did not display offensive behaviors in any way.

6. Integrity: This person was seen as honest, prudent, direct, serious, loyal, and trustworthy. He was a person who never took advantage of the trust that was placed in him. He was genuine and sincere in his appearance to others. He protected and defended his employees as long as they were honest with him. He was loyal to the company.

He was also ethical and responsible in his actions. Part of his responsibility was to perform well and to finish his work in the expected time frame. He did not act for personal benefit or knowingly that his actions were against the company's policies and procedures.

7. Introversion: This person was understood to be reserved and shy. He kept his thoughts to himself. This person was more observant than talkative, a quiet individual of few words.

8. Self control: This person was perceived to be at peace with himself, a person who demonstrated serenity, tranquility, and patience, someone who always kept calm and self-controlled no matter how bad the situation was or how much pressure under which he found himself.

9. Socialization: This person was characterized as friendly, someone who was a friend and colleague not only at work but also outside of work. Others found him to be a delightful, easy going, cheerful person who had a jovial spirit with a good sense of humor. He was a good mannered person who never used inappropriate vocabulary and was always dressed impeccably. He was receptive and open to others' ideas.

Performance. Performance consisted of the answers that made reference to the management skills for accomplishing organizational processes such as job delegation, conflict resolution, communication, team work and employee motivation and recognition, among others. The answers that fell under this category included the following characteristics:

1. Communication skills: The person was understood to communicate effectively while being receptive to others' ideas. He displayed effective two way communication. In addition, he was a person who was listened to in the sense that he was able to keep the attention of his personnel. He also knew how to provide feedback appropriately.

2. Interference control: This individual was seen as good at avoiding and preventing outside and inside interference in the job. Outside interference included things like personal and social problems. Inside interference referred to problems with other departments within the company.

3. Dependability: This person was characterized as a methodical person in the sense that followed well defined procedures. He was a person who liked to conduct activities with precision. He was a person who knew where everything was and liked to keep as close as possible to the work standards that were set up by the company. He was well organized and self disciplined, and planned ahead carefully.

4. Professional development: This person seemed to always express a feeling of achievement about his profession and job position. In addition, this person was considered to be culturally sophisticated. He not only had knowledge about his profession, job position and company but had a range of knowledge about music, sports, art, literature, politics and history. This allowed him to relate more effectively with his colleagues and employees.

5. Work quality: This individual was perceived to know

how to do his job and perform it very well. He was a hard and dedicated worker in the sense that if he had to work very hard to finish a job project, he put all his mental and physical energy into it. And the extra effort needed to finish the project wasn't made with a resentful attitude. On the contrary, he approached it with a positive attitude and he found personal and professional satisfaction in doing it.

6. Work relationships: This individual was seen to know how to manage, reduce and solve conflicts and tensions. He was characterized for his fairness, which means he treated the employees justly and was a person who was demanding with employees but flexible. Also, he encouraged and motivated his employees not only to start and finish job projects but also to create and develop successful projects. He valued and recognized the fellow workers and their professional abilities and performance. He promoted team work and active participation from his employees. His motto was "us" instead of "I" as a part of the work process necessary to get the job done effectively. He provided also extra direction for those employees who had difficulty in performing their jobs appropriately. When the employees performed their jobs well, he delegated more job responsibilities to them and exercised less control while promoting more autonomy. Finally, he was a person who shared knowledge and work supplies with his personnel and was available to work after hours when it was necessary.

Second Research Question

What are the characteristics of workplace meetings in Latin America?

This question was directed to explore characteristics like those which made meetings successful, the attributes and behaviors of the participants, the positive and helpful aspects of work meetings, and how the meetings were conducted. The answers from the 15 interviewees were classified into 9 categories. The characteristics are listed in chronological order and are not weighted by importance. (See Table III).

1. Planning consisted of the conscious efforts to prepare for work meetings in the most effective and productive ways in order to take full advantage of the time and effort of the people and the company.

The answers pointed out that there was prior development of a well organized plan of work and agenda for these meetings which were followed and accomplished during the meetings. Specifically, the participants developed objectives and reached conclusions as part of the previously developed work plan.

2. Time frame referred to the frequency and duration of meetings.

The meetings varied in time, from one to many hours. The frequency of the meetings varied from once a week to an unspecified number of times. The frequency and duration of

TABLE III

CHARACTERISTICS OF WORKPLACE MEETINGS
IN LATIN AMERICA

1. Planning
2. Time Frame
3. Attendance
4. Agenda
5. Climate
6. Involvement
7. Breaks
8. Interruptions
9. Success Factors

the meetings varied according to the disposition and time available of the group.

The respondents said that meetings were conducted three times a week, once a week or once every two weeks. Also, in other cases, the meetings were planned according to need.

Meetings lasted from one to one and a half hours, or one to three hours, or one hour and not to be extended for more than fifteen minutes. In other instances, the meetings lasted longer than was planned. They could be carried out during the whole morning or until a conclusion was reached. Finally, in cases where there were important issues to be discussed and the anticipated time ran out and conclusions could not be achieved, the moderator asked the participants if they could continue with the meeting. If they could not stay any longer, another meeting was planned.

3. Attendance referred to timing for the meetings, and for the arrival, departure and attendance of the staff.

The answers from this category indicated that there was a deadline for starting and finishing the meetings without taking into account whether all of the participants were present or not. In some instances they arrived on time, and in other cases they arrived five to ten minutes later. In some meetings where participants arrived late a sanction was imposed.

With respect to meeting punctuality, there were cases in which meetings started and finished according to the plan. In other instances, meetings started on time, but finished later than scheduled. Finally, there were work meetings which were carried out through breakfast time. In these meetings there was not a specified period of time to start or finish and people could arrive late.

4. Respondents discussed meeting agendae in times of agenda preparation format and coverage.

In some instances the agenda was modified during the meetings. Sometimes there was no agenda available for the participants. In other examples agendae were handed out prior to the meetings. Agendae were planned either by the manager or the executive director. Sometimes they were prepared by the whole staff. There was an instance where each participant brought their personal agenda. The agenda had an important role in the operation and development of the meetings, with its variations from very personal to more casual formats.

In some cases the participants arrived to the meetings with their own personal agendae. In other cases, there was a general formal agenda that each person was aware of prior to the meeting, but the meeting's moderator would present another undisclosed agenda at the meeting. In other cases, there was a formal agenda that was extensive and unstructured in order to make modifications while the discussions of the various issues took place. In another instance, there was not a formal agenda and the moderator was the only person that knew the agenda. Finally, there were other cases in which there was a formal agenda which the participants had days before the meeting in order to have time to review the content of the agenda and prepare themselves for the meeting. This meeting was conducted according to the agenda.

The agenda was covered in full in some cases, while in others they were either mostly incomplete or included only the next important issues.

The respondents revealed that when the issues addressed in the agendae were not fully addressed in the anticipated time, they were finished in the following meeting. In other words, participants tried to follow and accomplish what was stated in the agenda as much as possible. Sometimes the agenda was completely covered during the meeting. The undisclosed or hidden agenda was always fully addressed.

5. Climate referred to the social and psychological environment of the meeting like the personal interaction of the participants during the scheduled work meetings. The atmosphere of the meetings was informal, pleasant and friendly. Conversations about social interests took place periodically during the meetings.

The climate permitted participants to tell jokes or to talk about issues related to politics, the economy, sports, other news, parties, or weekend events, among others. The talking within the meeting was not restricted to formalities about to the job or to the agenda, but included to other formal or incidental issues. Participants talked about these issues before, during and after some of the meetings. In other instances, the informality was enhanced by combining the meetings with breakfast.

6. Involvement referred to the level of participation during the meetings. Participants at some of the meetings were very vocal. In other instances, attendees were only

listeners. There was no pressure or obligation to take an active part in either type of meeting.

Participants who took an active role gave opinions or provided explanations or added information. In some instances, participants had the opportunity to express their own ideas or they could interrupt others in order to clarify or make a comment. In other cases, there were attendees who participated actively while some others were only listeners, and yet others were not involved in any way, attending the meetings only because they were mandatory. In some cases attendees took an active role because they were interested in some way in the topics stated in the agenda. There was not any strict rule or procedure to follow during the meetings. Participants requested time for themselves to express their ideas during meetings. When a moderator was in control of the meeting he took charge of all the various procedures, including time for attendees to speak.

7. During work meetings there were breaks in both long and short meetings. In general, when the meetings lasted more than two hours, or if the environment was tense, brief break periods were taken. In other cases, there was no formal break.

In some cases snacks such as cookies, soft drinks, coffee and tea were displayed on a table and the participants could help themselves. If the meeting was for two or more hours, snacks were served directly to the participants, and sometimes available only during the break time. In other instances, a secretary came into the room and offered coffee or in other cases, attendees came into the meetings with their own drinks or snacks.

8. Interruptions dealt with time out taken from the meetings by the staff in order to respond to outside needs. The importance of the needs could be related to business or personal matters.

The answers from the interviewees suggested that interruptions by secretaries or pagers were allowed during the work meetings for important or urgent matters. In a few cases interruptions were not allowed at all.

9. Success factors consisted of the elements which were important to the success of the meetings in addition to their stated goals. These were the subject matter content, the knowledge and preparation of the attendees, the procedures used to conduct the meetings, and the incidental benefits of the work meetings.

With respect to the subject matter content, the interviewees suggested that the issues discussed during the work meetings were important, interesting, and directly related to the job and the company. Also, the ideas and objectives were clear and fully discussed. A tentative or a complete solution was developed. Definite conclusions and decisions were reached.

In relation to the knowledge and preparation of the attendees, interviewees stated that meetings were successful because of the attendees' professional preparation; and their maturity, interest, responsibility, and willingness to prepare for the meetings. They were people who had appropriate skills for communicating effectively with others. They were open and receptive to other participants' ideas, suggestions, opinions and comments. They respected others' rights to their opinions. They had positive attitudes and listened carefully to other participants' ideas. And the success of the meetings was due to the moderator's responsibility and ability to conduct the session.

Regarding the procedures to carry out the meetings, the interviewees stated that meetings were planned ahead of time and that these were appropriately organized and conducted. In some cases there were rules and procedures established in advance. These rules and procedures were first discussed in order to get an agreement and final approval by the members. Once they were approved, they had to be followed. In other instances, all the participants signed an attendance sheet at the end of the meeting in order to check attendance and to confirm how well and how much of the agenda was covered and how well the meeting was planned and conducted. The minutes were later sent to the participants for their review and corrections.

Concerning the incidental benefits received from the meetings, interviewees reported that meetings allowed participants to become aware of activities in other divisions of the company. Participants learned whether other project ideas were suitable and if resources were or were not available. These meetings were also a way to integrate professional workers from various company divisions. The meetings allowed participants to share and exchange ideas, projects and suggestions.

Third Research Question

What are the causes of and solutions for workplace conflict in Latin America?

The responses described causes of conflicts and the solutions suggested for these situations in the workplace. The responses from the interviewees were classified into ten categories of conflict categories and eight categories of solution suggestions, not all of which were necessarily effective. The causes of conflicts are listed in alphabetical order and are not weighted by importance. The solutions are listed from more passive to more active involvement by employees and from more to less control by management. (See Table IV).

Conflicts. 1. Peer uncooperation refers to the unwillingness of the members of the company to be tolerant of others in order to get along with employees who are different from them. This causes conflicts within the company.

Personality variations among employees was a cause of friction when it came to criticisms, suggestions or complaints. People were perceived to respond with an aggressive, defensive or pessimistic attitude. In other instances, members tried to impose their own points of view without listening and respecting other coworkers' ideas. Sometimes they assumed this attitude because they thought that their educational and professional backgrounds made them superior

TABLE IV

CAUSES OF AND SOLUTIONS FOR WORKPLACE CONFLICTS IN LATIN AMERICA

CONFLICTS	SOLUTIONS
1. Peer Uncooperation	1. Acceptance
2. Budget Limitations	2. Avoidance
3. Competitive Behavior	3. Denial
4. Theft	4. Strict Control
5. Favoritism	5. Benign Control
6. Peer Friction	6. Delegation
7. National Political Problems	7. Mediation
8. Negative Performance Appraisals	8. Problem Solving
9. Poor Time Management	
10. Sudden Job Changes	

to their coworkers. Other cases showed that working in team groups was sometimes problematic because one of the members tended to want to control the group.

2. Budget limitations referred to both the need to maintain an adequate supply of goods for work performance and the shortage of income needed to provide a fair salary to the employees.

The answers indicated that there was conflict in the sense that employees could not perform their jobs appropriately because of a shortage of work supplies. In addition, conflicts were created because of low wages

3. Competitive behavior referred to the efforts of staff members to equal or to surpass their peers in their jobs. Sometimes these behaviors were carried out by underhanded methods like discrediting someone in the process.

The responses indicated that these behaviors created competitive situations among several organizational divisions. These competitive situations caused conflicts among employees and interfered with the conduct of work assignments. Also, some employees took advantage of other employees' mistakes in order to receive a reward or benefit.

4. Theft referred to equipment or work supplies taken by the personnel without permission.

The responses indicated that there was a conflict when employees took equipment and resources which belonged to the company or when they used the equipment and resources for personal application.

5. Favoritism referred to high ranking members of a

company taking advantage of their positions to favor others in illegal ways.

Favoritism created conflicts among employees. Highly positioned managers could sponsor pet employees of lower rank. They have used their positions to influence managerial decisions concerning promotions of friends over more qualified employees.

6. Peer friction was identified in two ways. Members of organizations expressed their envy of other individuals for holding positions that they wanted. Conflicts were also caused by internal peer support, which separated the personnel into rival groups, causing uneasiness among employees.

There were coworkers who wished to take someone else's job position or to have an equal or greater salary. In other cases, it was stated that the employee who was highly educated expected to have the best job position, or at least a job position that was better than the one that was occupied by a less educated employee. Also, conflict appeared when a member of the company had to work with more than one team but only shared and supported the political and business interests of one of the teams. Finally, there was a power struggle when a supervisor blamed someone because of a mistake.

7. National political problems referred to political problems that were directly affecting the members of the company in various ways, such as preventing them from going to work or making them late. In some cases employees would take advantage of this.

A company could not perform adequately when employees either did not show up at work or arrived late. However, because of the country's political instability, it created a situation in which it was difficult to sanction, fire or hire personnel.

8. Negative performance appraisals addressed situations in which staff members were not receptive to constructive criticism after a review of their performance. The answers revealed that the evaluation of the performance created a conflict because employees were not receptive and open to analyzing and discussing their evaluation results. They adopted a negative attitude against the evaluation and they were not receptive to criticism.

9. Poor time management consisted of responses that made reference to a lack of responsibility by employees of the organization in meeting a normal work schedule and in completing a work project, or daily job duties, on time. The lack of punctuality in meeting deadlines and schedules and the lack of precision in carrying out job assignments according to the company's rules was seen to be obstructing performance expected by the company, and interfering with the work of other employees.

This situation caused the employees and supervisors to get involved in complaints and arguments that breached the normal relationships among them. In general, the answers from the interviewees suggested that conflicts were created at work by the lack of discipline in carrying out job duties according to the procedures and delays in turning out assignments.

10. Sudden job changes referred to the interruption of

the daily routine scheduled by the organization. These changes were imposed by high ranking members who could and did disregard the rules and regulations because of their job position. These alterations caused imbalance in the performance of the company.

Conflicts were created when mid level and upper level managers would change project priorities. Specifically, if employees were already working on a project, they had to forget about that project or they had to interrupt it for a while in order to begin to work on another project. In addition, conflict was evident when information that had to be communicated was not channeled to the appropriate personnel, and when procedures to carry out a job assignments were not followed.

Solutions. The solutions which were attempted in response to these conflict situations follow.

1. Acceptance referred to the workers accepting the point of view of their coworkers without much discussion. Also, it referred to staff involvement in a discussion until they decided to accept another point of view without caring whether all members agreed or not. This position was taken in order to stop the discussion, forget the issue and be able to move ahead.

2. Avoidance points up their situation in which coworkers did not reach agreement but after sometime they stopped arguing about the issue.

3. Denial referred to pretending that the conflict did not happen.

4. Strict control referred to management monitoring employee behaviors closely and using sanctions to avoid conflicts.

5. Benign control referred to management searching for innovative ways to approach and solve problems, discussing and clarifying the problematic situation with the employees.

6. Delegation referred to supervisors meeting with the employees involved in conflict and encouraging them to solve the situation. If they were not be able to solve it, supervisor would make the decision.

7. Mediation referred to a neutral or third person intervening to solve situation.

8. Problem solving referred to the open discussion of conflicts in order to resolve them successfully and prevent their recurrence.

Fourth Research Question

What behaviors are inappropriate in the Latin American workplace?

The question asked respondents to describe and explain behaviors that may be interpreted as offensive in a work situation. The responses were classified into five categories. The behaviors are listed in alphabetical order and are not weighted by importance. (See Table V).

1. Hierarchical behavior referred to the interaction of the employees according to the various levels of the company's hierarchy.

Inappropriate upward interaction between employees referred to an action taken against the supervisor. An example would be to insist that staff from management or other upper level positions "clock in and out" at the workplace.

Inappropriate downward interaction between employees referred to an action taken against the subordinates. An example would be to deny the subordinates the opportunity to attend a religious event or tradition important to their culture during a work day; to force subordinates to change routine practices for doing a job; to reject an invitation from a subordinate; or to treat subordinates as if they were slaves or possessions.

Inappropriate horizontal interaction referred to an action taken by a superior who lowered himself to his subordinates' social level. Examples would be to drink beer in a bar with subordinates; to allow subordinates to call him by his first or last name instead of his professional title; or to fail to maintain a certain personal and professional distance from subordinates.

2. Interpersonal behaviors referred to the social graces expected from members such as courtesy rituals like "thank you" and "goodbye". Persons who do not observe these formalities cause disturbances among sensitive coworkers. Another example is the display of arrogant behavior or mockary of other employees' ideas or conduct.

The answers from the interviewees indicated that not to greet or to pass in front of other employees without showing an expression of courtesy such as "good morning" or "goodbye" is considered offensive. In addition, the

TABLE V

TYPES OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS IN
THE LATIN AMERICAN WORKPLACE

1. Hierarchical
2. Interpersonal
3. Nonverbal
4. Verbal
5. Wasteful

failure to be kind, pleasant and cordial in daily relationships with coworkers is seen as inappropriate behavior.

3. Nonverbal behavior referred to the visual messages which people project in organizations.

Inappropriate behaviors included body-language that is disturbing to fellow workers, such as mannerisms, gestures, and a personal appearance that may be annoying to others.

The answers from the interviewees suggested that it was inappropriate to dress in an informal or casual way and not to have a neat and clean physical appearance. Employees who do not dress in a manner consistent with expectations for the job position, and employees who smoke in the office or fall sleep at the desk, are considered employees whose behavior is disrespectful. Other inappropriate behaviors include sitting on the office desk and arriving to work drunk.

4. The verbal behaviors referred to the auditory messages that people project in organizations.

Inappropriate verbal behaviors include disturbances of the sense of hearing of coworkers. Examples included unnecessary noise which affects the work of employees who need peace and quiet for the concentration required for work and vulgar language, gossip, and other unnecessary verbal liberties. Many times their behaviors do not violate moral codes but create intolerable situations for coworkers with sensitive hearing.

The answers from the interviewees indicated that calling someone by raising the voice very loudly, and talking and laughing in a loud manner in the hallways are inappropriate. Shouting, insulting someone, arguing, scolding or demanding something from an employee for any reason in front of other employees is inappropriate, as well as is the abrupt interruption of a conversation between two people.

In addition, it is inappropriate to use a derogatory or otherwise offensive tone of voice or vocabulary or to critize in a negative or destructive way when someone makes a mistake. Responses indicated that it was perceived as bad manners to talk behind someone's back. Also, the failure to use polite words or expressions of courtesy such as "please" is considered disrespectful. Finally, the use of colloquial language or crude verbal expressions are perceived as inappropriate

5. Wasteful behaviors concerned worker lack of respect and a sense of responsibility to the job efficiently. Specifically, such things as the wasting of time and of supplies and a lack of respect for staff as well as for rules and policies of the company have had a negative effect in the functioning of the company.

The responses indicated that there was a lack of responsibility and respect when coworkers discussed personal problems during office hours. Disrespect was also displayed when employees used the office phone in order to talk with friends or about issues not related to the job. It considered wasteful for employees to stop doing their job in order to engage in casual conversations or to gossip for long periods of time at the office. Other examples of wasting time included going to the cafeteria during working hours, and distracting other employees during work time.

In addition, missing an appointment, arriving late to work or leaving early from work were seen as counter productive. Irresponsibility is also evident from using the company resources for personal benefits. Unethical behavior would include failing to follow company procedures to make a purchase, writing false job reports, or biasing employees in order to coerce them to make certain decisions. Finally, it is wasteful to take and use the office supplies of other employee without permission or to obstruct the completion of work being conducted with others.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics and behaviors of effective professional colleagues in the workplace in Latin America.

The study describes qualities of effective professional colleagues, characteristics of workplace meetings, causes of and solutions for workplace conflict, and inappropriate behaviors in the workplace, according to 15 professionals from seven Latin American countries.

Summary

The responses from the interviewees showed that it is typical for Latin Americans to approach fellow workers not only as employees but also as friends both at work and outside of the workplace. There is no clear line that separates work from friendship. Brislin et al., (1990) stated that work and social relationships are closely intertwined for Latin Americans. They also stated that Latin Americans place a considerable emphasis on socializing with fellow workers during and after the work day.

Interviewees agreed that professional workers have to wear clothing that is appropriate to their positions. They stated that professional workers who do not dress formally or whose personal appearance is not impeccable or who do not use courteous manners are perceived as people whose behavior is inappropriate. Copeland and Griggs (1985) said that U.S. managers and executives should dress formally, display a neat appearance and exhibit proper manners.

The interviewees in the present study believed that professional workers should be addressed by their professional titles and last names. Henderson (1989) and Copeland and Griggs (1985) stated that Latin Americans should be addressed by their last name and proper title. The answers from the interviewees confirmed that Latin American business meetings are relatively informal, pleasant and friendly. There are times for relaxation as well as for conversation about topics such as politics or sports.

Informality is one of the characteristics of work meetings. The opening of the meeting does not necessarily focus upon issues of the agenda, but instead it is common for participants to spend time socializing and discussing trivialities. This is also the case during the course of the meeting, where some superfluous chatting takes place. Interruptions are allowed and work meetings can be carried out through breakfast. Copeland and Griggs (1990) affirmed that Latin Americans do not get involved directly in matters pertaining to business at the onset of a meeting and that during business meetings the conversation is not kept strictly on the agenda.

The interviewees in this study suggested that professional workers should care about their employees. They should be approached not only as employees but also as human beings. Executive personnel from the company have to respect certain religious events which comprise an important part of employee life. In other words, if there is a traditional religious event during a work day, the executives must allow employees to attend. Copeland and Griggs (1985) stated that it is important to show personal concern and understanding toward employees. Interviewees indicated that supervisors delegate more job responsibilities and exercise less control only on those employees whose job performance is adequate. Most of the decisions are made by managers and not employees. Copeland and Griggs (1985) affirmed that processes such as decision making and delegation of responsibilities are not shared with employees, and in general these processes are centralized.

Latin Americans perceive time in a flexible way. This means that they are not slaves to the clock. Sometimes there is a lack of punctuality in starting and ending a work meeting. For instance, job meetings can start and finish outside of the previously established period of time. People can come late to work meetings or appointments. In addition, interviewees stated that it was not unusual for professional people to have flexible work schedules. For instance, if they prefer, instead of working from 9:00 am to noon, they may work from 6:00 pm to 9:00

pm. Their work is not dependent upon the schedule provided by the company.

Agendae are not always followed according to the previous plan. It is not unusual for workers to miss deadlines for job projects. There is sometimes a lack of precision in following work procedures established by the company. Brooks (1991), Henderson and Milhouse (1987) and Copeland and Griggs (1985) all stated that interruptions and delays are part of normal business procedures. Sometimes punctuality is not a major concern, and business after hours is very common among Latin Americans. In Latin America time is approached in a more relaxed and flexible way than in the United States (Henderson and Milhouse, 1987 and Copeland and Griggs, 1985).

Latin Americans appreciate people with broad cultural backgrounds. These are people who not only have knowledge about their profession and company but also are people who have a range of knowledge about cultural things like sports, art and literature. Copeland and Griggs (1985) affirmed that Latin Americans appreciate U.S. business professionals with good academic and intellectual backgrounds as well as knowledge of the specific country visited and the world at large.

In Latin America people maintain physical proximity to each other. They are warm and expressive in their greetings and relationships. Copeland and Griggs (1985) stated that Latin Americans are accustomed to providing warm greetings and that they feel comfortable interacting with people in close spaces.

When working with the public, they prefer to do it in person rather than through media like the telephone, the mail or other impersonal means. Copeland and Griggs (1985) and Henderson and Milhouse (1987) stated that negotiations rely more upon personal contact and acquaintanceship and ongoing working relationships. They pointed out that the establishment of appropriate interpersonal relationships is important also because meetings begin with extended social acquaintance and the establishment of social rapport. (Copeland and Griggs, 1985 and Milhouse and Henderson, 1987).

It is common for work meetings to have a hidden agenda. This hidden agenda always takes priority over the official agenda.

When there is conflict, Latin American workers are in general more aggressive, defensive, domineering, and closed minded. Sometimes they begin blaming each other and raising their voices until one of the persons decides to break the cycle, walk away and leave the discussion. This apparently brings the situation back to normal, but the people do not forget the incident. When another conflict appears, people take the opportunity to dredge up the incidents from the prior conflicts. They try to avoid confrontations and "work things out" expediently. They prefer to reach solutions by the easiest and fastest method available.

Sometimes worker performance appraisals are based upon the connections that they have with key personnel or upon their involvement with the political or business views or goals of various groups within the company. Promotions and other types of benefits sometimes do not depend only upon how appropriate the worker's performance is, but on how much influence that worker has with executive level people in the company. Henderson and Milhouse (1987) stated that employees tend to be evaluated upon their loyalty to superiors more than upon actual job performance.

Finally, it is common to make alterations on work projects blindly in response to demands by high ranking members of the company. Specifically, upper level managers make decisions about starting or finishing work projects without considering the projects in which employees were already working. These decisions are made without consulting with the workers themselves who are responsible for the projects. Copeland and Griggs (1985) noted that in general, organizational processes like decision making are centralized.

Conclusions

The increasing globalization of business accelerates the need for U.S. business professionals to learn to function effectively in other cultures. For this reason companies should train their personnel for cross cultural interactions.

U.S. business professionals need to develop skills in how to listen carefully, and how to interrupt appropriately, and reprimand appropriately. U.S. professionals need to acquire of both effectiveness skills which empower them to translate their managerial, consulting and technical competence successfully, and coping skills which enable them to become reasonably comfortable in a foreign environment.

U.S. business professionals need to learn to be flexible and open in intercultural contacts in order to minimize mistakes and misunderstandings in intercultural relationships. Flexibility and openness contribute to cross cultural understanding that conveys a sincere attitude as well as acceptance and empathy which will be received in a trusting, positive manner.

U.S. business professionals should be equipped with a number of personality characteristics and behavioral skills such as empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, sociability, kindness, patience, intellectual curiosity and an open attitude toward people whose personal, moral and social values are different from their own. They should also develop and display a genuine interest in local culture and people.

In order to select and train individuals who will function competently in various cultures, there must be an understanding of which factors are important as criteria for successful cross cultural functioning. Some of these factors can be classified into skills, attitudes, values, and personality traits.

Once these factors have been identified, a training program can be designed so that the participants develop cultural understanding and sensitivity to cultural issues of the host country by experiencing the other people's values and beliefs vicariously. This allows the participants not only to get knowledge about the other culture but also to understand how people in this culture behave and why. This process helps to reduce the magnitude of the stress experienced by U.S. business professionals which results from the extent to which the Latin American culture.

For U.S. business professionals the challenge is to sharpen cultural awareness more than to learn facts about the other culture. U.S. business professionals must be aware not only of facts pertaining to Latin American culture but also to be aware of why Latin Americans behave in the way that they do.

The information gathered in this study describes and reflects Latin American culture as it relate to their professional relationships at work, their efforts in work meetings, in conflict situations and concerning inappropriate behaviors at work. This information may help U.S. business professionals to know how Latin Americans behave, think, and interrelate and why they behave in the ways they do. U.S. business professionals will then be able to understand the reasons that underlie and characterize Latin American cultural patterns. If they know why people behave in the way that they do, there is a greater possibility of ensuring a successful adaptation in Latin America or other regions of the world.

Some of the cultural patterns included in this study are overt components of Latin American culture that are explicit and easily observed, but there are also covert ones which are implicit and difficult to identify. These covert cultural elements are manifested through attitudes, beliefs, and values.

It is a serious challenge for U.S. business professionals to enter into Latin American covert behavior. So U.S. business professionals must be strong observers, watching both individuals and their environments and trying to understand their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, habits of thought and values that underlie what U.S. professionals observe from Latin Americans daily life and work.

Culture is a very important component of all aspects of business operations in Latin America. American business professionals must be trained to be sensitive to cultural differences in order to be most effective.

Recommendations

In the past decade the interest in understanding cross cultural issues has intensified because business and commerce are expanding exponentially across national boundaries. Many studies in cross cultural issues have been generated, but there is still a need to build a more complete foundation from theoretical, research and practical points of view.

Research

One of the primary intentions of this study was to generate and expand knowledge in the area of cross cultural issues in relation to Latin American culture. Recommendations follow.

1. A larger sample should be used in order to validate the results.

2. A standardized instrument should be developed to collect information regarding cross cultural issues from a large representative population.

3. A comparison of the perceptions of male and female Latin Americans the issues that were addressed in this study should be conducted.

4. A comparison of the perceptions of Latin Americans and Anglo Americans should be studied.

Practice

The practical benefits from this study follow:

1. This study provides useful information in order to design educational experiences for the selection and training of U.S. business professionals who are sent to Latin American countries.

2. Human Resource Development professionals can expand their research and understanding of the regional and national culture of companies in Latin America.

3. Using the Latin Americans' perceptions of their own culture might help to design training programs that promote empathic understanding. This means an understanding of the emotions, feelings, values, attitudes and beliefs of the Latin Americans, not only cognitively but also by attempting to experience the affective dimension of the Latin American person. For instance, trying to see the situation the way the Latin American person sees and experiences it. This means entering actively and imaginatively into the other person's situation and to try to understand a frame of reference different from one's

own. This will help to ensure a better and more successful adaptation in Latin American countries.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

INTERVIEW

Country: Type of Organization:

Job Position: Gender:

Years of Work Experience: Age:

1. Select one or several persons with whom you worked in Latin America, specifically someone that you think was useful in order for you to be able to do your work in an effective way.

a) What characteristics or qualities did you find in this person that helped both of you to develop and establish an excellent relationship as coworkers or colleagues?

b) What positive aspects did you identify in this person?

c) What was his/her attitud like?

d) What were his/her values?

e) What was it that made you get along well together?

f) Could you describe his/her behavior for me?

g) What was his/her personality like?

h) What were his/her emotional reactions like?

i) What was his/her his temperament like?

2. With respect to the work meetings:

a) What were they like?

b) What helped make these meetings successful?

c) What kinds of attributes did you find in the people who participated in these meetings?

d) What positive and useful aspects can you identify about these meetings?

e) How were the work meetings carried out or conducted?

f) What was the behaviors of the participants during the work meetings?

3. When there were moments of conflict:

a) Did you remember what the causes were?

b) Could you describe how the situations or moments of conflict in the work were solved?

c) How did the participants as a work team solve these conflict situations?

4) Could you describe and explain the behavior patterns that were perceived or interpreted by other persons as offensive or uncultured?

1. Personal characteristics from a professional colleague that contribute to develop and establish a successful work relationship.

2. Characteristic aspects involved in the planning, starting, conduction and finishing of work meetings.

3. Causes and solutions of conflictive sitations at work.

4. Innapropriate behaviors at work place.

ENTREVISTA

Pais: Tipo de Organizacion:

Cargo: Sexo:

Anos de Experiencia de Trabajo: Edad:

1. Seleccione una o varias personas con las cuales usted trabajo en Latinoamerica, especificamente alguien que usted considere le fue util para que usted pudiera hacer su trabajo de una manera efectiva.

a) Que caracteristicas o cualidades usted encontro en esta persona que ayudo a que ustedes desarrollaran y establecieran una excelente relacion como companeros o colegas de trabajo?

b) Que aspectos positivos usted identifico en esa persona?

c) Como era su actitud?

d) Cuales eran sus valores?

e) Que hizo que ustedes se la llevaran bien?

f) Me podria describir como era su comportamiento?

g) Como era su personalidad?

h) Como eran sus reacciones emocionales?

i) Como era su temperamento?

2. Con respecto a las reuniones de trabajo:

a) Como eran?

b) Que ayudo a que esas reuniones fueran exitosas?

c) Que clase de atributos usted encontro en las personas que participaron en esas reuniones?

d) Que aspectos positivos y utiles usted puede identificar acerca de esas reuniones?

e) Como se llevaban a cabo o se conducian esas reuniones de trabajo?

f) Como era el comportamiento de las personas durante las reuniones de trabajo?

3. Cuando hubo momentos de conflicto:

a) Recuerda usted cuales fueron las causas?

b) Podria describir como las situaciones o momentos de conflicto en el trabajo fueron solucionados?

c) Como las personas como grupo de trabajo solucionaron esas situaciones de conflicto?

4) Podria describir y explicar patrones de comportamiento que pudieran ser percibidos o interpretados por otras personas como ofensivos o de mala educacion?

2

VITA

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OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
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Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature: Marcia L. Tilley
Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: June 8, 1993