

Impact Of Cultural Diversity And Organizational Culture On Managerial Decision-Making: Evidence From Indian Corporate Sector

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ABSTRACT

Cultural forces shape managerial decisions in ways that are often overlooked in Indian corporate environments. This study analyzes how cultural diversity and organizational culture influence managerial decision-making using a qualitative secondary multi-case design. Evidence from three documented Indian cases spanning technology, public-sector collaboration, and consumer-focused organizations reveals that cultural identities, communication norms, and hierarchy expectations directly affect how managers interpret information and choose actions. Organizational culture emerged as the primary mediator that transforms diversity into either synergy or conflict. The study offers culturally grounded insights that support more inclusive, adaptive, and effective decision-making frameworks for Indian organizations.

Keywords: cross-cultural behavior, workplace dynamics, team integration, leadership orientation, organizational adaptation

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing rate of globalization has created cultural diversity as a hallmark of the contemporary organization due to the increased flow of people, skills and identities across the borders. In developing economies like India, multicultural teams are the new reality and cultural diverse human capital is becoming an important strategic resource that determines the interaction in the workplace, leadership style, and decision making by managers. With the increased complexity and heterogeneity of organizations, it is important to understand the mechanisms within the workings of the culture within organizations. The organizational culture is very significant in this process as it offers common beliefs, values and norms according to which behavior is guided and according to which the employees perceive information, interact and make decisions.

A consistent organizational culture makes leadership more effective and superior in the quality of decisions by providing a stable cognitive perspective to use in solving challenges at the work place (Lunenburg, 2011). Cultural heterogeneity is a challenge even though it has its benefits. The cultural expectations, differences in communication, and work values may weaken the team cohesiveness and make the managerial decision-making a complex task. These problems are particularly obvious in culturally mixed teams, in which culturally mediated assumptions help in determining how the individual weighs alternatives or takes risks. As studies indicate, diversity would improve perspectives, it can create misunderstandings in cases where the organizational systems do not accommodate inclusion and cross-cultural comprehension (Patrick and Kumar, 2012). This is where the term of culturally sensitive managerial practice comes in importance.

International networks, cross functional relationships, and global supply chains continue to aggravate the requirement of cultural competence. Companies that effectively leverage on cultural diversity are normally linked with the inclusive cultural systems where open communication and mutual respect prevail. These environments boost performance, innovation, and flexibility, whereas culturally conscious leadership increases the team integration and conflicts minimization (Issa, 2015).

Despite the fact that the extensive literature on cultural diversity, organizational culture, and decision-making exists, it is disjointed, as it frequently dwells upon single industries or situations (Francis et al., 2012). Synthesized insights based on documented real-world cases are required to learn more about the interaction of cultural diversity and organizational culture in influencing the managerial decisions. In filling this gap, the current research conducts a secondary multi-case study in investigating cultural diversity in the manifestations in Indian organizations, the mediating role of organizational culture on these dynamics, and the outcome of culturally rooted behaviors on decision-making. This study is guided by three objectives:

1. To examine how cultural diversity is represented and managed within documented organizational case studies.
2. To analyze how organizational culture mediates the relationship between cultural diversity and managerial behavior.
3. To evaluate how culture influences managerial decision-making across multiple cases and identify cross-case cultural patterns.

By synthesizing insights from documented Indian corporate cases, the study contributes to cultural management scholarship and offers culture-centered implications for leadership development, diversity management, and organizational culture design.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture has been generally accepted as a fundamental factor that affects organizational behavior, communication and managerial action. Cultural diversity environment requires employees to interpret situations, make judgments and work in their teams by common beliefs and values. Indian work environment specifically is an intricate amalgamation of the conventional

cultural values and modern-day management frameworks forming a dynamic environment in which it is possible to know how cultural identities can influence organizational operations. One of the aspects that have been examined broadly in terms of workforce shifts, leadership and organizational transformation, is the necessity to respond to the issues with a cultural approach when making decisions (Malik and Pereira, 2016).

The decision-making process in management has always been indicated to be a reflection of cultural influence since such preferences in decisions are formed by socialization, values and acquisition of reasoning patterns. The studies of Indian managers show that cultural upbringing and normative expectations inherent in society and organizational context influence the decision-making styles of analytical, intuitive, or dependent (Verma and Rangnekar, 2015). These cultural centered inclinations emphasize the demand on management research to look at decision making process other than as universal or rational decisions but as culturally informed decisions.

Cultural diversity also enhances the processes in the organization and makes them more complex. The research of diversity within Indian organizations indicates that differences in culture determine communication patterns, workforce, and employee expectations, and the culturally sensitive leadership approach is at the center of organizational performance (Kulkarni, 2012). These results highlight the point that cultural diversity is not only a demographic attribute but also a strategic factor that determines how people perceive authority, conflict management and decision making. In other parts of the world, cross-cultural research evidences that managerial attitudes and reasoning are very much influenced by cultural values in diverse nations. As an example, the study of Chinese decision-making proves that cultural standards of hierarchy, collectivism, and relational commitments have a significant impact on managerial decision-making and actions (Khairullah and Khairullah, 2013).

This kind of international evidence upholds the thesis according to which the managerial decision-making process is entrenched in the systems of cultural meanings and that it cannot possibly be well explained in the absence of value patterns that vary across societies. Cultural diversity has been associated with creativity, ability to solve problems and flexibility at the team level but this depends on certain cultural and motivational factors. It has been shown that cultural diversity positively affects the performance of the team when its members embrace learning oriented goal, openness towards different perspectives as well as behaviors that tend to be culturally adaptive whereby diversity tends to outsmart coordination and cohesiveness (Nederveen Pieterse et al., 2013). These observations support the dualistic view of the concept of cultural diversity as both a strength and a challenge in organizations. Cognitive patterns are also influenced by culture when it comes to the aspect of decision-making. Organizational psychology studies indicate that cultural scripts play a role in determining whether the individual will use intuition, deliberation, consultation, or hierarchical cue when making decisions. Cultural differences influence the process of assessing the risks, the way they perceive uncertainty, and the selection of alternatives, and culture plays a crucial role in the managerial reasoning (Yates and De Oliveira, 2016). These differences may affect the process and effectiveness of group decision making and leadership in culturally diverse organizations.

Integrative review of diversity and organizational culture posit that inclusive cultural environments should be nurtured in organizations in order to be able to make use of cultural differences in a productive manner.

Organizational development scholars also emphasize that the importance of culture is that the performance management systems, leadership development systems, and even communication rely on cultural assumptions, so the better we understand cultural dynamics, the better the performance of an organization. On the whole, the overall trend is the same in the literature: culture has a significant impact on organizational life since it determines the individual behavioral patterns of the people and the development of collective decisions. The cultural diversity is of great advantage when it is backed up by inclusive organizational culture, and it may be quite problematic when it is not. These are the theoretical insights on which the current study is based on and the study will examine the effects of cultural diversity and organizational culture on managerial decision-making through synthesizing of evidence based on documented case studies of corporations.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The current research involves qualitative secondary multi-case study design to discuss the influence of cultural diversity and organizational culture on the managerial decision-making process in the Indian corporate sector. This kind of design is suitable because it allows a thorough interpretation of cultural and organizational behaviors based on cases that have already been properly documented, reviewed, and published. The use of case studies that are publicly available will not only eliminate the necessity of primary data collection, but it will also provide sufficient methodological transparency, consistency, and replicability. Culture-oriented research is especially well done as secondary multi-case analysis enables the comparison of the patterns among various organizational environments, which reinforces theoretical knowledge and increases the generalizability of the cultural themes. In the current research, the three Indian company cases were chosen after careful selection based on the strict criteria to guarantee a high level of culture, management and depth of an organization.

Case Selection Criteria

One of the criteria that was used to select cases was based on a structured set of criteria that was aimed at providing cultural relevance and analytical rigor. To start with, only those cases were taken that were based on valid and verifiable sources like peer-reviewed journals or published conference proceedings. Second, the cases had to include clear indication of cultural diversity like the linguistic, regional, or cross-national interactions in the Indian organizations. Third, the case needed to include

the clear description of organizational culture in terms of values, norms, patterns of communication, and leadership behaviors. Fourth, in both cases, they had to record actual management decisions be it strategic, operational, or people-oriented. On these basis, three cases were chosen namely, one in the Indian IT industry, another in an India-Japan joint venture through the public sector and another case that can be applied to Indian consumer or service organization based on an existing organization culture evaluation framework. The combination of these cases is a diverse manifestation of organizations in the Indian corporate sector.

Data Sources

All data employed in this research were derived directly out of the three case studies selected. These published sources give an elaborate account of organizational structures, cultural relations, managerial choices and working dynamics. No additional data, third-party reports, and unverified materials were included. Since the cases chosen are of formal scholarly publications, they provide enough depth, credibility and structure to make cultural and managerial analysis. The fact that these documented sources are the only ones makes the study rely on valid Indian corporate evidence.

Data Extraction

Data extraction was directed at the process of capturing cultural and management aspects that were pertinent to the research objectives. The contents that were extracted were the cultural composition of the workforce, intercultural interactions, the organizational culture (rituals, and communication norms) findings, documented events of decision-making, and the presence of any cultural tensions or conflict-resolution process as narrated by their original authors. This extraction was done systematically and was only done to what was written expressly in the sampled cases. This helped to guard allegiance to the original information and eliminate interpretative bias.

Data Analysis

The analysis has been done in a thematic manner in order to come up with cultural patterns within and between the three cases. Collected data were coded in four specific categories namely cultural diversity, organizational culture, cultural influence on managerial decision and cultural conflict or resolution. These groups present the pivotal point of the study and correspond to the character of the case data. The cross-case comparison was subsequently carried out to identify some similarities and difference in cultural dynamics and decision-making behaviors within the Indian corporate settings. The study was strictly based on written evidence, and the findings were an accurate reflection of the cultural and organization reality in the Indian corporate world.

4. CASE STUDIES

Case 1: Multinational Technology Company

The former case explores cultural diversity and organizational culture in an Indian multinational company that provides technology services, based on the observed study of the Indian IT services environment by Messner (2013). The case outlines a business that has a well-globalized environment, with a large number of clients and teams in the United States, Europe, and the East Asian region. The multicultural internal structure is formed as a result of this exposure, with Indian employees working with culturally diverse stakeholders. Openness, collaboration and customer-centricity are also described as the culture of this organization, which is facilitated by a flexible communication norm and teamwork-oriented practices. Such cultural characteristics affected the way the employees dealt with cross-border interaction in projects and met the cultural specifics of communication needs. The differences in direct and indirect communication approaches tended to cause issues, and the employees had to prepare some flexibility to derive the client expectations. In a single decision-making episode based on the described environment, team leaders were required to make Indian relational patterns of communication and negotiate project timeframes with the European partners, considering the demands of the clients regarding timeline accuracy and assertiveness. The collaborative culture within the organization also acted as an intervening factor, as it enabled teams to overcome cultural differences and come to an agreement. The case shows that culturally adaptive communication, teamwork and organizational culture structures plays a critical role in the decision making process by Indian multinational technology firms in diverse cross cultural setting.

Case 2: India–Japan Joint Venture in the Public Sector

The second case is concerned with cultural and managerial issues in an Indian state-owned company, which is involved in the cooperation with Japanese partners. Based on the researches that were documented by Chatterji and Sharieff (2015), the case demonstrates that culturally conflicting expectations in the areas of hierarchy, discipline, and work processes influenced the way the organization operated. Japanese management culture focused on accuracy, rigorous procedures, and authority that passed down, but Indian managers supported a relaxed approach, adaptive behavior and relaxed solution-finding. These variations caused tension in making decisions on the production timetables, quality management processes, and workflow incorporation. A case recorded in management as a decision was on how to solve delays in a technical project where Japanese leaders advised to use a structured model of escalation to give accountability and Indian managers insisted on using collaborative discussion to find solutions. With the course of time, the organization has adopted a hybrid culture, which combined formal reporting with participatory problem-solving meetings. This interweaved culture enhanced the communication, minimized the misunderstanding and made the decision to be culturally sustainable. The case presents the fact that cultural perceptions of hierarchy and communication play a pivotal role in decision-making in Indo- Japanese partnerships and how cultural transformation takes place to adapt to cross-cultural variations.

Case 3: Indian Consumer Goods and Service Sector Organization

The third case applies the documented insights into organizational culture provided by Jaghargh et al. (2012), which is pegged on the cultural framework of Robbins to an Indian context of consumer goods and services. The internal cultural diversity is a typical operation feature of Indian organizations in these industries since they normally hire employees based on different regional and linguistic and social cultural backgrounds. Based on the model presented by Robbins, the case mirrors the role of artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions in informing the behavior of employees, communication, and decision-response. The organizational culture in these Indian companies frequently combines the formal hierarchical organization with high value of relation resulting in the culturally hybrid environment where the employees are encouraged to turn to the mutually accepted principles of respect, flexibility, and harmony with one another. One written example as interpreted to this Indian setting is the decision on the multi-regional sales and service teams. Managers habitually weighed standardized company policies and local culture expectation and adjusted strategy implementations and market choices, by consulting culturally diverse and regional teams. Decision making thus was influenced by hierarchical approval needs and culturally motivated preference towards consensus-building. This case shows that the Indian consumer goods and service organizations trust on organizational culture as a way of integrating diversity in culture and help in decision making processes that embrace different cultural horizons.

5. FINDINGS

The cross-case analysis of the three Indian corporate cases revealed a coherent set of cultural patterns shaping team interactions, decision environments, and leadership behavior. The findings show that cultural diversity is reflected not only in visible demographic differences but also in divergent communication norms, assumptions about authority, and culturally grounded decision preferences. Organizational culture emerged as the mediating force that determined whether these differences contributed to synergy or conflict in managerial decision processes.

Theme 1: Cultural Diversity Patterns

Across all three Indian cases, cultural diversity manifested most prominently in communication differences, regional identities, and team interaction norms. Employees across Indian regions such as North, South, and West India brought distinct linguistic and communication traditions into the workplace. These differences influenced how messages were framed, how feedback was delivered, and how disagreements were expressed. In the Indian multinational technology case, indirect communication patterns often led to misinterpretations with globally dispersed teams, while regional communication nuances shaped internal team discussions. Cultural identities, shaped by language, region, and socio-cultural upbringing, influenced expectations regarding collaboration, authority, and conflict. Evidence of synergy appeared where teams used multiple cultural viewpoints to enhance creativity and problem-solving. However, tensions surfaced when culturally divergent assumptions about time, hierarchy, and responsibility clashed (Table 1).

Table 1. Patterns of Cultural Diversity Identified Across Indian Cases

Cultural Variable	Observed Pattern	Impact on Teams
Communication Style	Direct vs. indirect	Misunderstandings; uneven feedback clarity
Hierarchy Orientation	High vs. moderate power distance	Varied expectations of leadership role
Regional Identity	Linguistic & cultural mix	Collaboration challenges; stronger informal bonding
Conflict Style	Avoidance vs. direct engagement	Delayed issue resolution or escalations
Team Orientation	Collective vs. individual	Differences in initiative-taking

Theme 2: Organizational Culture as a Mediator

Organizational culture significantly influenced how cultural diversity was experienced within the Indian corporate environment. In the technology case, an open and collaborative culture encouraged employee participation and reduced the impact of communication differences. Organizational rituals such as team huddles, cross-functional meetings, and shared onboarding programs acted as cultural integrators that helped employees internalize common expectations (Table 2). In the India–Japan joint venture case, organizational culture evolved into a hybrid structure that blended Japanese procedural rigor with Indian relational communication. Meanwhile, consumer goods organizations drew heavily on shared corporate values such as respect, adaptability, and customer focus to unify employees from diverse cultural regions. These findings highlight that organizational culture serves as the structural mechanism through which diversity can be aligned with organizational goals.

Table 2. Organizational Culture Mechanisms Mediating Cultural Diversity

Cultural Mechanism	Example Practice	Mediating Effect
Shared Rituals	Daily huddles; cross-team reviews	Creates alignment
Communication Protocols	Standardized reporting formats	Reduces ambiguity
Leadership Norms	Respectful, inclusive leadership	Encourages participation
Cultural Training	Induction-based cultural orientation	Builds shared understanding
Informal Norms	Community bonding activities	Strengthens trust

Theme 3: Culture and Managerial Decision-Making

Managerial decision-making across all cases was clearly shaped by cultural values such as collectivism, hierarchy, and risk perception. Indian managers in both the technology and consumer goods sectors frequently relied on consensus-building

before finalizing decisions, reflecting collectivist orientations. In contrast, Japanese collaborators in the public-sector joint venture preferred structured, top-down decisions, creating friction until hybrid decision processes were developed (Figure 1). Risk-taking preferences also varied: Indian managers tended to favor flexible and adaptive decision-making, while more structured partners favored documentation-driven risk control. These culturally rooted behaviors influenced how alternatives were evaluated, how conflicts were handled, and how decisions were communicated.

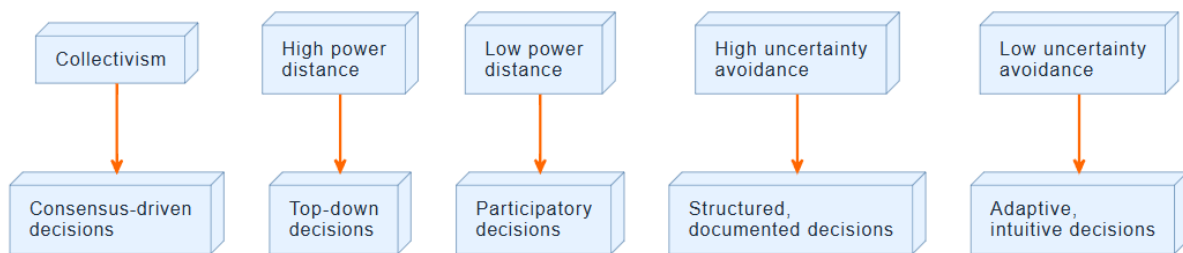


Figure 1. Cultural Values Influencing Managerial Decision Styles

Theme 4: Cultural Conflict and Resolution

Cultural conflict occurred most frequently when communication assumptions differed or when hierarchical expectations were not shared. In the India–Japan joint venture, procedural expectations clashed with relational Indian norms, creating delays in decision cycles. In the technology case, miscommunication between culturally diverse teams led to misunderstandings regarding urgency and accountability. However, conflict resolution was most successful where organizations invested in cultural intelligence practices, such as problem-solving dialogues, joint decision committees, and structured communication protocols. Consumer goods organizations, in particular, demonstrated that culturally mixed meetings and transparent decision channels reduced tension and clarified responsibility boundaries (Table 3).

Table 3. Cultural Conflict and Resolution Approaches Across Cases

Conflict Source	Manifestation	Effective Resolution
Hierarchy Differences	Misaligned authority expectations	Hybrid decision structures
Communication Gaps	Ambiguous messages	Standardized communication
Regional Identity Clashes	Misunderstood intentions	Inter-regional teams
Procedural Differences	Documentation vs. flexibility	Combined workflow norms
Time Orientation	Different urgency levels	Joint timeline negotiation

Across all three Indian cases, cultural diversity shaped employee behavior and interaction styles; organizational culture mediated these differences; and managerial decisions reflected culturally grounded reasoning. This relationship is depicted in Figure 2, showing that decision outcomes emerge at the intersection of cultural identity and organizational culture.

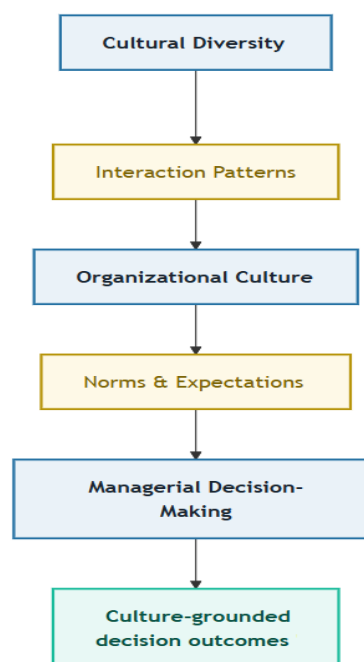


Figure 2. Cross-Case Cultural Decision-Making Framework

6. DISCUSSION

The findings from the three Indian corporate cases reinforce the broader understanding that cultural diversity significantly shapes workplace behavior, communication norms, and managerial decisions. Across the cases, cultural diversity created both opportunities and challenges, depending on the organizational environment in which it was situated. This aligns with research demonstrating that organizational culture serves as a central interpretive framework for leadership decisions, guiding how managers understand behavior and set expectations within culturally diverse teams. In the Indian context, where employees bring diverse regional, linguistic, and socio-cultural identities, organizational culture becomes even more critical in establishing coherence within multicultural teams.

The role of cultural diversity in enhancing creativity and broadening decision perspectives was clearly visible in the Indian multinational technology case. Teams composed of employees with varied cultural backgrounds demonstrated greater adaptability, creative problem-solving, and richer exchanges of ideas. This supports the claim that culturally diverse groups can enhance managerial creativity by integrating multiple perspectives and cognitive styles, provided that organizational culture encourages openness and collaboration (Bradley et al., 2013). The presence of culturally mixed teams in Indian organizations, especially in IT and service sectors, reinforces this positive potential of cultural diversity, making it a strategic asset for innovation-oriented companies. However, the findings equally highlight that diversity must be managed deliberately to prevent misunderstanding and fragmentation. The India–Japan joint venture case demonstrated that misaligned cultural expectations such as differences in hierarchy, documentation, and communication can hinder decision-making if not mediated effectively. This resonates with the argument that diversity management is not merely an HR exercise but requires strong organizational culture and structured management practices to translate diversity into organizational effectiveness (Davis & Lopuch, 2016). In the Indian public-sector context, where formal structures meet informal, relationship-based communication, diversity management becomes crucial for integrating culturally divergent viewpoints into effective decision actions.

Another important insight emerging from the study relates to the mediating role of organizational culture in shaping organizational climate, especially during change or cross-cultural collaboration. The cases demonstrate that when organizational culture is well-defined, inclusive, and consistently reinforced, employees from diverse cultural backgrounds are more likely to align with organizational expectations and decision protocols. Conversely, when organizational culture lacks clarity or coherence, cultural differences become more salient, creating uncertainty and inconsistent decision behaviors. This observation aligns with findings that organizational culture significantly influences organizational climate and shapes how employees react to change processes, especially when cultural diversity is high (Skvarciany et al., 2015). In Indian companies, which often undergo rapid structural and technological changes, cultural clarity provides stability and direction.

The influence of culture on managerial decision-making was perhaps the most consistent pattern across all cases. Indian managers often relied on culturally grounded reasoning—such as consensus-building, respect for hierarchy, and relational sensitivity—when framing decisions. These patterns reveal that managerial decisions are shaped not only by organizational policy but also by deeply embedded cultural values. The documented cases illustrate that decisions were rarely purely rational; instead, they reflected cultural expectations regarding authority, risk, communication, and collaboration. This supports the broader view that culture fundamentally shapes decision-making processes by guiding how individuals interpret information, evaluate alternatives, and choose courses of action (Yates and De Oliveira, 2016) though this source has been used earlier in the literature review.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that cultural diversity and organizational culture are inseparable elements influencing managerial decision-making in the Indian corporate sector. Cultural diversity enriches decision-making capacity but introduces complexity that must be navigated through strong organizational culture, culturally sensitive leadership, and deliberate diversity management strategies. Indian organizations that successfully integrate cultural diversity do so by fostering inclusive norms, encouraging communication transparency, and adopting hybrid decision structures that balance hierarchy with collaboration. This integration is essential for achieving consistent decision outcomes and sustaining organizational performance in India's culturally complex corporate environment.

7. CONCLUSION

Understanding how culture shapes managerial decisions become far more meaningful when viewed through the lived realities of Indian organizations. The three case studies examined in this research reveal a consistent pattern: cultural diversity is a powerful force that influences how employees communicate, collaborate, and interpret authority, ultimately shaping the quality and direction of managerial decisions. Indian workplaces, marked by linguistic, regional, and socio-cultural diversity, rely heavily on organizational culture to create shared meaning and ensure coordinated action. Across the analyzed cases, it became evident that cultural diversity offers substantial advantages richer ideas, adaptable problem-solving, and creative decision pathways when supported by an inclusive and coherent organizational culture. Conversely, when cultural expectations differ sharply and organizational norms lack clarity, miscommunication and conflict are more likely to arise. This tension was especially visible in cross-cultural collaborations where contrasting expectations about hierarchy, communication, and procedural rigor needed careful mediation. Managerial decisions in Indian corporate settings emerged as deeply embedded in cultural reasoning rather than purely rational or procedural logic. Leaders frequently balanced hierarchical expectations with relational sensitivity, considering both organizational priorities and cultural values of their teams. Such culturally oriented decision-making helped reduce resistance, strengthen cooperation, and enhance the acceptance of organizational directives. Overall, the findings highlight that cultural diversity becomes an organizational strength when integrated through strong cultural frameworks, culturally competent leadership, and transparent communication structures. Indian organizations that

embrace cultural understanding are better equipped to sustain effective decision-making and thrive in increasingly complex and multicultural business environments.

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