

## **THE ROLE OF ACCULTURIZATION FOR CROSS-CULTURAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract:** Many of global researches demonstrated that innovative enterprises are in average twice more profitable than other enterprises. Intensive global competition, higher customer expectations and greater focus on quality have resulted in much greater requirements placed upon employees today than decades ago. The challenge has been to internalize a new type of organizational behavior in order to operate successfully under unfamiliar conditions. It is clear that in creation of innovative enterprise not only technology is important, but also people, culture and communication. Under going globalization process it is important to draw attention that it influences organization employees too, thus human resource development as well. In this paper authors analyze factors impacting global human resource development, globalization's impact on human resource development process. Mostly authors emphasize influence of culture and speak about opportunities of acculturation.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Training and Development; Culture; Acculturation.

More recently, there have been efforts to define the growing field of human resource development (HRD) from a broader perspective (McLean & McLean, 2001). As cultural and social contexts vary leading to varied HRD practices, HRD as a discipline needs to develop a globally accepted definition for international HRD to accommodate the extensive amount of cross-national HRD work that is being done by transnational corporations, transnational nongovernmental organizations, and transnational political entities.

Looking to the broader context of research that explores concepts and theories of the field in a cross-cultural context, it is likewise important to look at a definition of HRD that may not fit in the context of a specific culture or in a specific national environment, but rather relates to how we understand the field when it is applied in an international or cross-national context. Speaking about human resource training and development practices in different regions of the world, several scholars and international experts view different countries within a region as more homogeneous; others view them as more heterogeneous (Ronen and Shenkar, 1985; Dirani, 2006).

Nowadays students are more international than they were few decades ago. But students from different countries represent different attitudes and behavior still. For enterprises it is important to see the difference of young generation, because they are future employees and employers. For this reason empirical research of this paper was done with students.

This paper is organized as follows. First, the definition of cross-cultural human resource development is given. Next, factors, influencing global human resource development are described. Then acculturization and its importance in cross-cultural human resource development are given. After this focus on training methods using scientific literature and results of intercultural study are provided. Finally, discussion about future of cross-cultural human resource development and conclusion are presented.

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Methods of the research are analysis and synthesis of the scientific literature and empirical study.

### **Theoretical Background**

#### **The Definition of Cross – Cultural Human Resource Development**

Economic globalization and transnational corporations have had a significant impact on the field of HRD (Yaw, McGovern, & Budhwar, 2000), providing the impetus for the need of a definition of international or cross – national HRD. During the past two decades, continuously intensifying globalization has demanded more internationalized HRD study and practice. But what is international human resource development (IHRD)? The term is frequently found in the literature, it is usually not defined, and when it is the definition is vague. Much of the published literature on the definition of the field has been focused in the west – originally, in the United States (Weinberger, 1998) and, increasingly, in Europe. However, there is no one definition in the scientific literature. Scientists still discuss how to describe human resource in national, cross - cultural, transnational and global context.

As Hansen and Brooks (1994) found, HRD practitioners from different nations use culturally based perceptions and attitudes to define their work and its effectiveness that often varies from U.S. - based HRD definitions. As cultural and social contexts vary leading to varied HRD practices, HRD as a discipline needs to develop a globally accepted definition for IHRD to accommodate the extensive amount of cross-national HRD work that is being done by transnational corporations, transnational nongovernmental organizations, and transnational political entities. Thus, although individual companies working in one nation are free to develop their own understanding of HRD, and although nations work at developing an understanding of national HRD, it becomes critical for organizations that work across nations to define IHRD to accommodate common themes that relate to cross-national or transnational HRD activities. Mostly definition have two drawbacks: (1) They are still U.S.-based and consider HRD activities in non-U.S. cultures as international HRD, and (2) they consider HRD only in business organizations, ignoring other major organizations or entities (Wang & McLean, 2007).

Peng, Peterson, and Shyi (1991) proposed a general lens through which to define IHRD; their definition, however, focused on HRD only in organizations, though with efforts to avoid confining the definition to a specific culture or country. By integrating pertinent literature, Peterson (1997) defined IHRD in three categories: HRD in a culture other than the U.S.; intercultural or transnational HRD between two or more countries; and general cross-cultural HRD, such as HRD in an international joint venture.

Metcalfe and Rees (2005) proposed European approach that international HRD in the global arena can be categorized under three headings: global HRD, comparative HRD, and national HRD. They then proposed a definition for IHRD that improves on that offered above:

“IHRD is a broad term that concerns process that addresses the formulation and practice of HRD systems, practices, and policies at the global, societal, and organizational level. It can concern itself with how governments and international organizations develop and nurture international managers and how they develop global HRD systems; it can incorporate comparative analyses of HRD approaches across nations and also how societies develop national HRD policies” (p. 455).

However, Wang & McLean (2007) keep international HRD, cross-national HRD, transnational HRD, and global HRD as synonyms and give us such definition:

“International HRD (also known, perhaps more appropriately, as cross-national HRD, transnational HRD, and global HRD) is a field of study and practice that focuses on for-profit, not-for-profit, and/or governmental entities and individuals cooperating in some form across national borders. The purpose of this interaction is systematically to tap existing human potential and intentionally shape work-based, community-based, society-based, culture-based, and politically based expertise through multiple means for the purpose of improving crossnational relationships collaboratively across all involved entities through greater mutual understanding, improved individual and organizational performance, improved standards of living and quality of life, reduced conflict between entities and individuals, and any other criteria that would be deemed useful by the involved entities. International HRD is aspirational rather than realized and serves as a challenge for continuous efforts at improvement” (p.105).

Much less effort, however, has gone in to exploring what, in the current age of globalization (Friedman, 2005), has become critical for the field – definition of international or cross-national HRD. There has certainly been a substantial body of literature, much of which will be reviewed in the literature review, focusing on the practice of HRD in cross-national context and the development of foundational concepts and theories related to international/cross-national HRD. However, we have been unable to find any efforts at defining the field in this context.

HRD – as part of the expanding scope and theoretical frameworks observed by Woodall (2006). As stated by Woodall (2005) HRD scholarship now has to confront the challenges of cross-cultural analysis experienced earlier by other scholars from various social science and management disciplines. We face an important choice: do we take well-established theories, developed and tested mainly in the U.S., and then apply them to the analysis of empirical evidence gathered in other countries? Or, do we sometimes need to start afresh, grounding our process of theorization in specific cultural context or even drawing upon theories and concepts developed in other management and social science disciplines? (p. 399)

All authors provide such factors as culture and it is a matter of central importance for cross - national HRD. Foundational contributions to HRD from a global perspective allow for “application in diverse cultures and values that pertain to different geographical locations” (Lee, 2001). Variations in HRD practices and systems are directly linked to the socio-cultural variations among countries and regions around the world (Dirani, 2006). Culture influences every aspect of HRD. Diagnosing and understanding learnr’s cultural values is as important as understanding their training needs. Hofstede (1991) believes that national culture is the strongest influence on the behavior of employers and employees, customers and citizens – stronger than differences in professional roles, education, age, or gender. Laurant (1983) discovered that the impact of culture was greater in global companies than in domestic ones, that a multinational environment causes people to cling even more strongly to their own cultural values. Aspects of successful human resource development in cross- cultural context are discussed in next chapter.

### **Factors influencing global human resource development**

According to McLean (2001), Bates (2003), Marquardt & Berger (2003), the HRD must include not only economic development and workplace learning, but it must also be

committed to the political, social, environmental, cultural, and spiritual development of people around the world. Global success depends on utilizing the resources and diverse talents and capabilities of the broadest possible spectrum of humanity.

While speaking to the broader context of research that explores concepts and theories of the field in a cross-cultural context, it is likewise important to look at a definition of HRD that may not fit in the context of a specific culture or in a specific national environment, but rather relates to how we understand the field when it is applied in an international or cross-national context.

Several definitions and frameworks of human resource development (HRD) were offered throughout the history. Nadler coined the term human resource development in 1970 and offered a model with three components: training, education, and development (Nadler and Nadler, 1991). Much of the published literature on the definition of the field has been focused in the west—originally, in the United States (Weinberger, 1998) and, increasingly, in Europe. However, human resource development is a discipline that is more developed in Western industrialized countries than the rest of the world. Therefore, defining HRD is not easy and up till now no single point of view or framework of HRD has been predominant (Dilworth, 2003). Weinberger (1998) explored the different HRD definitions in the United States and concluded that there is no one agreement on definition of the field and that HRD is rather a mosaic of multiple perspectives.

In discussion of divergence and convergence in HRD practices in different regions of the world, several scholars and international experts view different countries within a region as more homogeneous (European countries), others view them as more heterogeneous (Arab countries) (Ronen and Shenkar, 1985; Dirani, 2006). Globalization influences such homogeneous and heterogeneous countries and changes them. Therefore the implications of globalization include a need for the profession to better understand and integrate intercultural practices into global organization, rather than assuming or imposing a Western view on the people and culture of other countries.

More recently, there have been efforts to define the growing field of HRD from a broader perspective (McLean & McLean, 2001). As cultural and social contexts vary leading to varied HRD practices, HRD as a discipline needs to develop a globally accepted definition for international HRD to accommodate the extensive amount of cross-national HRD work that is being done by transnational corporations, transnational nongovernmental organizations, and transnational political entities.

According to Wang & McLean (2007) International HRD (also known, perhaps more appropriately, as cross-national HRD, transnational HRD, and global HRD) is a field of study and practice that focuses on for-profit, not-for-profit, and/or governmental entities and individuals cooperating in some form across national borders. Speaking about the purpose of this interaction is systematically to tap existing human potential and intentionally shape work-based, community-based, society-based, culture-based, and politically based expertise through multiple means for the purpose of improving cross-national relationships collaboratively across all involved entities through greater mutual understanding, improved individual and organizational performance, improved standards of living and quality of life, reduced conflict between entities and individuals, and any other criteria that would be deemed useful by the involved entities. Therefore Wang & McLean (2007) state and the authors of this paper agree

that International HRD is aspiration rather than realized and serves as a challenge for continuous efforts at improvement.

HRD must focus on the challenges of truly embracing the process of globalization with all its implications. There are many issues to consider, including crossing boundaries of time, space, geography, and culture; economic issues; culture clash; working virtually; coping with increased bureaucracy; and exploitation issues arising out of countries with fewer legal restrictions (Chermack et al., 2003).

According to reviewed literature in this paper, factors impacting global HRD are provided in Table 1.

As McLean (2001) and Bates (2003) stressed the HRD professions must include not only economic development and workplace learning, but it must also be committed to the political, social, environmental, cultural, and spiritual development of people around the world.

**Table 1. Factors Impacting Global HRD**

<i>Marquardt &amp; Reynolds, 1994; Marquardt, 1998</i>	<i>Hartenstein, 1999</i>	<i>Harris &amp; Moran (1989)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preparing employees for overseas confidence; includes cross-cultural training, expatriation and repatriation support, language training;</li><li>• Building global teams and enhancing their ability to work virtually across time and distance;</li><li>• Creating systems for continuous quality improvement to meet global customer expectations;</li><li>• Developing cross-cultural communication skills;</li><li>• Developing abilities in learning how to learn through action learning process;</li><li>• Building capabilities in knowledge management and technology systems.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Theory and practice of globalization;</li><li>• Cross – cultural human communication;</li><li>• Value awareness;</li><li>• History and culture of each country involved in the business;</li><li>• Survival confidence about living and working in each of these countries;</li><li>• Systematic approaches for navigating national bureaucracies;</li><li>• Ways of handling culture shock;</li><li>• Language skills.</li><li>• A key issue for HRD is how to have people gain more confidence, competency, and control in an uncertain world.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To encourage greater sensitivity and more astute observations of situations and people who are culturally different;</li><li>• To foster greater understanding in dealing with representatives of micro-cultures within one's own country;</li><li>• To improve customer and employee relations by creating awareness of cultural differences and their influence on behavior;</li><li>• To develop more cosmopolitan organizational representatives who not only understands the concepts of culture, but also can apply this knowledge to interpersonal relations and organizational culture;</li><li>• To increase managerial effectiveness in international operations, especially with regard to cross-cultural control systems, negotiations, decision making, customer relations, and other vital administrative processes;</li><li>• To improve cross-cultural skills of employees on overseas' assignment, or representatives of micro-cultures in our own country;</li><li>• To reduce culture shock when on foreign deployment, and to enhance the intercultural experience of employees;</li><li>• To apply the behavioral sciences to international business and management;</li><li>• To increase job effectiveness through training in human behavior, particularly in the area of managing cultural differences;</li><li>• To improve employee skills as professional intercultural communicators.</li></ul>

International and comparative HRD research, regardless of specific topics studied, continually refers to culture (Marquardt & Berger (2003), Losey, Meisinger & Ulrich (2005), Bates (2003) et al).

Culture shapes the group's and each member's conscious and subconscious values, assumptions, perceptions and behavior (Marquardt, Berger and Loan, 2004).

It provides the group with systematic guidelines for how they should conduct their thinking, actions, rituals, and business. Since HRD professionals may come from several different cultures, the cultural dynamic impacts every aspect of global HRD.

This means that culture is a matter of central importance for global HRD. Variations in HRD practices and systems are directly linked to the socio-cultural variations among countries and regions around the world (Dirani, 2006).

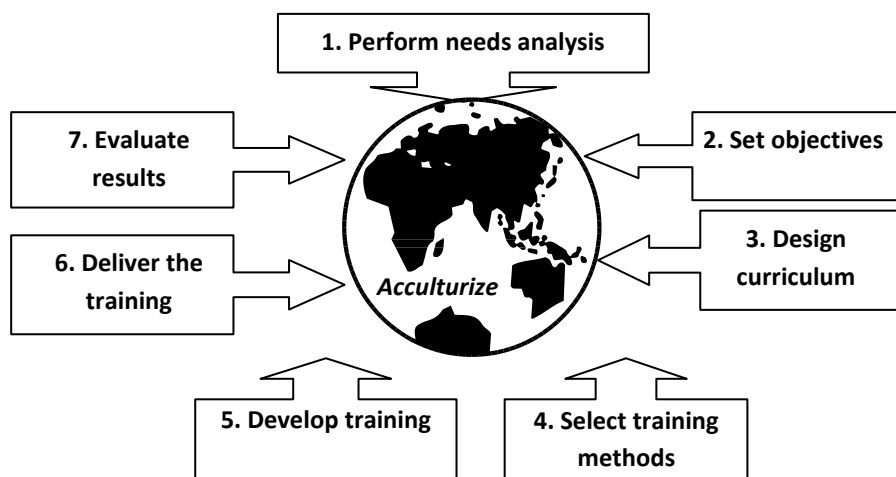
### **Acculturation's Importance for Successful Human Resource Development in Cross-Cultural Context**

Marquardt, Berger and Loan (2004) state that the seven steps of the Global Training Model are similar to those followed to develop domestic training programs.

The addition of acculturation at each step, however, differentiates this model from previous ones. Figure 1 presents the seven steps and illustrates the central role that acculturation component. Since this is a systems model, after evaluating results in step 7, the cycle starts again with a needs analysis to identify new and changing needs of the organization and the learners.

Acculturation is the conveying of a program (including its objectives, methodologies, materials, and content) across cultural boundaries to ensure that the training program is user-friendly (Marquardt, Berger and Loan, 2004).

**Figure 1. Global human resource development training model (Marquardt, Berger, Loan, 2004)**



In both, national and global HRD, the most factors impacting HRD are the same. Only culture, language and political and economic environment become important in global HRD also. The basic word to describe all this notions is acculturation.

The addition of acculturation at each step, however, differentiates this model from previous ones. Every of these seven steps involve an integrated acculturation component. By taking cross-cultural differences into account, an acculturized training program includes as few roadblocks to learning as possible, enhances the learner's experience, and helps him or her accomplish the learning objectives. Since all trainers encounter difficulties when trying to fully understand and apply another's culture, the HRD professional should involve local people in the acculturation aspect to each step in the training model, to test for cultural relevance, accuracy, and effectiveness.

Global human resource development practitioners may choose between (Marquardt, Berger, Loan, 2004):

- The easy road of simply transposing a successful domestic training program from one cultural setting to another or
- The difficult, time-consuming road of "acculturizing" the program to fit the culture of the learners.
- 

A relatively small percentage of human resource professionals are able to express early career interests in global human resource and/or gain orderly development. Unlike finance, accounting engineering, technology, manufacturing, and even sales, global human resource is much more attuned to a nation's history, language, and culture, which greatly precludes or limits the utilization of human resource professionals as expatriates (Losey, Meisingerm, Ulrich, 2005).

Cross – cultural preparation is very important for successful HRD (Noe, 2005). It involves educating employees and their family members who were sent or emigrated to a foreign country. To successfully conduct business in the global marketplace, employees must understand the business practices and the cultural norms of different countries.

Many cultural characteristics influence employee behavior. Keep in mind that there are national cultures as well as company cultures. A culture refers to the set of assumptions that group members share about the world and how it works and the ideas worth striving for (Sathe, 1985). Culture is important because it influences the effectiveness of different behaviors and management styles.

To be successful in overseas companies, foreign employees need to be:

- Competent in their area of expertise.
- Able to communicate verbally and nonverbally in the host country.
- Flexible, tolerant of ambiguity, and sensitive to cultural differences.
- Motivated to succeed, able to enjoy the challenge of working in other countries, and willing to learn about the host country's culture, language, and customs.
- Support by their families (Arthur & Bennett, 1995; Garonzik et al, 2000).

Cross – cultural preparation is very important for successful HRD (Noe, 2005). It involves educating employees and their family members who were sent or emigrated to a foreign country. To successfully conduct business in the global marketplace, employees must

understand the business practices and the cultural norms of different countries. Cross – cultural preparation is important for the success of human resource development and the assignment, which can be very expensive. The annual cost of sending an employee overseas has been estimated to be three to seven times the employee’s salary (Noe, 2005). Besides salary, expenses include taxation, housing and education (Gale, 2003).

The study of Caligiuri (2000) suggests that cross – cultural training may be effective only when an expatriate’s personality predisposes him or her to be successful in work in other countries. Black and Stephens (1989) suggest that the comfort of an expatriate’s spouse and family is the most important determinant of whether the employee will complete training and assignment. Foreign assessments involve three phases: predeparture, on-site, and repatriation (preparing to return home) (Noe, 2005). Training is necessary in all three phases. One key to successful foreign assignment appears to be combination of training and career management for employees and their families.

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (Ibarz (Human resource development, 2005)) suggests focusing on achieving seven skills providing cross-cultural training program:

- Communicate respect;
- Be non-judgmental;
- Personalize knowledge and perceptions;
- Display empathy;
- Practice role flexibility;
- Demonstrate reciprocal concern;
- Tolerate ambiguity.

Besides cultural dimensions, trainers must consider language differences in preparing training materials. Cultural adaptation is as crucial to achieving results as is language translation. This is very important in not English speaking countries. Without this cultural sensitivity, little or no learning will occur. If an interpreter is used, it is important to conduct a practice session with the interpreter to evaluate pacing of the session and whether the amount of topic and material is appropriate. Training materials including videos and exercises need to be translated well in advance of training session. The needs assessment must include an evaluation of cultural dimensions and the characteristics of the audience (such as language ability, trainees’ company, and cultural status) (Noe, 2005).

In next chapter we introduce the 4th step of human resource development training model. It is selection of training methods and it is very important when speaking about acculturation.

### **Training methods**

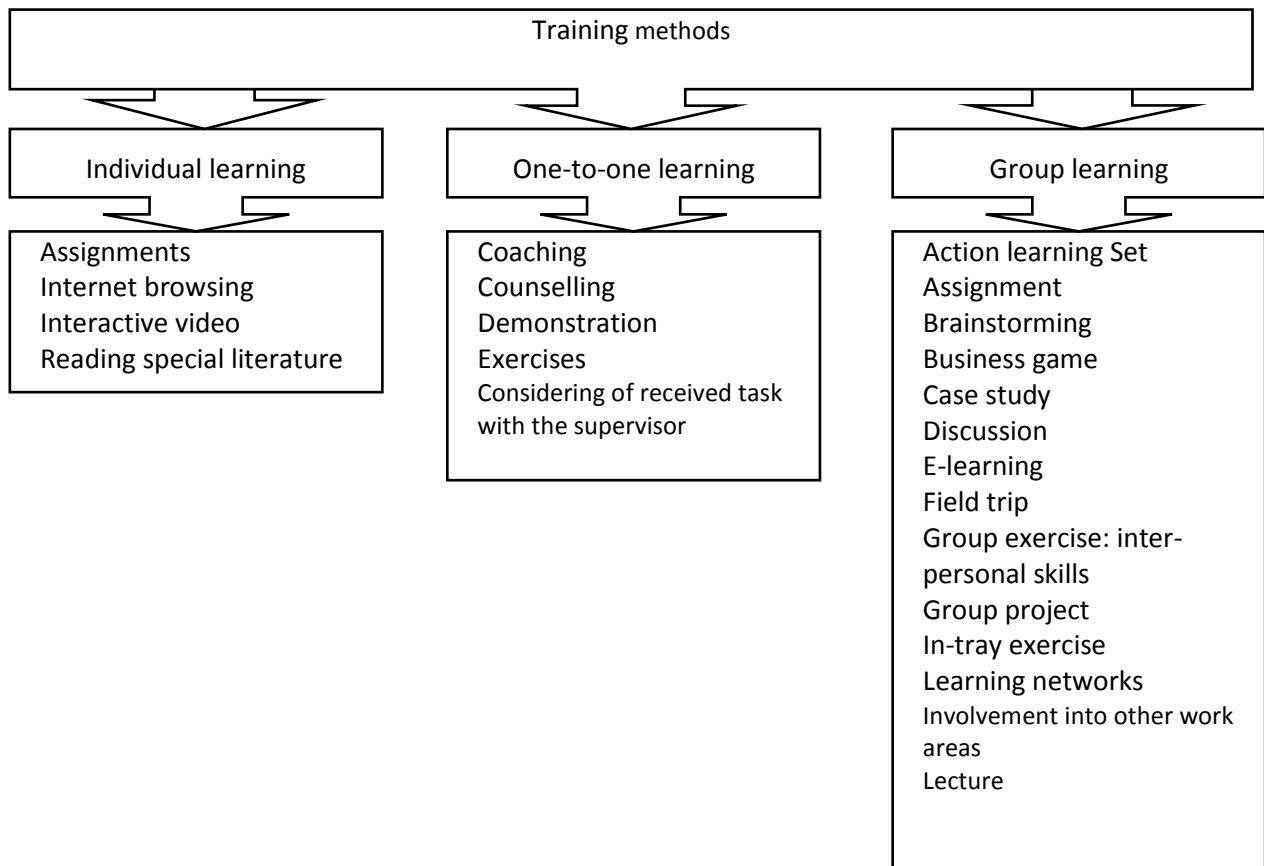
Looking in employees’ skills development we can speak about different types of training. These methods could be developed in accordance of their techniques as traditional and modern computer based methods or number of people involved in learning process. We selected the second typology to reach goals of our paper. Therefore based on Noe (2005), Mankin (2009) Kumpikaite & Sakalas (2007, 2008) given and analyzed methods, we could provide following training methods‘ (see Figure 1).

Individual or self-learning methods are such, which allow trainees to learn alone, independent from others. Traditional methods, such as Reading special literature and modern as Internet browsing or Interactive video watching are involved to these methods. One-to-one learning methods are such methods when a trainee is involved to the learning process together with



other person, which could be a teacher or other trainee too. Group learning methods are such methods when several participants are involved in to learning process. Group methods are described as the best developing methods (Kumpikaite & Ciarniene, 2008 a,b). Therefore we can see that there are a lot traditional (as Lectures, Groups projects, Discussions and others) as well as modern (E-learning or Learning networks) group learning methods. Certainly not all methods given in Figure 2 are very popular and well known.

**Figure 2. Skills development methods**



Based on earlier described learning methods research methodology was prepared and presented in next section.

### **Methodology & Results**

#### **Sampling**

By taking cross-cultural differences into account, an acculturized training program includes as few roadblocks to learning as possible, enhances the learner's experience, and helps him or her accomplish the learning objectives. Cultural adaptation is as crucial to achieving results as is language translation. This is very important in non-English speaking countries. Therefore language aspect is very important for our explored students because they are from countries that do not speak native English. In such situation the key to success in a foreign training session is preparation. Without this cultural sensitivity, little or no learning will occur.

Results of intercultural study where students' selected the most development methods are given in this paper. Students are future employees and we can speak about acculturation as the first step for intercultural development.

A survey was carried out by distributing questionnaires, which was designed and tested for this purpose earlier (Kumpikaite (2009). Training methods we selected based on analyzed scientific literature, which mostly is presented in Figure 2. Original questionnaire was prepared in Lithuanian. Questionnaires were prepared in respondents' native languages for this study. Therefore, original research instrument was translated in to English later, using double translation method for checking, and given to Turkey, Spain and Portugal and Iran where it was translated in to these languages and set out for survey. The questionnaires were given throw Internet in Lithuania, Turkey and Spain, and printed questionnaires were distributed in Portugal and Iran (Kumpikaite et al., 2012).

The main questions formulated in this study were:

1. What skills' evaluation methods do students evaluate the best and the worst?
2. What are differences among students' answers according to countries?

Students had to select 3 the most developing factors, where the most developing was evaluated by 3, the second by 2 and the third -1.

The study was provided in 2011. General information about respondents is given in Table 2.

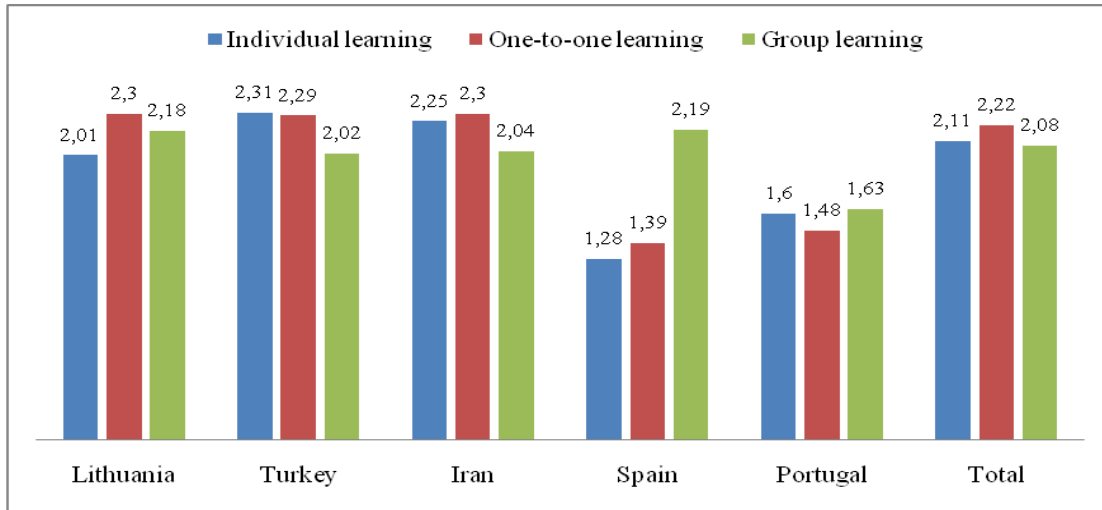
**Table 2. Respondents information according gender and country**

<i>Count</i>		<i>Country</i>					<i>Total</i>
		<b>Iran</b>	<b>Lithuan ia</b>	<b>Portuga l</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>Turkey</b>	
Sex	Missing	3	0	0	0	3	6
	Female	90	138	12	81	68	389
	Male	103	65	23	44	91	326
Total		196	203	35	125	162	721

### **Training methods evaluation in intercultural context**

Speaking about students' skills development methods analysis was made. According to Figure 3 we can see that Lithuanians, Turks and Iranians are most developed by one-to-one learning methods, Spanish and Portuguese prefer group learning at the same time. However these methods are at least developing for Turks and Iranians.

**Figure 3. Means of training methods' groups by countries**



The highest evaluation of common results are for one-to-one learning methods (Mean=2.22), individual learning is on the second place (Mean=2.11) and group learning – on the third place (Mean=2.08).

**Figure 4. Means of training methods by countries**

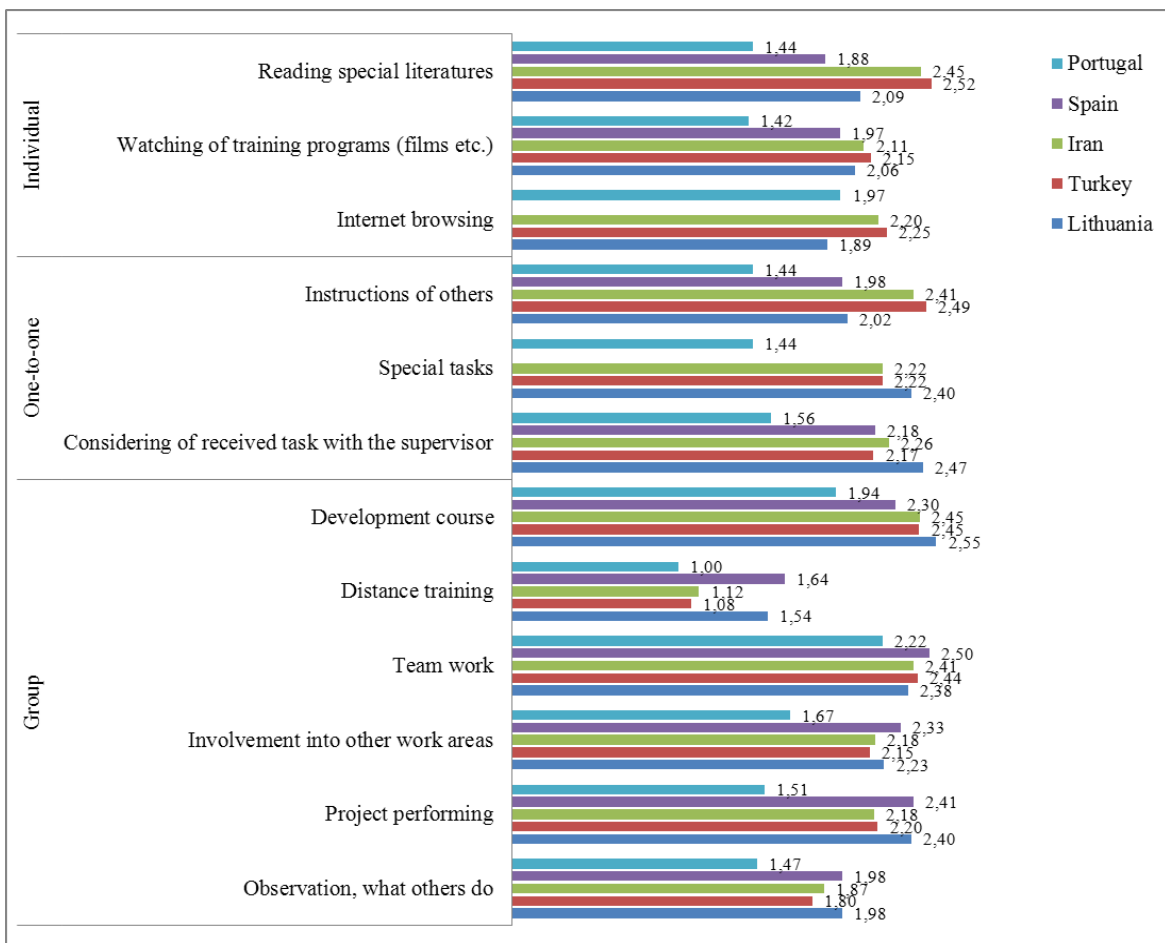


Figure 4 gives evaluation of every method by country and we can see very different results among them. Team work gets one of the highest evaluation and the lowest difference among countries' answers. Results showed that distance learning was selected as developing at least. However we could think that not all students used this method of learning before therefore cannot know its effort.

Comparison analysis of pair countries was made and statistical significant differences were found. Portuguese data for statistical comparison analysis was not used, as sample is too small. Moreover, no statistical difference among development methods between Turkey and Iran was found. Spanish did not evaluate their Internet browsing and Special tasks delivering, therefore we cannot compare them according these 2 methods.

Lithuanians evaluated their skills development by reading special literature, considering of received task with supervisor and development courses better than Spanish. No Spanish evaluation was better than Lithuanians. Spanish are more developed by distance training and worse by watching training programs, instructions of others, development courses and Reading literature in comparison with Turks. Spanish are more developed by distance training and project performing and worse by watching training programs, instructions of others, development courses, reading literature and considering tasks with supervisor measuring them with Iranians

According to comparison analysis Lithuanians are more developed by distance training and considering of received task with supervisor Instructions of others and worse by reading of educational literature, Instruction of others and Internet browsing than Turks. Lithuanians are more developed by project performing, special tasks, distance training and considering tasks with supervisor and worse instruction of others, reading literature and Internet browsing comparing with Iran.

### **Conclusions**

Human resource development is fundamentally concerned with the enrichment of the quality of human life. It truly has the power to lead to cross-cultural development in which economic and technological advances are people centered and nature based.

Globalization presents many challenges to an organization. A key issue for domestic and global human resource development is how to have people gain more confidence, competency, and control in an uncertain world.

Domestic and global human resource development has some basic differences, which we could classify as political economic and cultural environment. Culture is very important in working with people and developing them. So it is very important to pay attention to such factors as language, cross-cultural communication, religion, family, class structure, geography and history. Therefore, in this situation as Marquardt, Berger and Loan (2004) suggest, domestic – traditional human resource development programs should be acculturized – adapted and modified to the target audience. New EU countries should pay attention to this possibility and to learn how to provide correct acullturization to reach company's goals

Results of our empirical research showed that Spanish and Portuguese prefer group learning the most. However these methods are at least developing for Turks and Iranians. They prefer one-to-one learning methods, as well as Lithuanians. It could be related with respondents' culture. Even so the reasons of differences in preferences of learning methods should be analyze further in other studies, which was not done in this one. Study revealed that students

who can show their own opinion better prefer Project performing more than students who's Ability to show their own opinion is not developed so well.

Thinking that the world is influenced by globalization so much our explored students will be involved to work in international groups and organizations. Therefore their skills should be developed in accordance with these requirements taking in to account acculturation moments.

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