Intercultural communication assignment

Art & Culture

I. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION. FRAMEWORK "… the single greatest barrier to business success is the one erected by culture. " Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall Why study Intercultural Communication? Cultural diversity and multiculturalism are the realities of everyday life for almost everyone. The growth of interdependence of people and cultures in the global society of the twenty-first century has forced us to pay more attention to intercultural issues. In order to live and function in this multicultural environment as effectively and meaningfully as possible, people must be competent in intercultural communication.

Therefore, demands for intercultural communication skills are increasing as more and more businesses go global or international. We realize that there are barriers and limitations when entering a foreign territory. Without the help of intercultural communication we can unknowingly cause confusion and misunderstandings. For these intercultural businesses to breach the cultural barriers encountered when stepping into foreign grounds it is vital for business people to fully understand the cultural differences that exist so as to prevent damaging business relations due to intercultural communication gaps.

We should also be aware of the reasons for the development of the world into a global system: a. The development of technology has enabled a constant flow of information and ideas across boundaries. Communication is faster and more available than ever. The development of transportation as well, has increased face-to-face contact with people from different cultural backgrounds immensely b. These developments have affected the world

economy. The business world is becoming more international and interrelated. c.

Widespread population migrations have changed the demographics of several nations and new intercultural identities and communities have been born. d. The development of multiculturalism Working, meeting, dealing, entertaining, negotiating and corresponding with colleagues or clients from different cultures can not be perceived outside the frame of intercultural communication. This field is of importance to international businesses as it examines how?? people from different cultures, beliefs and religions come together to work and communicate with each other.

However, the basic skills of intercultural communication are fundamentally general communication skills that can be used universally by all cultures and races. These skills are simply tweaked in a direction that takes the cultural limitation into consideration. An example of such communication skills in the intercultural environment is to listen without judging, repeat what you understand, confirm meanings, give suggestions and acknowledge a mutual understanding.

Starting from these general observations, the main characteristics of intercultural communication can be established: ??? Intercultural communication is a form of global communication. It is used to describe the wide range of communication problems that naturally appear within an organization made up of individuals from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. ??? Intercultural communication is sometimes used synonymously with cross-cultural communication.

In this sense it seeks to understand how people from different countries and cultures act, communicate and perceive the world around them. ??? IC also studies situations where people from different cultural backgrounds interact. ??? Aside from language, intercultural communication focuses on social attributes, thought patterns, and the cultures of different groups of people. ??? It also involves understanding the different cultures, languages and customs of people from other countries. ??? Intercultural communication plays a role in anthropology, cultural studies, linguistics, psychology and communication studies. Intercultural communication is also referred to as the base for international businesses and requires the development of intercultural communication skills for the benefit of the business environment. Being aware of intercultural issues, understanding and appreciating intercultural differences?? ultimately promotes clearer communication, breaks down barriers, builds trust, strengthens relationships, opens horizons and yields tangible results in terms of business success. (http://en. wikipedia. org/wiki/Intercultural_communication) http://www. wintessential. co. uk/cultural-services/articles/introduction-intercultural. html A Short History of Intercultural Communication 1. A review of the development of intercultural communication study Although the phenomenon of intercultural communication is as old as human society, the study of intercultural communication is of recent origin. It was first started in the United States. Communication scholars commonly recognize E. T. Hall as the father of the field of intercultural communication study (Condon, 1981; Dodd, 1982; Gudykunst, 1985; Singer, 1987).

He conceptualized this new field of ICC in the early 1950s when he worked for the U. S. Foreign Service Institute (FSI). He popularized this new area of communication in his book, The Silent Language, published in 1959, which is considered the founder of intercultural communication study and a classic in this field. Hall's role in the study of IC is clearly pointed out by Gudykunst and Mody: " After World War II, the United States established a foreign aid program, the Marshall Plan, to help rebuild Europe. Based on the success of this program, U. S. President Harry S.

Truman proposed in 1949 the United States should offer its technical and scientific expertise to the then developing nations in Latin America, Africa, and Asia to assist their development process. The FSI was established by the U. S. Congress in the U. S. Department of State to train American development technicians and diplomats. Hall was the key intellectual in the FSI training program from 1950 to 1955. " (Gudykunst and Mody, Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication 2002, 2nd edition, p. 2) Hall introduced terms such as " intercultural tensions" and " intercultural problems" in 1950 and " intercultural communication" in 1959.

The field of ICC has continued to prosper in the United States considering the following reasons: ??? The United States provide many opportunities for people from different cultural backgrounds to communicate with each; ??? There are thousands of new immigrants entering the country every year; ??? The U. S. has large numbers of foreign students and tourists; and ??? The American involvement in the global economy: the majority of America's Fortune 500 Corporations are multinational and transnational companies

with numerous employees and offices in many different countries in the world.

There had also been an anthropological tradition in the study of race and culture in U. S. that contributed to the further development of ICC. Anthropologists such as Franz Boas, a professor of anthropology at Columbia University and some of his students which included Edward Sapir, Ruth Benedict, and Margaret Mead, contributed to the later development of ICC through their studies and research of race and culture. For example, Ruth Benedict is the anthropologist who coined the term " culture shock," which is defined as the traumatic experience that someone may encounter when entering a different cultural environment.

Benjamin Lee Whorf, a student and colleague of Sapir's at Yale University, advanced the theory that language influences perceptions and thus human behavior. The major points in the development of ICC are: ??? Culture and communication were studied separately until recent years, and it was not until the early seventies that scholars started to relate culture to communication. ??? In 1970, intercultural communication was recognized by the Intercultural communication Association (ICA), and since that time, many changes in the discipline have taken place, such as ICC being offered as a course of study at many American universities. In the early 1970s, serious training in the field of intercultural communication was begun. The first training actually started with Peace Corps members, who were being prepared in ICC before being sent abroad in the 1960s and 1970s, to countries in the Asian and African continents. ??? Sietar (Society for

intercultural education, training and research) was set up in 1975; and it is probably the largest international organization engaged in intercultural communication. ??? In 1977, an academic journal entitled International Journal of Intercultural Relations was first published. The International Association of Communication has a membership of over five thousand members. As Hart (1996) summarized, this new field of study originated in the United States in the late 1950s when anthropologists made studies of the native Indians and the problems U. S. diplomats at the Foreign Institute Service had with people from other cultures. The study of intercultural communication gained acceptance through training and testing practice in the 1960s and 1970s, formed its basic framework in the late 1970s and has made great achievements in theory and practice ever since the 1980s both inside and outside the U.

S. Today intercultural communication not only has become one of the major academic disciplines in the United States but also is widely acknowledged and extensively researched in all parts of the world. 2. The Chronological Development of Intercultural Communication Study (1) The Burgeoning Period In 1958, Lederer and Burdick's The Ugly American first raised mass awareness of intercultural issues, but the term " intercultural communication" itself did not appear until Hall's The Silent Language was published in 1959. The same book paved the way for the study of intercultural communication.

According to Leeds-Hurwitz (1990), Hall made at least eight contributions to the study of intercultural communication: ?? a) Hall extends the single-

culture focus of traditional anthropology study to comparative culture study, with a new focus on the interaction of people from different cultures. This focus continues to be central to the present time. b) Hall shifts the study of culture from a macro perspective to a micro analysis. This shift encourages the study of intercultural communication in terms of the practical needs of the participants in communication.) Hall extends the study of culture to the field of communication. His extension gradually develops a link between anthropology and communication studies. d) Hall treats communication as a rule-governed, analyzable, and learned variable, a practice that permits communication researchers to theorize about cultural patterns of interaction. e) Hall proposes that a holistic understanding of a counterpart's culture is not necessary to intercultural communication. He enumerates several items that can be used to understand another culture, including the use of voice, gestures, time, and space.) The training methods developed by Hall at the Foreign Service Institute are still applied to the intercultural communication training. g) Hall's use of descriptive linguistics as the model of intercultural communication research at the Foreign Service Institute continues to be the cornerstone of contemporary intercultural communication study. h) Hall not only applied intercultural communication training to foreign service officers but also introduced it to international business.

Today, training people in intercultural business has become one of the major activities of intercultural communication specialists. Hall continued his theorizing about intercultural communication in other books, including The Hidden Dimension (1966), Beyond Culture (1976), The Dance of Life (1984), and Understanding Cultural Differences (Hall & Hall, 1989). His works

continue to influence the development of the field of intercultural communication. (2) From 1960 to 1970 Hall's writings have attracted numerous scholars to the study of intercultural communication.

In addition to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) discourse on cultural value orientations (Variations in value orientations), which provides an important conceptual contribution to the field, two representative books reflect the continuous efforts made by scholars in the field in the 1960s: Robert T. Oliver's Culture and Communication (1962) and Alfred G. Smith's Communication and Culture (1966). Oliver's study focuses on Asian philosophy and communication behaviors, especially from a rhetorical perspective.

His book establishes a model for the comparative study of communication behaviors between cultures. Smith's book is a collection of essays on human communication covering thirteen types of communication studies. Although only four articles on intercultural communication are included in the book, their presence confirms the status of intercultural communication as a field of study. The first college class in this field was taught in 1966 at the University of Pittsburgh. (3) From 1971 to 1980 The 1970s witnessed rapid development in the field of intercultural communication.

In 1972, after three years of refining his model of intercultural communication, Edward C. Stewart published his American Cultural Patterns. In 1973, Samovar and Porter published Intercultural Communication: A Reader, and Indiana University awarded the first doctoral degree in intercultural communication. Many books on intercultural communication

became available in the years that followed, the most influential including Michael H. Prosser's Intercommunication among Nations and People (1973) and Cultural Dialogue (1978), A.

G. Smith's Transracial Communication (1973), Condon and Yousef's Introduction to Intercultural Communication (1975), Barnlund's Public and Private Self in Japan and United States (1975), Sitaram and Cogdell's Foundations of Intercultural Communication (1976), Fischer and Merrill's International and Intercultural Communication (1976), Dodd's Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Communication (1977), Weaver's Crossing Cultural Barriers (1978), and Kohls' Survival Kit for Overseas Living (1979).

The publication of Asante, Blake, and Newmark's The Handbook of Intercultural Communication in 1979 highlighted the achievements of intercultural communication scholars in the 1970s. In addition to these books, The International Journal of Intercultural Relations began publication in 1977. The journal influenced research in the field of intercultural communication in the years that followed. Disorder characterizes the initial development of the field.

Intercultural communication scholars pursued their own directions and definitions and it was not until the 1980s that the field began to move from disarray to a more coherent focus. (4) From 1981 to the Present Time Condon and Yousef's Introduction to Intercultural Communication (1975) and Samovar and Porter's Intercultural Communication: A Reader (1973) are two major forces from the early 1970s in the integration of the study of intercultural communication in the 1980s.

Condon and Yousef's stress on cultural value orientations and communication behaviors parallels Hofstede's (1984) later work on cultural values and Hall's writing on high-context and low-context cultures in Beyond Culture (1977). Their writing on the relationship of culture and verbal and nonverbal communication is still important to contemporary intercultural communication study. In addition, their discussion of the interaction between language, thinking patterns, and culture drew from Oliver's method of comparative cultural study.

In the 1980s, Starosta (1984) continued to draw upon this line of research. Scholars who received formal academic training in intercultural communication in the late 1960s and the early 1970s began to make their contributions in research and teaching by the 1980s. Many of their mentors had been trained in rhetoric, including John Condon, Michael Prosser, William Howell, and Arthur Smith, whose students defined the course of intercultural communication in the 1980s and 1990s.

Five volumes published in the 1980s advanced an agenda for the study of intercultural communication: Gudykunst's Intercultural Communication Theory: Current Perspectives (1983), Gudykunst and Kim's Methods of Intercultural Research (1984), Kincaid's Communication Theory: Eastern and Western Perspectives, Kim and Gudykunst's Theories in Intercultural Communication (1988), and Asante and Gudykunst's Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication (1989).

Theory building and methodological refinement characterize intercultural communication study during this decade. It should also be pointed out that

from the 1970s to the present time the direction for the study of intercultural communication has been determined mainly by three influences: (1) the International and Intercultural Communication Annual (IICA), (2) the Speech Communication Association (SCA), and (3) the International Communication Association (ICA).

Early volumes of IICA were edited by Casmir and Jain. Starting with 1983, each volume of IICA focused on one specific topic. Intercultural Communication Theory: Current Perspectives (Gudykunst, 1983) and Theories in Intercultural Communication (Kim and Gudykunst, 1988) are two of the IICA volumes. The editorial direction of IICA was strongly oriented toward quantitative research in the 1980s and early 1990s. SCA and ICA are the two major professional associations for communication study.

Both associations have a division promoting research and study of intercultural communication, the International and Intercultural Communication Division of the SCA, and Intercultural/Development Communication Division of the ICA. In addition to SCA and ICA, other associations, including SIETAR, Eastern Communication Association (ECA), Western Communication Association (WCA), Southern States Communication Association (SSCA), Central States Communication Association (CSCA), and journals sponsored by these associations also make significant contributions to the development of the field of intercultural communication.

Recently, three additional journals, The Howard Journal of Communications, Intercultural Communication Studies, and World Communication, a publication of the World Communication Association, have begun to

specialize exclusively in the cultural issues of communication research. 3. The Content of Intercultural Communication Study Four decades after Hall's emphasis on the study of nonverbal messages in different cultural settings, the study of intercultural communication has xpanded to cover a diverse set of variables deriving from the concepts of " communication," " culture," and the combination of communication and culture. As is the case for the communication discipline itself, the study of intercultural communication is influenced by traditional disciplines such as anthropology, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. According to Rich (1974), intercultural communication is an ambiguous concept. For the purpose of her study, Rich argues that the content of intercultural communication can be classified into five forms.

First, intercultural communication focuses on the study of interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds, such as interactions between people from America and China. Second, international communication focuses on the study of interaction between representatives of different nations, such as the interaction between representatives in the United Nations. Third, interracial communication focuses on the study of interaction between members of the numerically or politically dominant culture and co-culture in the same nation, such as the interaction between whites and African Americans.

Fourth, interethnic or minority communication focuses on the study of interaction among co-cultures in the same nation, such as the interaction between Hispanic and Japanese Americans. Lastly, contracultural

communication focuses on the study of the developmental process linking intercultural communication to interracial communication, such as the developmental process that led from the interaction between Columbus and Native Americans to the interaction between First Nation tribes and Canadians.

Rich considered that the study of intercultural communication should include all these five areas. Rich's classification clearly shows that intercultural communication study should be approached from an interpersonal or rhetorical level. Except for contracultural communication, Rich's categories remain visible today. In his Outline of Intercultural Communication (1978), Stewart pointed out that the study of intercultural communication should lead to application in real-life situations.

Stewart emphasized intercultural training programs similar to those from his experience as a Peace Corps trainer, and based on a comparative culture model of cognition. He emphasized that intercultural communication training should lead trainees through nine stages of gradual change, enabling them to: a) select information among alternative facts they already possess. b) understand the goal of training and apply it in their decision making. c) identify or recognize generalizations and concepts to modify their perception of events and guide their performance at a general level.) master the content of the training. e) sensitize them to cultural concepts that will assist them in their interaction with people from other cultures. f) change aspects of their conscious attitudes, such as cultural self-perception and certain emotional and cognitive perceptions, to reach a higher level of empathy. g)

govern their behavior and emotions in working and in living with people from other cultures by increasing their adaptability. h) adopt a changed way of perceiving and behaving so that they can improve their social performance in other cultures.) integrate the emotional and perceptual change which govern their actions prior to the training. William B. Gudykunst (1987) classified the contents of intercultural communication study by using interactive-comparative dimensions to divide the field of research into four categories: (1) intercultural communication, (2) cross-cultural communication, (3) international communication, and (4) comparative mass communication. According to Gudykunst, intercultural communication includes a focus on both the " interactive" and the " interpersonal. It deals with interpersonal communication between people from different cultures or co-cultures, such as that among Chinese and Americans, or between whites and African Americans, and encompasses the areas of intercultural, interracial, and interethnic communication identified by Rich. Cross-cultural communication focuses on the concepts of " interpersonal" and " comparative" and deals with the differences in communication behaviors between people of different cultures, such as the differences in negotiation strategies between Swazis and South Africans.

International communication stresses the concepts of " interactive" and " mediated. " It mainly deals with media communication in another countries, exploring, for example, the role media play in Korean society. Finally, comparative mass communication focuses on the concepts of " mediated" and " comparative. " It deals with the differences and similarities of media systems in different countries, as in China and Russia. Gudykunst further

delineated five subareas of intercultural communication study based on the concepts of " interactive," " comparative," " interpersonal," and " mediated. In sum, in four decades of theorizing and research in intercultural communication advances occurred on several fronts. More and more intercultural communication training programs developed, including long-term and short-term workshops and seminars. While the content of intercultural communication has been classified by scholars into different categories, it maintains its historical focus on intercultural, cross-cultural, interracial, and interethnic communication that was developed by J. Condon, W. B. Gudykunst, E. T. Hall, R. T. Oliver, Rich, and A.

Smith. (http://210. 46. 97. 180/jpk/backg/3. html) 4. Communication Theories The following types of theories can be distinguished in different strands: focus on effective outcomes, on accommodation or adaption, on identity negotiation and management, on communication networks, on acculturation and adjustment. Theories focusing on effective outcomes ??? Cultural Convergence o In a relatively closed social system in which communication among members is unrestricted, the system as a whole will tend to converge over time toward a state of greater cultural uniformity.

The system will tend to diverge toward diversity when communication is restricted. Theories focusing on accommodation or adaption ??? Communication Accommodation Theory o This theory focuses on linguistic strategies to decrease or increase communicative distances. ??? Intercultural Adaption o This theory is designed to explain how communicators adapt to each other in " purpose-related encounters", at which cultural factors need

to be incorporated. ??? Co-cultural Theory o In its most general form, co-cultural communication refers to interactions among underrepresented and dominant group members. Co-cultures include but are not limited to people of color, women, people with disabilities, gay men and lesbians, and those in the lower social classes. Co-cultural theory, as developed by Mark P. Orbe, looks at the strategic ways in which co-cultural group members communicate with others. In addition, a co-cultural framework provides an explanation for how different persons communicate based on six factors. Theories focusing on identity negotiation or management ??? Identity Management Theory Identity Management Theory (also frequently referred to as IMT) is an intercultural communication theory from the 1990s.

It was developed by William R. Cupach and Tadasu Todd Imahori on the basis of Erving Goffman's Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behavior (1967). Cupach and Imahori distinguish between intercultural communication (speakers from different cultures) and intracultural communication (speakers sharing the same culture). To understand IMT, it is important to be familiar with Cupach and Imahori's view of identities. Among the multiple identities which an individual possesses, cultural and relational identities are regarded as essential to IMT.

Cupach and Imahori claim that presenting one's face shows facets of an individual's identity. Whether an interlocutor is able to maintain face or not, reveals his or her interpersonal communication competence. The use of stereotypes in intercultural conversations often results from the ignorance of each other's culture; the application of stereotypes, however, is face

threatening. Being able to manage the resulting tensions, is part of intercultural communication competence. For becoming competent in developing intercultural relationships, the following three phases have to be passed: 1. trial and error": act of looking for similar aspects in certain identities. 2. " mixing up" the communicators' identities to achieve a relational identity acceptable for both participants 3. renegotiating the distinctive cultural identities with the help of the relational identity that was created in phase 2 Cupach and Imahori call these phases " cyclical" as they are gone through by intercultural communicators for each aspect of their identities. ??? Identity Negotiation// Cultural Identity Theory// Double-swing model

Theories focusing on communication networks ??? Networks and Outgroup Communication Competence ??? Intracultural Versus Intercultural Networks ??? Networks and Acculturation Theories focusing on acculturation and adjustment ??? Communication Acculturation o This theory attempts to portray " cross-cultural adaption as a collaborative effort in which a stranger and the receiving environment are engaged in a joint effort. ??? Anxiety/Uncertainty Management o When strangers communicate with hosts, they experience uncertainty and anxiety.

Strangers need to manage their uncertainty as well as their anxiety in order to be able to communicate effectively with hosts and then to try to develop accurate predictions and explanations for hosts' behaviors. ??? Assimilation, Deviance, and Alienation States o Assimilation and adaption are not permanent outcomes of the adaption process; rather, they are temporary

outcomes of the communication process between hosts and immigrants. "
Alienation or assimilation, therefore, of a group or an individual, is an
outcome of the relationship between deviant behavior and neglectful
communication. Other Theories ??? Meaning of Meaning Theory – " A
misunderstanding takes place when people assume a word has a direct
connection with its referent. A common past reduces misunderstanding.
Definition, metaphor, feedforward, and Basic English are partial linguistic
remedies for a lack of shared experience. " ??? Face Negotiation Theory – "
Members of collectivistic, high-context cultures have concerns for mutual
face and inclusion that lead them to manage conflict with another person by
avoiding, obliging, or compromising.

Because of concerns for self-face and autonomy, people from individualistic,
low-context cultures manage conflict by dominating or through problem
solving" ??? Standpoint Theory ??? refers to the situation in which an
individual experience, knowledge, and communication behaviors are shaped
in large part by the social groups to which they belong. ??? Stranger Theory –
At least one of the persons in an intercultural encounter is a stranger.
Strangers are a ' hyperaware' of cultural differences and tend to
overestimate the effect of cultural identity on the behavior of people in an
alien society, while blurring individual distinctions. Feminist Genre Theory –
Evaluates communication by identifying feminist speakers and reframing
their speaking qualities as models for women's liberation. ??? Genderlect
Theory – " Male-female conversation is cross-cultural communication.
Masculine and feminine styles of discourse are best viewed as two distinct
cultural dialects rather than as inferior or superior ways of speaking. Men's

report talk focuses on status and independence. Women's support talk seeks human connection. ??? Cultural Critical Studies Theory – The theory states that the mass media impose the dominant ideology on the rest of society, and the connotations of words and images are fragments of ideology that perform an unwitting service for the ruling elite. http://en. wikipedia. org/wiki/Intercultural_communication Bibliography ??? Ellingsworth, H. W. (1983). " Adaptive intercultural communication", in: Gudykunst, William B (ed.), Intercultural communication theory, 195-204, Beverly Hills: Sage. ??? Griffin, E. (2000). A first look at communication theory (4th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill. /a ??? Gudykunst, William B. , & M. R. Hammer. (1988). " Strangers and hosts: An uncertainty reduction based theory of intercultural adaption" in: Kim, Y. & W. B. Gudykunst (eds.), Cross-cultural adaption, 106-139, Newbury Park: Sage. ??? Gudykunst, William B. (2003), " Intercultural Communication Theories", in: Gudykunst, William B (ed.), Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication, 167-189, Thousand Oaks: Sage. ??? Kim Y. Y. (1995), " Cross-Cultural adaption: An integrative theory. ", in: R. L. Wiseman (Ed.)Intercultural Communication Theory, 170 – 194, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ??? McGuire, M. & McDermott, S. 1988), " Communication in assimilation, deviance, and alienation states", in: Y. Y. Kim & W. B. Gudykunst (Eds.), Cross-Cultural Adaption, 90 – 105, Newbury Park, CA: Sage. ??? Oetzel, John G. (1995), " Intercultural small groups: An effective decision-making theory", in Wiseman, Richard L (ed.), Intercultural communication theory, 247-270, Thousands Oaks: Sage. ??? Wiseman, Richard L. (2003), " Intercultural Communication Competence", in: Gudykunst, William B (ed.), Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication,

191-208, Thousand Oaks: Sage. II. CULTURE. COMMUNICATION. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION Culture and Communication

The term " culture" refers to the complex collection of knowledge, folklore, language, rules, rituals, habits, lifestyles, attitudes, beliefs, and customs that link and give a common identity to a particular group of people at a specific point in time. All social units develop a culture. Even in two-person relationships, a culture develops over time. In friendship and romantic relationships, for example, partners develop their own history, shared experiences, language patterns, rituals, habits, and customs that give that relationship a special character??? a character that differentiates it in various ways from other relationships.

Examples might include special dates, places, songs, or events that come to have a unique and important symbolic meaning for two individuals. Groups also develop cultures, composed of the collection of rules, rituals, customs, and other characteristics that give an identity to the social unit. For example, issues such as where a group traditionally meets, whether meetings begin on time or not, what topics are discussed, how decisions are made, and how the group socializes become defining and differentiating elements of the group's culture.

Organizations also have cultures, often apparent in particular patterns of dress, layout of workspaces, meeting styles and functions, ways of thinking about and talking about the nature and directions of the organization, leadership styles, and so on. The most rich and complex cultures are those that are associated with a society or a nation, and the term " culture" is most

commonly used to refer to these characteristics, including language and language-usage patterns, rituals, rules, and customs.

A societal or national culture also includes such elements as significant historical events and characters, philosophies of government, social customs, family practices, religion, economic philosophies and practices, belief and value systems, and concepts and systems of law. Thus, any social unit??? whether a relationship, group, organization, or society??? develops a culture over time. While the defining characteristics??? or combination of characteristics??? of each culture are unique, all cultures share certain common functions.

Three such functions that are particularly important from a communication perspective are (1) linking individuals to one another, (2) providing the basis for a common identity, and (3) creating a context for interaction and negotiation among members. The Relationship between Communication and Culture Cultures are created through communication; that is, communication is the means of human interaction through which cultural characteristics (customs, roles, rules, rituals, laws, or other patterns) are created and shared. Cultures are a natural by-product of social interaction.

In a sense, cultures are the " residue" of social communication. Without communication and communication media, it would be impossible to preserve and pass along cultural characteristics from one place and time to another. One can say, therefore, that culture is created, shaped, transmitted, and learned through communication. The reverse is also the case; that is, communication practices are largely created, shaped, and transmitted by

culture. The communication-culture relationship has to be approached in terms of ongoing communication processes rather than a single communication event.

While communicating, the members of a group bring with them individual thought and behavioral patterns from previous communication experiences and from other cultures of which they are, or have been, a part. As individuals start to engage in communication with the other members of the group, they begin to create a set of shared experiences and ways of talking about them. If the group continues to interact, a set of distinguishing history, patterns, customs, and rituals will evolve. New members would in turn influence the group culture as they become a part of it.

In a reciprocal fashion, this reshaped culture shapes the communication practices of current and future group members. This is true with any culture; communication shapes culture, and culture shapes communication. Characteristics of Culture Edward Hall (1959, 1979) is one of the most significant contributors to the general understanding of the complexity of culture and the importance of communication to understanding and dealing with cultural differences at the societal level. There are several key characteristics of cultures that must be taken into account: 1. Cultures are subjective.

There is a tendency to assume that the elements of one's own cultures are logical and make good sense. It follows that if other cultures??? whether of relationships, groups, organizations, or societies??? look different, those differences are often considered to be negative, illogical, and sometimes

nonsensical. People who are used to informal meetings of a group might think that adherence to formal meeting rules is strange and stilted. Employees in an organization where suits are worn every day may react with cynicism and questioning when they enter an organization where casual attire is standard practice.

With regard to culture, the tendency for many people is to equate " different" with " wrong," even though all cultural elements come about through essentially identical communication processes. 2. Cultures change over time. In fact, cultures are ever changing??? though the change is sometimes very slow and imperceptible. Many forces influence cultural change. Simce cultures are created through communication, it is also through communication between individuals that cultures change over time.

Each person involved in a communication encounter brings the sum of his or her own experiences from other (past or present) culture memberships. In one sense, any encounter between individuals in new relationships, groups, organizations, or societies is an intercultural communication event, and these varying cultural encounters influence the individual and the cultures over time. Travel and communication technologies greatly accelerate the movement of messages from one cultural context to another, and in small and large ways, cultures come to influence one another through communication.

Phrases such as " melting pot," " world community," and " global village" speak to the inevitability of intercultural influence and change. 3. Cultures are largely invisible. Much of what characterizes cultures of relationships,

groups, organizations, or societies is invisible to its members. Language, of course, is visible, as are greeting conventions, special symbols, places, and spaces. However, the special and defining meanings that these symbols, greetings, places, and spaces have for individuals in a culture are far less visible.

Consequently, opportunities to " see" culture and the dynamic relationship that exists between culture and communication are few. Two such opportunities do occur when there are violations of cultural conventions or when there is cross-cultural contact. When someone violates an accepted cultural convention, ritual, or custom – for example, by speaking in a foreign language, standing closer than usual while conversing, or discussing topics that are typically not discussed openly the other members of the culture become aware that something inappropriate is occurring.

When " normal" cultural practices are occurring, members of the culture think little of it, but when violations occur, the members are reminded of the pervasive role that culture has on daily life. When visiting other groups, organizations, and, especially, other societies, people are often confronted by??? and therefore become aware of??? different customs, rituals, and conventions. These situations often are associated with some awkwardness, as the people strive to understand and sometimes to adapt to the characteristics of the new culture.

In these circumstances, again, one gains a glimpse of " culture" and the processes by which people create and adapt to culture. 4. Cultures are influenced by media. All institutions within society facilitate communication,

and in that way, they all contribute to the creation, spread, and evolution of culture. However, communication media such as television, film, radio, newspapers, compact discs, magazines, computers, and the Internet play a particularly important role. Because media extend human capacities for creating, duplicating, transmitting, and storing messages, they also extend and amplify culture-building activities.

By means of such communication technology, messages are transmitted across time and space, stored, and later retrieved and used. Television programs, films, websites, video games, and compact discs are created through human activity??? and therefore reflect and further extend the cultural perspectives of their creators. They come to take on a life of their own, quite distinct and separate from their creators, as they are transmitted and shared around the increasingly global community. 5. Cultures depend on communication. Understanding the nature of culture in relationship to communication is helpful in a number of ways.

First, it helps to explain the origin of differences between the practices, beliefs, values, and customs of various groups and societies, and it provides a reminder of the communication process by which these differences came into being. This knowledge can and should heighten people's tolerance for cultural differences. Second, it helps to explain the process that individuals go through in adapting to new relationships, groups, organizations, and societies and the cultures of each. Third, it underscores the importance of communication as a bridge between cultures and as a force behind cultural change. 6.

Cultures are shaped by communication. A number of questions also concern researchers and policymakers in this area. As communication increases between individuals, groups, and countries, does this mean that cultural differences and traditions will inevitably erode altogether? Will the cultures of individuals from groups, organizations, and societies that have great access to and control of communication media overpower those in cultures that have fewer resources and less access and control? Can knowledge be used to help individuals more comfortably and effectively adapt to new relationships, groups, organizations, and societies?

The importance of these issues makes this area an important one for continued examination by scholars and practitioners. Cross-cultural Communication Challenges We all communicate with others all the time — in our homes, in our workplaces, in the groups we belong to, and in the community. No matter how well we think we understand each other, communication is hard. " Culture" is often at the root of communication challenges. Our culture influences how we approach problems, and how we participate in groups and in communities.

When we participate in groups we are often surprised at how differently people approach their work together. As people from different cultural groups take on the exciting challenge of working together, cultural values sometimes conflict. We can misunderstand each other, and react in ways that can hinder what are otherwise promising partnerships. Oftentimes, we aren't aware that culture is acting upon us. Sometimes, we are not even aware that we have cultural values or assumptions that are different from

others'. Therefore we should be aware that cultural differences do exist and influence the way we communicate.

Anthropologists Kevin Avruch and Peter Black explain the importance of culture this way: "… One's own culture provides the " lens" through which we view the world; the " logic"… by which we order it; the " grammar" … by which it makes sense. (…) In other words, culture is central to what we see, how we make sense of what we see, and how we express ourselves. " There are Six Fundamental Patterns of Cultural Difference : 1. Different Communications Styles 2. Different Attitudes Toward Conflict 3. Different Approaches to Completing Tasks 4. Different Decision-Making Styles 5.

Different Attitudes Toward Disclosure 6. Different Approaches to Knowing By describing them, we can more easily be aware of the causes of cross-cultural communication difficulties. Different Communication Styles The way people communicate varies widely between, and even within, cultures. One aspect of communication style is language usage. Across cultures, some words and phrases are used in different ways. For example, even in countries that share the English language, the meaning of " yes" varies from " maybe, I'll consider it" to " definitely so," with many shades in between.

Another major aspect of communication style is the degree of importance given to non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes not only facial expressions and gestures; it also involves seating arrangements, personal distance, and sense of time. In addition, different norms regarding the appropriate degree of assertiveness in communicating can add to cultural misunderstandings. For instance, some people typically consider

raised voices to be a sign that a fight has begun, while others often feel that an increase in volume is a sign of an exciting conversation among friends.

Thus, some may react with greater alarm to a loud discussion than others. Different Attitudes Toward Conflict Some cultures view conflict as a positive thing, while others view it as something to be avoided. In the U. S. , conflict is not usually desirable; but people often are encouraged to deal directly with conflicts that do arise. In fact, face-to-face meetings customarily are recommended as the way to work through whatever problems exist. In contrast, in many Eastern countries, open conflict is experienced as embarrassing or demeaning; as a rule, differences are best worked out quietly.

A written exchange might be the favored means to address the conflict. Different Approaches to Completing Tasks From culture to culture, there are different ways that people move toward completing tasks. Some reasons include different access to resources, different judgments of the rewards associated with task completion, different notions of time, and varied ideas about how relationship-building and task-oriented work should go together. When it comes to working together effectively on a task, cultures differ with respect to the importance placed on establishing relationships early on in the collaboration.

A case in point, Asian and Hispanic cultures tend to attach more value to developing relationships at the beginning of a shared project and more emphasis on task completion toward the end as compared with European-Americans. European-Americans tend to focus immediately on the task at

hand, and let relationships develop as they work on the task. This does not mean that people from any one of these cultural backgrounds are more or less committed to accomplishing the task, or value relationships more or less; it means they may pursue them differently.

Different Decision-Making Styles The roles individuals play in decision-making vary widely from culture to culture. For example, in the U. S. , decisions are frequently delegated — that is, an official assigns responsibility for a particular matter to a subordinate. In many Southern European and Latin American countries, there is a strong value placed on holding decision-making responsibilities oneself. When decisions are made by groups of people, majority rule is a common approach in the U. S. ; in Japan consensus is the preferred mode. Different Attitudes Toward Disclosure

In some cultures, it is not appropriate to be frank about emotions, about the reasons behind a conflict or a misunderstanding, or about personal information. When you are dealing with a conflict, be mindful that people may differ in what they feel comfortable revealing. Questions that may seem natural to you — What was the conflict about? What was your role in the conflict? What was the sequence of events? — may seem intrusive to others. Different Approaches to Knowing Notable differences occur among cultural groups when it comes to epistemologies — that is, the ways people come to know things.

European cultures tend to consider information acquired through cognitive means, such as counting and measuring, more valid than other ways of coming to know things. Compare that to African cultures' preference for

affective ways of knowing, including symbolic imagery and rhythm. Asian cultures' epistemologies tend to emphasize the validity of knowledge gained through striving toward transcendence. These different approaches to knowing could affect ways of analyzing a community problem or finding ways to resolve it.

Some members of your group may want to do library research to understand a shared problem better and identify possible solutions. Others may prefer to visit places and people who have experienced challenges like the ones you are facing, and get a feeling for what has worked elsewhere. Respecting Our Differences and Working Together In addition to helping us to understand ourselves and our own cultural frames of reference, knowledge of these six patterns of cultural difference can help us to understand the people who are different from us.

An appreciation of patterns of cultural difference can assist us in processing what it means to be different in ways that are respectful of others, not faultfinding or damaging. Anthropologists Avruch and Black have noted that, when faced by an interaction that we do not understand, people tend to interpret the others involved as " abnormal," " weird," or " wrong. " This tendency gives rise on the individual level to prejudice. Consequently, it is vital that we learn to control the human tendency to translate " different from me" into " less than me. We can learn to do this. We can also learn to collaborate across cultural lines as individuals and as a society. Awareness of cultural differences doesn't have to divide us from each other. It doesn't have to paralyze us either, for fear of not saying the " right thing. " In fact,

becoming more aware of our cultural differences, as well as exploring our similarities, can help us communicate with each other more effectively. Recognizing where cultural differences are at work is the first step toward understanding and respecting each other.

Learning about different ways that people communicate can enrich our lives. People's different communication styles reflect deeper philosophies and world views which are the foundation of their culture. Understanding these deeper philosophies gives us a broader picture of what the world has to offer us. Learning about people's cultures has the potential to give us a mirror image of our own. We have the opportunity to challenge our assumptions about the " right" way of doing things, and consider a variety of approaches.

We have a chance to learn new ways to solve problems that we had previously given up on, accepting the difficulties as " just the way things are. " Lastly, if we are open to learning about people from other cultures, we become less lonely. Prejudice and stereotypes separate us from whole groups of people who could be friends and partners in working for change. Many of us long for real contact. Talking with people different from ourselves gives us hope and energizes us to take on the challenge of improving our communities and worlds. Guidelines for Multicultural Collaboration

When working on multicultural collaboration, keep in mind these additional guidelines: ??? Learn from generalizations about other cultures, but don't use those generalizations to stereotype, " write off," or oversimplify your ideas about another person. The best use of a generalization is to add it to your storehouse of knowledge so that you better understand and appreciate

other interesting, multi-faceted human beings. ??? Practice, practice, practice. That's the first rule, because it's in the doing that we actually get better at cross-cultural communication. Don't assume that there is one right way (yours!) to communicate. Keep questioning your assumptions about the " right way" to communicate. For example, think about your body language; postures that indicate receptivity in one culture might indicate aggressiveness in another. ??? Don't assume that breakdowns in communication occur because other people are on the wrong track. Search for ways to make the communication work, rather than searching for who should receive the blame for the breakdown. ??? Listen actively and empathetically. Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes.

Especially when another person's perceptions or ideas are very different from your own, you might need to operate at the edge of your own comfort zone. ??? Respect others' choices about whether to engage in communication with you. Honor their opinions about what is going on. ??? Stop, suspend judgment, and try to look at the situation as an outsider. ??? Be prepared for a discussion of the past. Use this as an opportunity to develop an understanding from " the other's" point of view, rather than getting defensive or impatient. Acknowledge historical events that have taken place. Be open to learning more about them.

Honest acknowledgment of the mistreatment and oppression that have taken place on the basis of cultural difference is vital for effective communication. ??? Awareness of current power imbalances — and an openness to hearing each other's perceptions of those imbalances — is also

necessary for understanding each other and working together. ???
Remember that cultural norms may not apply to the behavior of any
particular individual. We are all shaped by many, many factors — our ethnic
background, our family, our education, our personalities — and are more
complicated than any cultural norm could suggest.

Check your interpretations if you are uncertain what is meant. Avruch, Kevin
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org/articles/pages/6491/Culture-and-Communication. htm http://www. pbs.
org/ampu/crosscult. html III. CONTRASTING CULTURAL VALUES AND
PERCEPTIONS | Geert Hofstede Cultural Dimensions " Culture is more often a
source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best
and often a disaster. " ???????? Prof. Geert Hofstede ?? For those who work
in international business, it is sometimes amazing how different people in
other cultures behave. We tend to have a human instinct that ' deep inside'
all people are the same – but they are not. Therefore, if we go into another
country and make decisions based on how we operate in our own home
country – the chances are we'll make some very bad decisions.

The study of cultural dimensions gives us insights into other cultures so that
we can be more effective when interacting with people in other countries. If
understood and applied properly, this information should reduce your level of

frustration, anxiety, and concern. The importance of culture Each of us has her or his unique personality, history, and interest. Yet all people share a common human nature. Our shared human nature is intensely social: we are group animals. We use language and empathy, and practice collaboration and intergroup competition.

But the unwritten rules of how we do these things differ from one human group to another. " Culture" is how we call these unwritten rules about how to be a good member of the group. Culture provides moral standards about how to be an upstanding group member; it defines the group as a " moral circle". It inspires symbols, heroes, rituals, laws, religions, taboos, and all kinds of practices – but its core is hidden in unconscious values. We tend to classify groups other than our own as inferior or (rarely) superior.

This applies to groups based on national, religious, or ethnic boundaries, but also on occupation or academic discipline, on club membership, adored idol, or dress style. In our globalized world most of us can belong to many groups at the same time. But to get things done, we still need to cooperate with members of other groups carrying other cultures. Skills in cooperation across cultures are vital for our common survival and the development of such intercultural cooperation skills is a must for the modern society. The word " culture" stems?? from a Latin root that means the tilling of the soil, like in agriculture.

In many modern languages the word is used in a figurative sense, with two meanings: 1. The first, most common, meaning?? is " civilization", including education, manners, arts and crafts and their?? products. It is the domain

of?? a " ministry of culture". 2. The second meaning derives from social anthropology, but in the past decades it has entered common parlance. It refers to the way people think, feel,?? and act. Geert Hofstede has defined it as " the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from another".

The " category" can refer to nations, regions within or across nations, ethnicities, religions, occupations, organizations, or the genders. A simpler definition is ' the unwritten rules of the social game'. The two meanings should not be confused. We refer here to culture in the second sense. Human culture is the result of hundreds of thousands of years of evolution. During most of this time, competition between bands of gatherer-hunters was a powerful evolutionary pressure. As a result our social and intellectual skills have become ever bigger.

But we did not lose the elements of our behaviour that identify us as social mammals. Fights for dominance, competition for partners, a wish to belong and to know who does not belong – all of these basic drives are alive in us. No wonder that culture revolves around basic issues that have to do with group membership, authority, gender roles, morality, anxiety, emotions and drives. Culture affects our love lives, our professional lives, our wars and our dreams. An individual human being acquires most of her or his programming?? during childhood, before puberty.

In this phase of our lives we have an incredible capacity for absorbing information and following examples from our social environment: our parents and other elders, our siblings and playmates. But all of this is constrained by

our physical environment: its wealth or poverty, its threats or safety, its level of technology. All human groups, from the nuclear family to society, develop cultures as they go. Culture is what enables a group to function smoothly. Here are some prominent levels on which culture functions: National level Today's world population is divided into some 200 nations.

Comparing nations has become part of most social sciences. Some nations are more culturally homogeneous than others; especially large nations like Brazil, China, India and Indonesia comprise culturally different regions. Other culturally similar areas belong politically to different?? nations: this is in particular the case in Africa. With these limitations, comparing national cultures is still a meaningful and revealing venture. Research by Geert Hofstede and others has shown that national cultures differ in particular at the level of, usually unconscious, values held by a majority of the population.

Values, in this case, are " broad preferences for one state of affairs over others". The Hofstede dimensions of national cultures are rooted in?? our unconscious values. Because values are acquired in childhood, national cultures are remarkably stable over time; national values change is a matter of generations. What we see changing around us, in response to changing circumstances are practices:?? symbols, heroes and rituals,?? leaving the underlying values untouched. This is why differences between countries often have such a remarkable historical continuity. Organizational level

Many of us spend a large part of their time in organizations. Organizational cultures, the way Hofstede uses the term, distinguish different organizations within the same country or countries. His?? research has shown that

organizational cultures differ mainly at the level of practices (symbols, heroes and rituals); these are more superficial and more easily learned and unlearned than the values that form the core of national cultures. As a consequence, the Hofstede dimensions of national cultures are not relevant for comparing organizations within the same country.

National cultures belong to anthropology; organizational cultures to sociology. Because organizational cultures are rooted in practices, they are to some extent manageable; national cultures, rooted in values, are given facts for organization management. Occupational level Entering an occupational field implies acquiring a degree of mental programming. Occupational cultures have symbols, heroes and rituals in common with organizational cultures, but they also often imply holding certain values and convictions.

Occupational cultures in this respect?? take a position in between national and organizational cultures. The culture of management as an occupation contains both national and organizational elements. Gender level Gender differences are not usually described in terms of cultures. It can be revealing to do so. If we recognize that within each society there may be a men's culture that differs from a women's culture, this helps to explain why it is so difficult to change traditional gender roles.

Women and men are often technically able to perform the?? same jobs, but they do not respond to the symbols, do not look like the heroes, do not share the rituals. Even if some do, the other sex may not accept them in their deviant gender role. Feelings and fears about behaviours by the opposite sex

can be of the same order of intensity as reactions of people exposed to foreign cultures. The degree of gender differentiation in a?? country is highly dependent on its national culture. The Study of Dimensions of National Cultures

Geert Hofstede is a Dutch social psychologist who did a pioneering study of cultures across modern nations. He has operated in an international environment since 1965, and his curiosity as a social psychologist led him to the comparison of nations, first as a travelling international staff member of a multinational (IBM) and later as a visiting professor at an international business school in Switzerland. His 1980 book Culture's Consequences combined his personal experiences with the statistical analysis of two unique data bases.

The first and largest comprised answers of matched employee samples from 40 different?? countries to the same attitude survey questions. The second consisted of answers to some of these same questions by his executive students who came from 15 countries and from a variety of companies and industries. Systematic differences between nations?? in these two data bases?? occurred in particular for questions dealing with values. Values, in this case, are " broad preferences for one state of affairs over others", and they are mostly unconscious.

The study of dimensions of national cultures is important since it provides a comprehensive understanding of cultural differences which entails, in its turn, an effective dialogue between different cultures. One example of cultural differences in business is between the Middle Eastern countries and

the Western countries, especially the United States. When negotiating in Western countries, the objective is to work toward a target of mutual understanding and agreement and ' shake-hands' when that agreement is reached – a cultural signal of the end of negotiations and the start of ' working together'.

In Middle Eastern countries much negotiation takes place leading into the ' agreement', signified by shaking hands. However, the deal is not complete in the Middle Eastern culture. In fact, it is a cultural sign that ' serious' negotiations are just beginning. Imagine the problems this creates