The Communication Barriers in Virtual Teams in Pakistan: A Case Study of Software Industry

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ABSTRACT

We live in an era of digitalization, where everything is connected, and access to the Internet is available to nearly four billion people across the globe. As technology and infrastructure continue to advance at a very fast pace, it becomes increasingly easier to collaborate with people across thousands of miles, in real time. Collaborating with people from various countries and regions of the world is a phenomenon that has become the new normal in business and academic environments. These are called Virtual Teams and the dynamics that they face based on the dimensions of communication are the focus of this study.

The aim of this research is to study the communication barriers in virtual teams of software industry in Lahore, Pakistan. The nature of the study was exploratory and qualitative, and it followed the principles of a case study which was conducted through semi-structured interviews with eight remote employees from different software houses of Lahore, Pakistan. Based on the analysis of the interviews, it is concluded that virtual teams deserve special attention by leaders and team members, as the adoption of this operating model will continue expanding and hence will make difficult to manage it effectively. Specific skills are needed when communicating and dealing with different cultures. Being virtual means very different dynamics, challenges and opportunities than those known by collocated teams. This research brings insight and managerial recommendations related to the ways to leverage such opportunities and mitigate the communication challenges, along with an overall skill set approach to work virtually across borders and cultures. The suggestions can benefit both new and existing teams, which are either global and virtual or aiming to become so.