Effective Cross-Cultural Communication for International Business

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Abstract
In today's business and pandemic scenario, working in an international team is common with remote workers, overseas offices, and inescapable cultural gaps. The diversity of co-workers may become a cultural barrier that some people don't know how to overcome. Most of the professionals do not even realize the problems of cultural differences in their work. Cultural awareness helps managers to effectively transact with their employees and other stakeholders. Understanding the diverse workforce and guiding them for effective cross-cultural communication is essential for multicultural firms, or else they may face several issues in the areas of employee relationships, staffing, attrition rates, trade policies, mergers, advertising, business stakeholder relationships, team building, and negotiations. Language, stereotypes, non-verbal signs, emotional display, ethnocentrism, anxiety, uncertainty, perception, and prejudice are the invisible barriers to enculturation. This paper discusses how to effectively communicate in a culturally diverse organization by sharing and exchanging ideas based on mutual understanding, respect, and credibility. Best practices for effective cross-cultural communication are summarized in this chapter for the use of students, academicians, and managers in intercultural contexts. This will help them to gain some insights about multicultural environments and how to get along with people by maintaining etiquette, mutual respect, reciprocal cognition, and avoiding stereotypes. The study also discusses the importance of inclusive communication, constructive transactions, cross-cultural training, and design thinking in modern organizations. The paper may be very effective to teach subjects like Organisation behavior and International business communication.
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Introduction to Culture and Communication

Culture is the way of thinking and behavior shaped by the members of a community. Hall (1959) equates culture with communication: "Culture is communication, and communication is culture." Every culture is unique and is made up of ideals, values, beliefs, traditions. Understanding how a culture communicates allows people to convey messages as intended and find their identity in differences. It also defines how the members interact with each other on the basis of common identity. Cultural studies cover the areas of anthropology, high culture, and pop culture. Anthropology is the study of cultural meanings, including norms and values. High culture refers to cultural by-products like art, music, and literature, to name a few, and pop culture refers to contemporary art and trends. All communications take place in a human environment, and the communicative behavior of the people, including their selection of means of communication and content, is influenced by the context of the communicator.

The context will be influenced by the selection of means of communication and the content of the message. External and internal are the two different contexts. The external contexts like socio, techno, and religion are determined by culture and society, and the internal mindset is created by a person's psychological conditions. All social interactions develop a culture; groups develop a culture based on their socialization rules, rituals, and gestures, and gifts. Organizational culture is apparent in workspaces, economics, interactions and meeting styles, communication patterns, hierarchy, leadership styles, values and belief systems, perception, and attitude.

Culture is a natural by-product of human interaction in society, and the relationship is very intricate. Cultures are shaped through communication; also by interactions made through cultural characteristics like roles, norms, rituals, laws are created and shared with others. Without media and communication, it is impossible to pass the characteristics of culture from one place to another. In other words, culture is shaped through communication; communication is created and transmitted by the culture. To understand the context, think about how a group forms (Bruce Tuckman 1965). Tuckman summarised that for a group to develop into a successful team, it will need to pass through four stages: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. When a group is in the forming phase, the members bring their previous cultural and communication experiences. As the storming phase begins, they start communicating with others in the group, and new communication patterns, behaviors, and rituals will emerge. These will create a set of shared experiences and cultural characteristics in the norming phase. When the team reaches the performing stage, the redesigned culture shapes the communication practices of the group, and the group member's new communication patterns create the culture and share it with future groups.

Importance of Cross-cultural Communication Practices

Cross-cultural communication explores how people from different cultures communicate, perceive, and interpret things around them. The interpretation of the verbal and non-verbal signs will be based on their respective cultures, belief, value systems, and experiences. Due to globalization, diverse work opportunities, international strategic alliances, and exposure to new technologies, people get exposed to various cultures and sub-cultures. For instance, Indian employees at Microsoft in Washington will be more influenced by the American culture than Microsoft's culture. Their core and peripheral values systems might not converge. There will be more chances of misunderstanding, lack of co-operation, hostility in the work environment resulting in poor productivity, loss of customers, declining revenues, stress, and discontentment.

Multiculturalism is a perspective of "us and others" and focuses on the tip-of-iceberg features of culture, accepting differences, and maintaining a balance without losing individuality. For example, 'Cultural day' at work usually features food, dance, clothing, and saying a few words or greetings from different cultures. Different languages, high vs. low context cultures, the difference in non-verbal communication, power distance, ethnocentrism, uncertainty avoidance, and individualistic cultures are only the tip of an iceberg when coming to the factors that affect cross-cultural communication. Ideals of beauty, the concept of time, goal orientations, kinship systems, privacy, modesty, values, motivation, work habits, the relationship of man with nature, social acceptance of behaviors, and many more contributes to the big part of the iceberg under the unseen surface. Effective communication is difficult even under optimum conditions. Cross-cultural factors essentially create increased communication problems in semantics, word connotations, tone differences, perceptions, etc. A better understanding of these miscommunications and their implications across cultures is discussed after this.

Cross-Cultural Miscommunications

Cross-cultural communication issues might be many, but they all point down that the message is not delivered across. In worst cases, it might end up in misunderstanding. For instance, a joke might be misinterpreted, leading to confusion and humiliation during a presentation in a multicultural setting. Again, in an Indian company, organizational hierarchy is

less questioned due to the fear of demotions and the fury they have to face afterward. It won't be the same case with an American company.

Cultural values are the main source of cross-cultural differences in a multicultural setting. Core values are part of a human being's basic values system that was assimilated deep inside them during early socialization (Fox et al., 2005). Values that form the core of the culture includes communication patterns like etiquette, personal space, and touch, time orientation, the meaning of work, socioeconomic status, education, clothing, hygiene, family orientations, interpersonal relationships ranging from kinships and rivalries, moral, religious beliefs, and personal traits. The value systems in different cultures serve as a mechanism of social control by determining the behaviors of the group.

What are the values attached to the Indian culture? How can it be differentiated from American culture? For a comprehensive view, let us analyze the core cultural values of both Indian and American cultures. Indian culture is a complex combination of several sub-cultures; a young average Indian raised as a communitarian is more adaptable, modest, values interpersonal relationships, and open to new experiences. A young Indian in his workplace is found more adaptable, flexible to extra work hours, and more obedient to his boss. But an American in the same context is raised in a more individualistic society, believes in equality and work-life balance. Little need to mention the Indian workforce that settles in the US or the workforce ready to work extra night shifts as per the inflexible work demands. But values change over time; the same Indian settling in the US eventually get adapted to the American concept of time and work-life balance and feel progressive and relaxed.

According to the study conducted by LaRay Barna (1997), primary sources of cross-cultural miscommunication should be identified before developing best practices, or else these differences can have serious miscommunication impacts. As per the study, "the stumbling blocks" are:-

- **Language Differences:** When words of foreign origin are used in a language, meaning can differ from the origin. In French, shopping and parking are places to shop and park, which does not represent parking in crowded Indian streets. Some words do not differ between cultures. Translating English terms such as efficiency, regulation, and a free market is very difficult in Russian. The Japanese word "hai" translates as "yes," but its connotation may be "yes, I'm listening," rather than 'Yes, I agree." Non-native conversations can easily lead to miscommunications. For instance, on the west coast of US "pop" usually means Soda drink. In contrast, on the south coast, it refers to drug usage. "Stuffed" in the United States indicates over-eating; in Australia, it means carrying (expecting a baby).

- **Assumption of Similarities:** The "invisible" hands of culture lead us to expect that our communication way of behaving is how "absolutely everyone" communicates, acts, and behaves. After they act "like us," we assume they are perfect or don't share much input. While someone acts otherwise, we may additionally choose him or her negatively.

- **A Tendency to Evaluate:** Normally, in communication, there is a tendency to evaluate and interpret the message or the action through our cultural lens. We may evaluate the message or behavior as "good" or "bad" without understanding the intent.

- **High Anxiety:** Not understanding what is appropriate or expected in a context can raise the anxiety level. The obvious result of being in an anxious state is miscommunication and stress.

- **Social Differences:** Social differences can be related to social identity; it is the level of society a person was born into or references to who they want to be and how they will act accordingly. Different countries have different social identities and various responses to arts, culture, and sports activities. For example, working-class communities of some western countries prefer watching soccer, and in India, preference is for cricket. But the upper class in those countries watches golf and tennis, which are considered elite choices. The social status and the importance of status vary between cultures. For instance, the French are highly

status-conscious people. Countries differ on the criteria that create social status. Status for Asians is deep-rooted in family positions and job titles in organizations. But in the US and Australia, it is bestowed on personal accomplishments rather than family trees and titles.

- **Non-verbal Communication Differences** such as gesture, eye-contact, perception of time, personal space, etc., as it can create clarity, confusion, and misunderstandings in the various intercultural context. In the US, the finger-beckoning sign means "come here," but in Malaysia, it is used to call animals. In Australia, it is used for signaling "ladies of the night." The "Hook'em Horns" sign is a good luck gesture in Brazil, but in parts of Africa, it is taken as a curse. In Italy, it is a gesticulation for "spouse being adulterous."
- **Prejudices and Stereotypes:** Culture influences the way we see the world. Preconceived notions and stereotyping occur when "oversimplified" characteristics are used to judge a group of people or an individual associated with a group.
- **Perception:** Perception is also highly prone to both cultural and personal experiences. In cross-cultural organizations, extremely different communication styles can lead to negative perceptions about another person.

Criteria to be Considered before Adopting Cross-Cultural Communication Practices

It can be a time-consuming task to choose the right activities for the participant audience, i.e., the time we would far rather spend preparing for an activity than searching for one. It is critical to understand the context, type, communication themes, and risk level before adopting the best practices and to see the impact on people and processes in the long run.

- **Context and type:** The cross-cultural practices must be adapted to different contexts, like education, workplace, other forums, etc. It must be adapted to suit different types of communication, verbal, nonverbal, or written.
- **Communication themes:** The practices will help the participants understand their preferences and their perception of others whose communication styles may differ.

- **Risk level:** understanding the audience and own skill level is very important when selecting the risk level.

Subcultures are developed in large multicultural organizations to reflect upon situations, problems, or experiences defined by department designations and separations. For example, the Purchase department develops a subculture that includes the core values of the dominant culture and superfluous values unique to members in the department. Similarly, a unit of an organization in another region or country that is physically separated develops a different subculture, even if the core values are retained by the organization. In such cases, managing effective cross-cultural communication is considered one big aspect of an organization's strategy. It can be seen as a first step in maximizing employee and business performance. Here are some tips to improve cross-cultural communication:-

Best Practices for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication
Always Maintain Etiquette

Etiquette is the parameter for what is considered appropriate and inappropriate in a culture. It shapes the structure, integrity, and grace which transmit from one culture to another. When visiting a foreign country, it's always appropriate to read about the place and follow basic common sense. Although fads fade, the basics of etiquette remain the same. Always try to build a balance without losing individualism by showing respect, care, and manners. Check how to address the people before doing presentations and meetings. For high power distance cultures, showing respect and adding, 'Sir' is highly expected, whereas, in low context, managers are comfortable when employees call them first names. Respect is the key to bridging the cultural gap. Avoid any abbreviations, slang, and jargon since there is a chance that it may be taken literally. Speak clearly and in a slower mode; try not to drag conversation. They are being polite, and knowing appropriate greetings helps in connecting with the audience. Greetings come in all different forms like handshakes, kisses, hugs, namaste, and bows.

Using rude hand gestures, touching, and asking personal questions may be seen as unprofessional

and unsuitable in different contexts. Wearing casual-casual wear to an American setting may be taken as self-confident, but for Asian cultures, wearing work-casual may be more appropriate. Also, it's appropriate to avoid discussions on global affairs and politics from professional settings. Religious prejudice might be a problem with religious discussions. In Asian cultures, saying "no" is considered impolite and uncomfortable.

Do not Interpret as Per One's Own Culture and Form Stereotypes

Members of a multicultural team convey their ideas and usually 'open up' only to their cultural peers. Stereotypes happen when they see others through their 'cultural lens' and form beliefs about specific types of individuals or groups. For example, cultural stereotyping may be done by multi-cultural managers based on the problem-solving skills of people. They try to avoid those who rush to their cabins for simple solutions. When an employee from that cultural group later joins the team, he may feel discriminated by such notions. American managers may feel Indian employees have a very good skill set, but they lack initiative skills. An Indian employee with good leadership skills might feel discriminated against due to these notions about his cultural group.

Another problem for a manager is to distinguish between an employee's personality and culture. When a manager gets an unexpected reply from a team member from a different cultural background, he might wonder if it's because of the personality or because of a different cultural background. The interpretation shouldn't be biased as per own culture. We might be having certain cultural stereotypes based on the cooperative nature of people from different cultures. The gaps between the stereotypes often cause misunderstandings, resulting in group conflicts. The highly cooperative cultures are of Japan, America, Germany, Mexico, followed by Indians and Israelis, as per a study conducted by two German psychologists (Angela Dorrough; Andreas Glockner, 2016). It is always beneficial to understand one's stereotypes and be open to other cultures.

Understanding the Ego-State for Constructive Transactions

The transaction is the interaction between two people. Transactional analysis (Eric Berne, 1960) is used to determine if the ego state of the communicator is parent-like, childlike, or adult-like. It can be used for understanding the behavior of people in different contexts. It is the analysis of transactions based on the analysis of individuals involved in the transaction. In a particular situation, a person experiences and manifests their personality through a mixture of behaviors, feelings, and thoughts. As per that, Berne defined three ego-states as Parent, Adult, and Child, which may or may not represent the relationships they act out in a cultural setting. The ego-state from which someone is communicating is evident in their behavior and expression. For example, in the workplace, an adult supervisor in a Parent role and scold an adult employee as though he were a child. Parental figures are often nurturing and criticizing, and child behaviors are free and more adapted to others.

The adult tries to balance both ego states in an efficient way seeing the benefits and negative parts of it. The problem arises when communication starts from entirely different ego-states. Communication breaks down when ego-states are overlapped and results in conflicts. In such cases, it will become essential to check if the Adult ego-state is activated by examining our questions or comments. If it is fueled by compassion and curiosity, our Adult ego is doing its job by managing the Child and Parent egos. Transactional analysis is about recognizing the ego states present in our transactions to become more aware of ourselves. This will help to manipulate our behaviors and thoughts into more constructive communications by asking ourselves:

- Which ego state is being activated in my transaction?
- Is one ego-state constantly being activated?
- Analyze the relationship pattern with the other person; is one of you activating the child pattern consistently? If so, is it functional or dysfunctional?
- Does your peer want you to nurture (parent) or give advice (adult)? As per their need, adjust our behavior.

By analyzing our transactions with others, we can have a better understanding of our behaviors and manipulate the transactions constructively to suit different contexts.

Reciprocal Cognition and Importance of Enculturation

Social cognition includes the ability to understand others, their mental states, and experiences, but also includes misunderstanding, stereotypes, and prejudice. Enculturation is the gradual incorporation of other cultures, attitudes, and languages into one's own culture. Western cultures have been influencing other cultures worldwide because the adopting people equate westernization with modernization. Japan is remarkably the most westernized among Asian countries. Japanese people are highly influenced by western cultures and hence addicted to fashion luxury consumption, attitudes, and open work cultures. But Japan has a culture of strict social hierarchy and limited individualization through ages. The impact of technology, fashion, music, and art opens the door of cultural penetration, yet ethnocentrism, stereotypes, cognitive biases try to prevent an easy entry. As human beings, we can act intentionally, so we can engage in mutual, reciprocal cognition and avoid the negative effects and attract positive effects. This mutual recognition of humans as mental, intentional beings lies at the core of social cognition (Wellman, 1990).

Pay Attention to the Nonverbal Signs of Communication

Nonverbal communication is very important in intercultural situations, as it can create clarity and confusion for two reasons. First, a single nonverbal cue can have different meanings in different cultures; second, a high degree of variables need to be considered like gender, personality, relativity, status, and context. Nonverbal cues are nonlinguistic, hence can be expressed through eye contact, smiles, touch, hand gestures, and even silence. For example, a quick look away' can be interpreted in innumerable ways from "I'm busy" to "I'm embarrassed to talk to you." Paralanguage is the vocal cue like speed, volume, tone, and pitch. We evaluate other's speech based on our standards. 'Raising voice' in some cultures is

an indication of sincerity and impoliteness in some others. For example, some African Americans have expressive voices and are passionate about their speaking ways, mistaken for anger. Also, putting an accent on a different part of a word can have different meanings across cultures. Multiple cues are sending at the same time, like eye-contact, facial expressions, and body movement, making the inter-cultural interpreter confused. Social context and proxemics usually evaluate the appropriateness of the nonverbal message for the receiver.

Our physical characteristics such as body type, height, weight, hair, and skin color affect our daily communications in an inter-cultural context. Our clothing and artifacts give cues to the other person; it is said that 'First Impression' is formed in the first four minutes. It's impossible to wear or not to wear anything without conveying messages to others. Facial expressions also fall under the category of nonverbal communication. In some cultures, young people are taught not to show certain emotions, making it difficult for their inter-cultural peers to identify emotions when they see them. Eye contact is the most powerful communication tool. In many cultures, not making eye contact is a sign of fear, respect, intimidation, lack of interest, and more. In western cultures, it's proper to hold eye-contact during conversations, and failing raises suspicion about their hidden motives. But in Asian cultures, holding eye-contact with powerful people in the social hierarchy means impoliteness and disrespect.

Haptics is the study of touch, has varying rules across cultures. Indian men often keep hands over their friend's shoulder, indicating 'bromance' as per the new media glossary for 'thick friendship' while most American men wouldn't dare. In western cultures, kisses on cheeks are allowed before a good-bye, while in others, it may not seem alright. The study of space 'proxemics' is also regulated by culture. Asian cultures usually need a two-foot distance with a friend, while western cultures are comfortable within 12-18 inches. These differences can create discomfort among inter-cultural peers.

It is always better to always pay attention to the nonverbal signs and incongruent behaviors. For example, someone might inform you that they are happy while sulking and not making eye-contact.

Effective eye contact should look natural for both the participants of the conversation. Check the tone of voice and see others respond to those variations. Use this knowledge in corresponding situations where the message needs to be conveyed with feelings. Do not hesitate to ask questions when in doubt. For example, a person in tension might give off certain nonverbal cues, which may read differently by receiver.

Be a Learner and Accept the Stress Factor in Intercultural Communication Contexts

Some employees copy managers on e-mails and documents more often than required, and managers may think it's inappropriate and a waste of time. Informing the employee about what is expected from that context might solve the problem easily. The solution to this problem might be just informing the employee on what is expected from particular contexts. Sometimes employees may feel that managers are excessively involved in the minor decision-making process, not giving importance to the delegation. In some situations, managers expect that employees should give more weight to their suggestions, even if they want to initiate the process. A productive workforce should balance this attitude and behaviors by not marking them as good or bad. In such contexts, it may prove beneficial to take suggestions from other cultural peers who seem more open and empathetic. Also, do not take reactions personally, even if it is insulting as per one's culture. Try to accept the stress factor in intercultural communication contexts. Stress can be affected by the prior intercultural experience or the newness of it called the 'cultural shock'. People with limited cultural exposure may experience more stress than ones with prior experience. Experience adapts them to effectively learn and cope, have realistic expectations, and possess strong intercultural skills. A newbie can watch local television and channels to learn the norms of a new culture. The food culture, music, sports, history, mannerisms, storytelling, and even colors will give perceptual cues on what to expect and adapt.

Mutual Respect and Merit-based Promotions

The organization with the high rate of employee retention maintains a pleasant open company culture centered on mutual respect. Creating a multicultural workplace of mutual respect has its competitive advantages. It helps in conflict management in the workplace. For example, in a multinational company, employees who perceive their managers as technically incompetent might as well be perceived as lacking in initiative. Employees might show deference, and managers are likely to show negativity to those employees. Merit-based promotions and appraisal processes may get affected due to these presumptions. Regardless of job title or seniority in the organization, each person should have equal rights in a workplace of mutual respect, and it shouldn't matter who conflicts with whom. The promotions and career plans should be open and unbiased, giving 'opportunity to all' that deserves it. If management has to decide between layoff and pay-cut, it is always better if employees vote on the decision giving them a sense of respect and inclusion.

Importance of Cross-Cultural Training

Cross-cultural training is another way of managing diversity at the workplace and has many benefits to both businesses and participants. It helps people to learn about themselves, their cultures, common preconceptions, stereotypes, and worldviews. They will also be in a position to comprehend others, their cultures, ethos, and views. Training helps them in adjusting to new cultural environments and can avoid many problems and misunderstandings. They can work together to achieve the objectives of the organization by developing a healthy environment. Through learning, barriers will slowly open up, allowing more open relationships and confidence in dialogue. People become more sensitized to issues happening around them, and that improves their learning skills. Listening is an integral part of cross-cultural communication. Training helps people understand how to listen and perceive, improving communication skills. Employability skills can also be improved through training by developing a communication system based on knowledge, trust & thereby developing a unified organizational culture.

Show cultural empathy using team-building activities and active listening. Communicating in a low context is the main training activity in multinational organizations or universities. Students

from high context cultures may not be familiar with the practice. The instructors can provide insights about what to include in their introductory speech or write-up. It gives introductions a more comfortable experience for the people coming from cultures where self-glorification is considered taboo.

Importance of Design Thinking in Multicultural Corporate Communications

Multicultural companies like Apple, Microsoft among many others, stress the importance of design thinking in their corporate communications. Design thinking is an effective methodology to solve complex problems using a human-centered approach, empathy, and innovation which are the core elements of cross-cultural communication. It also helps us to predict what stakeholders expect from various communication contexts. Humans have the tendency to develop set patterns of thinking, referred to as schemas. Schemas help to think and react in the same way in similar situations. Design thinking breaks these usual patterns of thinking and helps in developing new ways of seeing and communicating. Telling stories and being empathetic is an effective way to connect and share ideas across cultures. To define the audience and purpose of communication in this context, it is always better to have formal and informal communication with the stakeholders. Clarity on their needs, wants, and aspirations help to define a better communication strategy through ideating the right message, content, medium, and style. The iterative communication process with the stakeholders may continue in parallel until creating assets like videos, posters, emails, datasheets, media write-ups, etc., as the case may be. Design thinking enables the stakeholders to effectively connect with different cultures and contexts through brainstorming with people from different cultural backgrounds. When communicating with someone from another culture, it's better to be creative, like managing a multicultural team, leading a project, or negotiating a deal. This can be achieved through the following stages of design thinking:

- Empathize with the audience and define their needs and problems.
- Ideate by challenging usual patterns of thinking, communicating, and thereby creating ideas for innovative solutions.
- Make prototypes by creating new communication solutions like videos, posters, emails, datasheets, media write-ups, etc.
- Test the solution if it works, or else go back to the brainstorming till it succeeds.

People usually do not know when miscommunications arise. But to grow, it is suggested to incorporate other's ideas into intercultural competence. Design thinking and innovation is a continuous process that can help by enhancing communication on multicultural teams. Design thinking can help team members open up by breaking the typical thinking, communicating patterns, and behaviors.

Be an Inclusive Communicator

Regardless of background and individual characteristics, all employees deserve to be treated with respect. An inclusive communicator takes care not to offend any person or a cultural group based on personal or group attributes. They do not make assumptions and care not to stereotype, value diversity, and stress unity in decision-making. Do not assume any person's gender and sexual orientation or define someone using their illness or disability. For example, sometimes, members of the LBGTQ+ community like to refer to themselves as 'queer' but get offended when others do so.

Conversational Threading with Peers to Build Rapport

One of the powerful tools for improving intercultural communication is conversational threading. It shows how to take anything someone says and turn it into a comment or question. Branching off from a particular statement gives many opportunities to understand the opinions and dispositions of inter-cultural peers. There are countless paths a conversation can follow; it can lead to better understanding and help form roles in a group.

For example, take a basic sentence, "On Monday, James and I worked with the G-software update." In each thread, there is something to reply and connect with the peer, such as:

- Monday- "Oh yeah? On Monday, we were after a new production issue."
- James-"How is James doing? We used to work in T-project before."
- G-Software- "Share your experience with software; it's on my list too."

There is an endless possibility to branch off from a conversation if the question is open-ended. Share stories and opinions when relevant; also introduce new threads to talk about from time-to-time. "Echo effect" is a technique for connecting with people by repeating back what they say. It reinforces the agreeing position and strengthens the rapport. Having general knowledge about their country, culture, and pop culture sparks new threads and endless possibilities to converse. Watching and listening to other people's conversations gives more ideas to cultivate improvisation skills in beginners.

Communicating Ethically Across Cultures

When companies export to other countries, they do not necessarily have the same ethical and legal obligations as the parent country. So communicators should understand these nuances when communicating with people in other countries with a different culture, ethics and laws. Companies need to decide on how to deal with the different culture's ethical views. For example, when a western country exports mobiles to a Muslim country, they need to decide how to present its product information by excluding or including women from their advertisements. It is difficult for women to assume a responsible position in the workplace. But it should be done in a way that will not reinforce the patterns of discrimination prevalent in that country. That is called the 'moral minimum' of ethical standards (Thomas Donaldson, 1991). So it is better not to include the photographs of women in roles that they do not usually perform in their culture and challenge the existing norms and prejudice directly. But there is nothing wrong with taking an activist stance; some organizations who oppose discrimination are taken favorably by the new generation and media.

Scope of the Study

This paper helps to understand the communication issues in a cross-cultural context. It also highlights the best cross-cultural practices that have to be encouraged in areas of human resource management, organizational behavior, organizational theory, and also those areas of marketing, where cross-cultural consumer behaviors and intercultural negotiations happen. This study is relevant to international companies and SMEs ' business with international transactions and operations. Effective intercultural business communication between partners and stakeholders is crucial for the survival of a business. Multicultural managers and employee job profiles demand to become proficient communicators and adopt multicultural perspectives constructively.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed the issues related to communication and how individuals can improve their cross-cultural communications. Intimacy among cultures emphasizes commonalities and closeness, while individuality emphasizes differences and separateness. Effective communication is a balancing act between the conflicting needs for intimacy and individuality. Certain words and behaviors can stereotype, intimidate and insult other individuals and cultures. Empathize and be sensitive to other's feelings. There is no simple solution to this dilemma. Nevertheless, one should be conscious of the trade-offs and need to find a balance to thrive.

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