

Hall's cultural factors essay examples

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



The high-context and low-context culture theory as discovered by Edward T. Hall helps understand how culture significantly impacts communication. This theory mainly focuses on context. The theory attempts to explain the surrounding circumstances, background and framework in which an event or communication occurs. This essay defines high-context and low-context cultures and investigates the manner in which communication is conducted in both cultures by providing examples of each.

A high-context culture is one in which people emphasize interpersonal level relationships rather than individualism. This culture may be defined as being relational, intuitive, collectivist and contemplative. Collectivism is the preference and recognition of group harmony and consensus as being important elements for individual success. People in high-context cultures are more driven by feelings or intuition rather than reason. This means that in a business transaction, for example, they value the development of trust between parties more than the facts and the logic underpinning the transaction. In this culture, many contextual elements that enable people understand rules exist. Most of these contextual elements are not verbalized and as a result, much is taken for granted. Words are not very important as compared to the context. Contextual elements may include facial expression, posture, gestures, family background etc. Every culture has “unwritten rules” such as those regarding morals and ethics. A high-context culture may be quite confusing for those who do not understand these “unwritten rules” of a particular culture. In high-context cultures, communication is more formal and indirect. People are more humble, in their communication and do not say much because words carry a lot of meaning.

Examples of regions that are high-context culture countries include Asia, the Middle East, South America and Africa.

On the other hand, Low-context cultures are those in which people are more individualistic, action-oriented, linear and logical. People from this culture are not as intuitive as those from high-context cultures. They value facts, logic and directness in their approach to communication and other aspects of life. In business, they value the facts, figures and the bottom line rather than in developing trust and relationships. Action is often the end result of discussion and communications are more direct, efficient and to the point. Communications are meant to be understood literally. In low-context cultures, everything is laid bare and not much is left for assumptions. This implies that more explanations is required but also makes sure that the chances of misunderstanding a form of communication are minimized. Overall, communication is clear, simple, explicit and overt. Verbal communication is emphasized more than non-verbal communication and body language is kept to a minimum. Regions in which low-context cultures exist include most of Western Europe and parts of North America.

Conclusion

Edward T. Hall proposed a theory on communication that is based on cultural context. This is the high-context and low-context culture theory. This theory holds that in high-context cultures, people rely more on contextual elements while communication. This means that people are more intuitive and use fewer words while communicating. Communication is more indirect and relies on non-verbal cues Such as body language, facial expressions and gestures. In low-context cultures, on the other hand, people are more direct

in their communication and rely less on contextual elements. People rely predominantly on explicit communication through words, logic and facts rather than intuition.