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Intercultural Business Communication: A Key to Building Inter-Organizational Systems

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Abstract

Intercultural business communication is an applied form of ethnography in which a speaker closely perceives and evaluates components of another culture. The fast rise in business globalisation has carried with it an expanded requirement for compelling worldwide interconnection. To ascertain a healthy business relationship and sustainability, cultural differences are important to understand. With the use of content analysis, this study discussed intercultural business and communication methodologies that are pieces of intercultural business communication. It is contended that for intercultural business communication to occur, it is not adequate for every one of the three factors to be available. The three factors interact and form a collaboration that mirrors the dynamic character of intercultural business communication. The study concluded that cultural differences, awareness, and understanding are paramount in an intercultural communication environment. Therefore, to accomplish effective business communication within an intercultural environment, the interactants have to understand and apply the values, symbols, and rituals of the other culture.

Keywords: Intercultural Business Communication; Culture, Inter-Organisation, Business, Globalisation

Introduction

Intercultural Business Communication (IBC) has without a doubt developed into a complex disciplinary attempt (Adanlawo and Vezi-Magigaba 2023; Wang 2022; Neuliep 2016). According to Liu et al. (2022) and Holliday (2018), intercultural business communication is an applied form of ethnography in which a speaker closely perceives and evaluates components of another culture. Holliday (2018) discussed seven factors that affect business communication as they move across cultures: language, environment/technology, social organisation, authority, nonverbal behaviour, and conceptions of time. It is by framing the right questions about these variables that one can gain insight into new cultures and their business practices. There is a need for nations and businesses globally to comprehend and appreciate one another because the international business environment is rapidly becoming interconnected and interdependent.

According to Eriksen (2020), the fast rise in business globalisation has carried with it an expanded requirement for compelling worldwide interconnection. To ascertain a healthy business relationship and sustainability, cultural differences are important to understand. Adanlawo et al. (2021) pointed to three significant factors as the cause of failure in some

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industries: the lack of intercultural skills and competence, the inability to communicate effectively in a global setting, and the failure to apply appropriate etiquette in business negotiations. Nevertheless, it is contended that variances in communication styles and culture are significant impediments to the management of business communication (Alsola 2023; Neuliep 2016). The importance of understanding culture has to be paramount in order to achieve feasible intercultural communication. According to Sorrells and Sekimoto (2016), intercultural communication can serve as a bridging gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged in a society.

An organisation ability to recognise and purposely build inter-organisational systems for the shared advantage of individuals and for the lessening of dysfunctional social results has been the hidden technique of numerous industries in globalising their operations. Chaka and Adanlawo (2022) aver that the accomplishment of business networks as time goes on is dependent upon each collaborator's interest in each system relationship and also the collaborators' capacity to impart successfully all through the length of the relationship. The competitive significance of solid relationships has created a fundamental change in marketing and organisational methodology that has reclassified the exchange procedure.

Core intercultural business theory asserts that there is a positive relationship between a firm's degree of multi-nationality and its performance (Bonelli 2022; Abdullah 2018; Shetty 2013), given that internationalisation offers the opportunity to grow and enhance their competitiveness. As businesses become more globalised, more noteworthy quantities of individuals are leading businesses crosswise over national and social limits. Culture conflicts will continue to displease all aspects of business worldwide because of these phenomena. Culture influences people's feelings and their impressions of others, prompting social miscommunications which can be expensive for organisations (Chaka and Adanlawo 2022). With the expanded acknowledgment that culture influences all aspects of universal industry, comes the test for organisations to work effectively in socially differing conditions (Srivastava et al. 2020; Szkudlarek et al. 2020).

The establishment of effective inter-organisational communications is essential to achieving strong relational connections in an international market. Peronard and Brix (2019) affirm that without effective inter-organisational communications, learning among network industries that are in partnership will be reduced, and the continuing efficiency of the system will be impaired. According to Wang and Flannery (2021), communication implies that there is a specific social system that permits interpretation of the message by the receiver to keep up with the genuine intention of the sender. In the event that the social structure (national and additionally authoritative) does not have adequate shared traits, communication might be less viable than when the typical social establishment is steady. Intercultural business communication is critical to an industry for at least two reasons. Firstly, it shapes the globalisation strategy of the industry as knowledge is gained and integrated. Secondly, it can change the content and process of an industry's globalisation strategy to enhance its long-term prospects (Reddy and Adanlawo 2018).

The Concepts of Intercultural Business Communication

In understanding the meaning of IBC, the relationship between language (communication), business, and culture is essential. Nkomo and Adanlawo (2023), and Moeran (2021) observe that communication is involved in all sorts of cultural design and acts of social behaviour in business. The author adds that the connection between culture, business, and language may not be obvious at the beginning. He contends that when people learn their native language, they also

unconsciously acquire their cultures; however, if a person learns another language or grows up speaking more than one language, that person may become aware of the various ways that each language allows its speakers to perceive and describe reality. The dissimilarities in perceptions establish differences in culture, and language, more than any other factor, is the greatest determinant of one's culture. We concur that intercultural business communication can best be understood by understanding the variables that form intercultural business communication:

Culture

Jakobsen et al. (2023) declare culture to be the aggregate understanding of a gathering of individuals that incorporates their considerations, emotions, values, practices, communication, and their translation of tangible boosts (sights, scents, sounds, and tastes). Culture is most likely the most ideal approach to completely welcoming the complexities of intercultural business communication. Puzzo et al. (2024) suggests four aptitude zones that are required for making an individual more interculturally skilled in business:

- i. Personal quality, which includes factors such as self-ideas, is simply the manner in which an individual perceives himself, just as it is the availability of the person to uncover information about himself and his counterpart with almost no nervousness.
- ii. Relational abilities are significant, and a successful communicator ought to have the option to manage varied individuals in various circumstances.
- iii. Psychological modification is imperative for an individual to have the option to oversee culture shock, which is frequently uncovered as pressure, dissatisfaction, and estrangement in new conditions.
- iv. Cultural mindfulness affirms that an individual needs to comprehend both the social traditions and social frameworks of a situation before s/he can be skilled regarding cultures (Puzzo 2024).

Business

According Chaka and Adanlawo (2023a), business exercises are of two kinds: internal and external. Among the internal exercises are: keeping up and improving the resolve of workers; providing requests to workers; recommending strategies and systems; reporting approaches and organisational changes; and keeping the management updated. The external exercises identify with selling and acquiring products and ventures, answering to the management and the investors on the money-related condition and business activities, and creating a positive atmosphere for leading business. Each action, internal or external, prompts some outcome.

Adanlawo and Chaka (2022) demonstrate that the principal motivation behind each communication in business is to acquire some outcome. The sender anticipates that he should accomplish something by composing the message, putting in a request, affirming an activity, and sending some information. Peronard and Brix (2019) add that to accomplish this, the language utilised must be plain, brief, and to the point, and the style must focus on drawing attention, stirring interest, or convincing. Orbe and Harris (2022) highlight the fundamental elements that distinguish business communication, which are as follows:

It manages different business and industrial subjects.

It is portrayed by certain proper components, for example, business and specialised jargon.

It is fair-minded, and objective in information dissemination.

It has nearly a high centralisation of certain intricate composition strategies and techniques.

Nkomo and Adanlawo (2024) and Peronard and Brix (2019) state that for organisations to viably enjoy intercultural business communication, it is important to make them comprehend organisational structures and management styles. Organisational structures decide factors, for example, the division of work, the centralisation of power, and the level of custom inside the organisation. These, thus, shape the managers' duties. The jobs and conduct of supervisors are probably going to significantly affect (intercultural) communication within an organisation, since they can impact different workers, and their perspectives towards others may decide the kind of communication that will occur. To summarise, business communication can be characterized as the utilisation of effective language for passing a business or industrial message to accomplish a foreordained goal.

Communication

Reddy and Adanlawo (2018) argue that communication is a strategy by which information is transferred and received to achieve an objective at whatever point individuals communicate together. The definition shows the embodiment of communication, as in, without communication, there cannot be cooperation. Communication is significant for our regular day-to-day existence. Communication is a significant determinant of our responses to issues and determines our exhibition capacity. Communication is a unique procedure; individuals are consistently not communicators or receivers. With the aforementioned definition, communication can be regarded as a technique that can be utilised to deal with any sort of business, regardless of whether small or large. Barrett et al. (2021) express that through communication, messages are sent and received. Martella and Bracciale (2022) argue that an individual participating in the communication process can act as both a sender and a receiver at the same time. Every individual involved in communication is one of a kind. Everybody has their own particular manner of life and method for acting in given conditions.

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is the administration of messages to make meaning between cultures (Neuliep 2016). Intercultural communication is characterized by Halliday (2018) as having profound significance in understanding individuals' identities/personalities, by staying away from discernments, acknowledging complexities, and not oversumming up singular occurrences. As indicated by Orbe and Harris (2022) and Sorrells and Sekimoto (2015), intercultural communication is communication between individuals from various societies. This indicates that intercultural communication happens at whatever point a message composer is an individual from one culture and the message recipient is from another. Sorrells and Sekimoto (2015) state that the majority of us underestimate our cultures until we end up with individuals from various societies. The author further state that our customs and traditions show us the proper behaviour within our cultures. R'boul (2022) identifies the major factors of intercultural communication in terms of four major categories:

Ideology, which includes the set of experiences and perspectives of a culture with beliefs, and religion as its primary elements.

Socialisation, which alludes to the manner in which individuals get familiar with the legacy, mentalities, qualities, and activities that are fitting to their way of life.

Forms of discourse, comprise two sub-classes: elements of language (information and

relationship, negotiation and ratification, group harmony, and individual welfare) and non-verbal communication, which comprises kinesics, proxemics, and concepts of time.

Face systems, and this involves kinship, the concept of self, and in-group and out-group relationships. This is significant as these aspects all differ from culture to culture, thus making intercultural communication so complex (R'boul 2022).

This brief explanation of the variables that form intercultural business communication (IBC) leads to what intercultural business communication (IBC) is.

The Essentials of Intercultural Business Communication

Adanlawo and Vezi-Maigaba (2023) ascribe IBC to issues relating to culture, communication, and business. It is communication that involves individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds in a business environment. It has distinct identities from business communication, intercultural communication, and international business. Chen et al. (2024) and Holmes and Wilson (2022) assert that inter-cultural matters are among the most tenacious influences on intercultural business activity. The infiltration of foreign businesses worldwide, globalisation, and internationalisation have brought focus to the competitiveness and competency of businesses at home and abroad. Chen et al. (2024) aver that an increase in foreign-owned businesses has necessitated the need for business organisations to communicate with their business counterparts from different cultures, therefore resulting in a need for intercultural communication competency.

According to Chen et al. (2024), globalisation is a spatial procedure wherein institutions and geography are key to understanding cultural demands. Holmes and Wilson (2022) argue that culture has brought about expanded social intrigue, social contact, and varieties of grammatical structures. The significance of intercultural business communication is clarified by Sorrells and Sekimoto (2015), who define globalisation and the impact it has on organisations. The author contends that all business is influenced by globalisation, in spite of the fact that not all organisations are worldwide. For business organisations to function effectively in international transactions, it is essential to approach the new worldwide market and make themselves adequate or ideally attractive to consumers.

Eriksen (2020) asserts that global business might be portrayed by its capacity to rise above existing limits of three sorts. To start with, worldwide ventures cross the outer limits of countries, existence, or duties that are in some sense quantifiable. Second, less unmistakable limits like culture, thought, or the connection between self (association) and others should likewise be crossed if worldwide open doors are to be reached. This infers that businesses must gain proficiency in the specialty of intercultural communication so as to have a competitive advantage. Intercultural business communication opens up new markets worldwide for enterprises of all sizes and sectors to grow their activities abroad at uncommon rates, which requires an expansion in key partnerships and thus intercultural organisations.

To build relationships and connections regularly with clients from different societies, most organisations or independent ventures depend on representatives to be their primary intermediaries. Jakobsen et al. (2023) maintain that organisations taking part in cross-national business must be insightful about multifaceted issues explicitly relating to business communication. Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2018) opine that cordial interactions among individuals from different cultures and backgrounds will lead to globalisation expansion. Thereby, organisations need decent variety to turn out to be increasingly imaginative and open

to change. Lim et al. (2023) postulate overseeing and esteeming diversity as a key part of effective means of people management, which can improve the organisation's profitability. This implies that unmanaged diversity in an organisation may turn into a hindrance to accomplishing management objectives. Consequently, diversity can be seen as a "double-edged sword."

The Influence of Culture on Communication of Business

Feasible intercultural communication in business plays an imperative role in preventing misinformation and misconceptions. Individuals are compelled to re-examine the significance of intercultural communication because of intercultural contact and interdependence. And we also have to keep in mind the target of achieving viable intercultural communication proficiency (Xaba et al. 2024; Puzzo 2024). Every communication is influenced by culture and environment. According to Chen et al. (2024) and Chaka and Adanlawo (2023b), culture and communication are connected. This indicates that culture affects communication; every single social gathering impacts the procedure by which the view of the truth is made and supported, and culture is likewise authorized through communication and, in this manner, affected by communication.

Similarly, Chaka (2014) argues that communication and culture are interrelated and complementary; nevertheless, when engaged in an intercultural situation, an essential viewpoint to remember is social contrasts. What might be viewed as powerful relational abilities and adequate conduct in one culture may not be applicable to another. Bonvillain (2019) confirms that individuals define and decipher messages based on their culture. Culture variety impacts the implications one credits to communication. Cultural contrasts do not just exist between individuals who speak various dialects but also between individuals who speak a similar dialect. Each culture has its own individual principles and inclinations for cooperation. At the point when these guidelines and inclinations are dismissed or new, people are probably going to confound the significance of the message and misinterpret the effect of the message.

Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2018) stress that when speaking with individuals whose states of mind, values, opinions, traditions, and practices are socially not quite the same as our own, we communicate across cultural limits. This could prompt false impressions that would more often than not happen between individuals of the same or comparable culture. Imparting communication across cultures has demonstrated challenges in comprehension or translating messages; it is accordingly clear that culture impacts communication and vice versa. Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2018) state that to accomplish an objective in intercultural interaction arrangements, it is vital to comprehend distinctive communication styles in various nations. Understanding the distinctive cultural differences prevalent among various countries poses an advantage for intercultural business transactions.

Different Views of Culture

Küster (2024) defines the main dimensions that distinguish cultures as "individualism versus collectivism, power distance, masculinity versus femininity, low-context versus high-context, high uncertainty avoidance versus low uncertainty avoidance, and a long-term versus a short-term orientation."

Individualism versus Collectivism

Küster (2024) recommends accentuation on setting as the most remarkable trait of collectivist societies. Collective cultures stress setting, recommending attributes such as inflection of voice, signals, and the communication setting have more importance than verbal words. Individualistic

societies then again place an accentuation on content more than on setting. Besides, it portrays the depiction of relationships between people in a specific culture (Lu et al. 2021; Alejo 2018). In a situation where accentuation is placed incredible on a singular objective, individualism happens. Individualistic culture advances individual imagination, accomplishment, and progression at an individual level. Instances of individualistic societies incorporate places like North America and Western Europe. Collectivistic cultures underline the significance of group objectives. Individuals in a specific collectivistic culture are relied upon to set aside singular wants, objectives, and plans for group objectives. Instances of collectivistic societies are available in Africa and Arab nations.

Low-Context and High-Context Culture

Low-context cultures support explicitness in communication. Individuals in low-setting societies are progressively free to communicate with people outside their culture. According to Broeder (2021), low-context communication styles are peculiar to western nations. Communication in high-context cultures depends intensely on irrationality (Adanlawo and Chaka 2023; Broeder 2021; Rai and Agarwal 2020). Most African societies as well as Asian societies have high-setting cultures. In Japan, for instance, quietness is esteemed so much that an individual of scarcely any words is viewed as attentive, astute, reliable, and decent. In high-context settings, for example, Japan (and most Asian regions) or Colombia, understanding the nonverbal segments of communication is generally increasingly critical to accepting the proposed significance of the communication (Broeder 2021).

Yang et al. (2021) recognise the ideas of high-context and low-context as major elements in communication styles. High-context exchanges present information that has been well planned for the receiver and the circumstances of the discussion. At the point when the cultural context is broadly high, communication does not require a lot of basic information from one individual to another. However, when cultural understanding is low, low-context communication requires a ton of foundational information.

Low-Power Distance and High-Power Distance

According to Rai and Agarwal (2020), the extent to which a culture values power is known as power distance. Low-power distance cultures see disparities in force and status as shallow. According to Jiang et al. (2021), individuals have the privilege to exercise power in societies. Unlike high-power distance cultures, it keeps up disparity in power and status. Certain people are given regard in the public eye as more intelligent or more important; this denotes high-power separation cultures.

Masculinity versus Femininity

Cultures could be recognized by manliness and gentility. Walton (2022) states that cultures that place higher incentives on manly qualities emphasise rivalry and material riches. Manly cultures recognise man's supremacy and rely on his strength to perform better. Cultures that esteem female attributes are increasingly lenient on women by assigning lesser activities to them. According to Sa'ar (2006), feminine cultures place more emphasis on personal satisfaction and concern for the less privileged.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is characterized by Caputo et al. (2019) as a degree of avoidance in which

an individual within a specific culture feels compromised by vulnerability and uncertainty and endeavours to maintain a strategic distance from such circumstances. Individuals are required by rules and customs to identify social circumstances in cultures that are progressively disposed to maintain a strategic distance from vulnerability. Caputo et al. (2019) argue that there is a need to quest for truth and confidence in relationship building pertaining to intercultural communication. It is a well-accepted norm that individuals with high cultures are reluctant to compromise, unlike those with low uncertainty avoidance cultures.

Long-versus Short-Term Orientation

Here, a cultural group holds a rational bearing regarding the future instead of a standard, important, or transient opinion (Caputo et al. 2019). Relationships are motivated by status, cheapness, having a sentiment of disfavour, and the mission for certified sentiments of self-possession. Culture dictates how to exchange greetings. Additionally, people of a culture acknowledge when to be quiet and when to talk and how non-verbal communication can be used to convey an understandable message. This can be achieved when people make sense of worthy conduct, think, talk, and even tune in to certain cultures.

Everyone is characterized by specific patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving acquired throughout his or her life, starting within the family and continuing at school, at the workplace, and eventually in the social environment in which the individual lives. All these patterns define an individual's culture. According to Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2018), cultures differ from one another, and consequently, the communication practices and behaviours of people from diverse cultural backgrounds will vary considerably. Therefore, cultural feelings and sign methods are sufficiently unique to hinder the communication process between people in an intercultural context. According to Caputo et al. (2019), values and practices are the ways in which cultural differences are apparent.

Influence of Culture on Non-Verbal Communication

Matsumoto and Hwang (2016) postulate that culture assumes a noteworthy duty in changing the interaction of human communication through non-verbal cues. Culture guides individuals on the most proficient method to communicate relationally. Culture as well directs how an individual allots with others; it could be personal or social. Yang et al. (2021) argue that culture could be contact, whereby people in such culture could indulge in close body contact when in social gathering. These include, for example, Saudi Arabia, France, Italy, and most North African nations. People from Western Europe and North America, then again, want to save a specific measure of individual space in open communication.

Similarly, as individuals of various societies vary in the manner in which they utilise individual space between at least two communicators, People from the Mediterranean area will in general be wanton in communicating their feelings, while the Chinese and Japanese will in general reveal their feelings in public. Touch is essential in human daily activities. Touch can be a sign of transparency, comfort with, and trust in the other individual (Matsumoto and Hwang 2016). The measure of touch that is adequate for people and how they need to be contacted are, to a great extent, dictated by culture. For example, Asian individuals, such as the Japanese, avoid touching in public because their cultures preclude this. Whereas, most Westerners show fondness in public because their cultures support it.

Owolabi et al. (2024) identify perception of time as another component affected extraordinarily by culture. Time understanding varies with culture. A few cultures will in general be distracted

by time, while individuals in different cultures value time. For example, an American may presume that the Japanese are hostile since the Japanese in general will express their feelings in public discussion (Bonvillain 2019). Gesturing with one's head, which symbolises understanding in North America, though in Japan this may infer a message has been received, not indicating that the person agrees with the message.

Understanding the above contrasts rearranges intercultural business by assisting with lessening uneasiness, facilitating trade, and ensuring better understanding.

Conclusion

Intercultural business communication has significance in each circumstance where individuals in business from various cultural backgrounds interact every day. It is of the utmost important that these individuals figure out how to acknowledge and endure differences relating to language diversities, nonverbal behaviours, perspectives, measures, perspectives, and customs. If such resistance is not accomplished, intercultural business communication is probably going to fizzle, consequently preventing progress and tranquil interrelationships. Previously, conversations on the theory of intercultural business communication have generally centered on intercultural communication utilising business as a model as opposed to including business as a particular variable. This study discusses intercultural business and communication methodologies that are part of intercultural business communication.

It is contended that for intercultural business communication to be effective, the three factors must interact and form a collaboration that mirrors the dynamic character of intercultural business communication. With this, business communication turns into a remarkable concept that is unique in relation to intercultural religious communication. As stated by Adanlawo (2017), a range of communication issues may emerge in intercultural business. Puzzo (2024) adds that cultural differences may impede the communication process. It is envisaged that misinformation may occur as a result of differences in culture. Also, if socio-cultural noise persists, it might lead to communication breakdown.

Consequently, people who transact business interculturally have to learn about those cultures, their values, beliefs, and symbols. As an outsider, the business negotiator may never come to share those values and beliefs, but he may get a good understanding of them. In intercultural business communication, participants need to take into account the fact that they are dealing with individuals, and there are always exceptions to every rule. There are cultural patterns that work as a guideline and prevent basic intercultural misunderstandings, but at the same time, one should adapt to each circumstance and stay open to new experiences and practices. Therefore, to accomplish effective business communication within an intercultural environment, the interactants have to understand and apply the values, symbols, and rituals of the other culture. As stated by Cuccurullo and Cinganotto (2020), cultural differences, awareness, and understanding are paramount in an intercultural communication environment.

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