

Example of research paper on poor intercultural communication

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



Poor Intercultural communication

Intercultural communication is a term used to explain the wide range of communication problems that appear within a group comprising of individuals from different cultural social, religious, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. It tries to comprehend how people from culturally different countries communicate, act and perceive their world. Culture determines how people encode messages, the type of medium they choose for transmitting the message, and the way in which the message is interpreted.

Relationship between Iran and USA

The relationship between Iran and the USA is currently extremely poor. There is no formal diplomatic relations between the two countries. There are many reasons for this strained relationship. One main reason for this poor relationship is the lack of cultural understanding between the two countries. Iran blames USA for the poor relations and describes it as arrogant. They are displeased with USA's interference with Arabic affairs and their hostility towards them. The USA, on the other hand, believes that Iran is a threat to security. They accuse Iran of terrorism activities. During the Iran-Iraq war, the USA provided arms for Iraq. This served to worsen relations between Iran and the USA. The USA accuses Iran of a number of things. Some of its accusations include its sponsorship of terrorist activities internationally, pursuing weapons of mass destruction, threatening neighboring countries within the Persian gulf, hostility towards Israel and America, opposing the peace process between Israel and other Arabic nations, and violation of human rights.

Iran, on the other hand, wants the USA to stop interfering with its affairs and treat their regime with respect. They also demand that America should lift the sanctions it has put against Iran, release its frozen assets in the US, end its military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, end their one-sided support of Israel, pay for all the damages it has caused Iran and formally apologize for interfering with Iran's businesses.

The conflict between the two countries has not only led to strained relations, but also negatively affected international trade. It has also affected Iran's relationship with other countries in the developed world. The USA has put sanctions on Iran, and this has affected their ability to participate in business with most of the G9 countries.

Differences in Cultural Patterns

The USA and Iran differ in many aspects. One main difference is in terms of cultural diversity. The USA has accommodated different types of people from all over the world for many years. The result of this is America becoming a multicultural nation. They have also learnt to accommodate the views and opinions of other people due to their constitution, which ensures freedom for all. Majority of the people living in the USA are Christians, although it also has other religions such as Islam, Buddhists and Hindus.

Iran, on the other hand, has always had a decidedly strict policy on the people who may live in their country. This has ensured that remarkably other few cultures live in Iran. It does not allow some of the freedoms allowed in America, and this makes Americans consider it to be oppressive. It is also predominantly Islam, unlike USA. Iranian law is based on the Quran while

American law is based on the constitution and the declaration of independence.

Role of Communication

In Iran, people tend to be more indirect in their communication. This may cause difficulty in understanding, especially to a person who is not accustomed to this type of communication. For example, a person may not tell you that your actions annoy them. They will instead find a way to show their dissatisfaction with your actions. Iranian people are, by default, not direct communicators. This is especially true for new relationships. As people get closer and become more comfortable with each other, they are able to speak their minds. Most people in Iran consider this to be polite behavior. Americans, on the other hand, tend to be more direct and informal. They do not rely so much on non- verbal communication (Watson, 2007).

Such differences in communication may have contributed to the communication breakdown. In expressing their dislike for one another, the two countries have used verbal and non- verbal communication. Not only did they verbally express themselves, they also waged war against each other as an indicator of their hatred for one another. This only served to worsen the relationship.

Theories

Dimensional Accrual and Dissociation Theory

According to this theory, one cannot understand intercultural communication without considering the cultural proclivities of each group (Rhodes, 2010). It is necessary to understand their beliefs, values and motives of each group.

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Cultures differ in their communication. It is necessary to note the different idyllic, signal and symbolic communication styles that could influence or affect communication between two culturally different groups (Gudykunst, 2003).

For culturally different groups to communicate effectively, they should be willing to work on adapting to the culture of the other group. Total assimilation is the best way to enhance intercultural communication. One reason why communication between Iran and the USA has not been effective is because they are not willing to make any changes to accommodate each other. None of them is willing to compromise on their demands to improve relations between them.

Standpoint Theory

According to this theory, knowledge, experiences and communication behaviors are shaped by the social group to which a person belongs to a large degree (Park, 1966). Iran has its own set of beliefs and values which were shaped by the generations before them. Some of these beliefs include spreading their religion by all possible means, including waging holy wars. These beliefs are extremely different from those of the Americans, who believe in the freedom or worship and protection of human rights. The differences in these two cultures serve to create tension between them.

Resolving Cross-Cultural Communication

Whenever any two countries clash on any matter, the citizens are normally the most affected by this difference. Trade between these countries and countries around then is also affected. This is because they are forced to find

other trade routes and this increases the costs significantly. It is, therefore, essential for all countries to live peaceably with each other for the sake of their citizens.

For effective communication to exist, there must be an understanding that different countries have different cultures. The two countries should consider their cultural differences and work at finding a middle ground (Jonasson & Luring, 2012). They should each be willing to adapt and make the necessary changes to accommodate each other. They should also practice tolerance and accept each other's terms so long as they are not against human rights. If they are unable to resolve the differences on their own, they should enlist the help of other countries and eminent personalities in the international community.

Communication Accommodation Theory

The communication problem between USA and Iran can best be solved by enlisting the help of intercultural communications theorist Howard Giles. He came up with the theory of Communication accommodation which argues that when people interrelate they change their speech, behavior, vocal patterns and gestures, to accommodate the other group. It looks into the different reasons why people in interaction tend to minimize differences between themselves through non-verbal and verbal communication. It looks at both the interpersonal and intergroup factors that are responsible for accommodation.

According to the theory, there are two processes in accommodation: convergence and divergence. Convergence is a term that refers to strategies

used by individual persons or groups of people to adapt to the communicative behaviors of each other, so as to lessen these social and cultural differences. Divergence is used in reference to instances where individuals put emphasis on speech and other non-verbal differences between the other group and themselves. In order to solve the communication problem between Iran and the USA, it is necessary for the two countries to interact with each other. This could lead to convergence and end the years of animosity between the two nations.

Conclusion

Intercultural communications create a wide range of challenges. These challenges need to be addressed for any group of people or nations to coexist peaceably. Failure to do so could impact negatively on the people and the economy. Improving intercultural communications does not necessarily mean adopting the culture of the other group as your own. It means trying to understand why they behave the way they do and accepting them for who they are. Only then can the world truly become a global village.

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