**Cross Cultural Management**

**Unit-2**

**(Cultural Diversity and Multicultural Teams)**

**The Impact of Cultural Differences on Individuals**

**Culture is one of the factors** that determine the way people think, act and interact; and it is composed of many layers. Some of them are obvious, such as customs, arts, food and celebrations. Others, such as social status, body language, social interaction, sense of humor, concept of time, or even the definition of insanity, aren’t as noticeable.

Every country has a specific inherent culture, which can vary from one region to another. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall introduced the concept of high and low-context culture, as well as the use of personal space by individuals within a culture.



High-context cultures, which include many Asian, South American and African countries, value society and collectivity. Group harmony and intuition are important concepts. Context is more valuable than words themselves, and much of the meaning of speech is implied. Body language, eye behavior and even the use of silence are valued means of communication. In low-context cultures, however, facts, descriptions and precision of words are considered a lot more important than context. Logic is also given more credit than intuition and society tends to be individualistic. It is customary to speak out and explain one’s point of view in detail.

As culture influences behavior and one’s reaction to a given situation, it is a primary element of communication in general and even more so in a business environment. Doing business with foreigners is particularly delicate: It can differ from one culture to another and what is customary in one country could be considered extremely rude in another one needs to be aware of the other person’s culture when a transaction is at stake.

Business etiquette, negotiations and even contracts (the latter of which, in some countries, are a sign of distrust), are just a few of the numerous business practices that are influenced by culture.

# Verbal and Non-verbal Communication across Cultures

A communication style is the way people communicate with others, verbally and nonverbally. It combines both language and nonverbal cues and is the meta-message that dictates how listeners receive and interpret verbal messages. Of the theoretical perspectives proposed to understand cultural variations in communication styles, the most widely cited one is the differentiation between high-context and low-context communication by Edward Hall, in 1976. Low-context communication is used predominantly in individualistic cultures and reflects an analytical thinking style, where most of the attention is given to specific, focal objects independent of the surrounding environment; high-context communication is used predominantly in collectivistic cultures and reflects a holistic thinking style, where the larger context is taken into consideration when evaluating an action or event. In low-context communication, most of the meaning is conveyed in the explicit verbal code, whereas in high-context communication, most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, with very little information given in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message.

### ****Verbal Communication****

The Verbal Communication is a type of oral communication wherein the message is transmitted through the spoken words. Here the sender gives words to his feelings, thoughts, ideas and opinions and expresses them in the form of speeches, discussions, presentations, and conversations.

The effectiveness of the verbal communication depends on the tone of the speaker, clarity of speech, volume, speed, body language and the quality of words used in the conversation. In the case of the verbal communication, the feedback is immediate since there are a simultaneous transmission and receipt of the message by the sender and receiver respectively.

#### ****Non-verbal Communication across Cultures****

Non-verbal communication is communication that occurs without words which is continuous. It is body language and environmental context involved in any communication. It is not what is said with words but how it is said and expressed. There are many types of non-verbal communications like eye contact, hand movements, facial expressions, touch, gestures, etc.

Non-verbal communication is different from person to person and especially from one culture to another. Cultural background defines their non-verbal communication as many forms of non-verbal communications like signs and signals are learned behavior.

**Some of the nonverbal communication differences in different cultural are:**

### ****(i) Eye Contact****

Western cultures mostly consider eye contact to be a good gesture. It shows attentiveness, confidence and honesty. Other cultures such as Asian, Middle Eastern, Hispanic and Native American do not take it as a good expression. It is taken as a rude and offensive expression.

Unlike in Western cultures taking it as respectful, other do not consider it that way. In Eastern cultures women should especially not have eye contact with men as it shows power or sexual interest. In some cultures, whereas, gazes are taken as a way of expression. Staring is taken as rude in most cultures.

### ****(ii) Gestures****

Gestures such as thumbs up can be interpreted differently in different cultures. It is taken as “Okay” sign in many cultures whereas is taken as a vulgarism in others like Latin American cultures and in Japan some even take it as money.

### ****(iii) Touch****

Touches are taken as rudeness in most cultures. Shaking hands is considered to be acceptable in many. Similarly, acceptability of kissing, hugs, and many other touches are different in different cultures. People in Asia are more conservative in these types of non-verbal communication.

### ****(iv) Appearance****

Appearance is another form of non-verbal communication. People are judged from their appearance. Racial differences as well as differences in clothing tell so much about any individual.

Grooming yourself to look good is taken as an important aspect of personality in most cultures. But, what is considered to be a good appearance is different again in different cultures. Modesty is also measured from appearance.

### ****(v) Body Movement and Posture****

People receive information or message from body movements. It shows how people feel or think about you. If a person does not face you while talking to you can mean that the person is nervous or shy. It might also mean that the person doesn’t like to talk to you. Other body movements like coming to sit near or far can also show confidence, power or trying to control the environment.

### ****(vi) Facial Expressions****

Face shows feelings, attitudes and emotions. The degree of facial expressions are determined by cultures. People from United States show emotions more than their Asian counterparts.

Facial expressions are shown to be similar all over the world, but people from different cultures do not show it in public. The meanings of these are commonly acknowledged everywhere. Too much expression is taken to be shallow in some places whereas in some it is taken as being weak.

### ****(vii) Paralanguage****

How we talk also constitutes of what we communicate. For example, vocal tones, volume, rhythm, pitch, etc. speak more than what words express. Asian people control themselves from shouting as they are taught not to from childhood.

They are known as vocal qualifiers. Vocal characterizations like crying, whining, yelling, etc. change the meaning of the message. Giggling is taken as a bad gesture in some cultures. Many other emotions are shown by vocal differences while all of them are included in paralanguage.

### ****(viii) Physical Space (Proxemics)****

People from different cultures have different tolerance for physical distance between people. In Middle Eastern culture people like to go near to others to talk while in others people might get afraid if anybody does so.

Even Europeans and Americans do not have that much acceptance on the breach of physical distance and less acceptance for it among Asians. People have specific personal space which they do not want intruded. In some cultures, even close physical contact between strangers is acceptable.

# Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Reasoning

**Kohlberg** based his theory on a series of moral dilemmas were presented to these participants and they were also interviewed to determine the reasoning behind their judgments of each scenario.

One example was “Heinz Steals the Drug.” In this scenario, a woman has cancer and her doctors believe only one drug might save her. This drug had been discovered by a local pharmacist and he was able to make it for $200 per dose and sell it for $2,000 per dose. The woman’s husband, Heinz, could only raise $1,000 to buy the drug. He tried to negotiate with the pharmacist for a lower price or to be extended credit to pay for it over time. But the pharmacist refused to sell it for any less or to accept partial payments. Rebuffed, Heinz instead broke into the pharmacy and stole the drug to save his wife. Kohlberg asked, “Should the husband have done that?”

#### ****Level 1. Pre-Conventional Morality****

The earliest stage of moral development, obedience, and punishment is especially common in young children, but adults are also capable of expressing this type of reasoning. At this stage, Kohlberg says, children see rules as fixed and absolute. Obeying the rules is important because it is a means to avoid punishment.

At the individualism and exchange stage of moral development, children account for individual points of view and judge actions based on how they serve individual needs. In the Heinz dilemma, children argued that the best course of action was the choice that best-served Heinz’s needs. Reciprocity is possible at this point in moral development, but only if it serves one’s own interests.

#### ****Level 2. Conventional Morality****

Often referred to as the “good boy-good girl” orientation, the interpersonal relationships stage of moral development is focused on living up to social expectations and roles. There is an emphasis on conformity, being “nice,” and consideration of how choices influence relationships.

This stage is focused on maintaining social order. At this stage of moral development, people begin to consider society as a whole when making judgments. The focus is on maintaining law and order by following the rules, doing one’s duty and respecting authority.

#### ****Level 3. Post-Conventional Morality****

The ideas of a social contract and individual rights cause people in the next stage to begin to account for the differing values, opinions, and beliefs of other people. Rules of law are important for maintaining a society, but members of the society should agree upon these standards.

Kohlberg’s final level of moral reasoning is based on universal ethical principles and abstract reasoning. At this stage, people follow these internalized principles of justice, even if they conflict with laws and rules.



### ****Criticisms****

Kohlberg’s theory is concerned with moral thinking, but there is a big difference between knowing what we ought to do versus our actual actions. Moral reasoning, therefore, may not lead to moral behavior. This is just one of the many of the criticisms of Kohlberg’s theory.

Critics have pointed out that Kohlberg’s theory of moral development overemphasizes the concept of justice when making moral choices. Factors such as compassion, caring, and other interpersonal feelings may play an important part in moral reasoning.

# The Historical Origins of Beliefs and Values

In ethics, value denotes the degree of importance of some thing or action, with the aim of determining what actions are best to do or what way is best to live (normative ethics), or to describe the significance of different actions. Value systems are proscriptive and prescriptive beliefs; they affect ethical behavior of a person or are the basis of their intentional activities. Often primary values are strong and secondary values are suitable for changes. What makes an action valuable may in turn depend on the ethical values of the objects it increases, decreases or alters. An object with “ethic value” may be termed an “ethic or philosophic good”.

### ****Personal Values****

Personal values provide an internal reference for what is good, beneficial, important, useful, beautiful, desirable and constructive. Values are one of the factors that generate behaviour and influence the choices made by an individual.

Values may help common human problems for survival by comparative rankings of value, the results of which provide answers to questions of why people do what they do and in what order they choose to do them. Moral, religious, and personal values, when held rigidly, may also give rise to conflicts that result from a clash between differing world views.

### ****Cultural Values****

Individual cultures emphasize values which their members broadly share. Values of a society can often be identified by examining the level of honor and respect received by various groups and ideas. In the United States of America, for example, top-level professional athletes receive more respect (measured in terms of monetary payment) than university professors. Another example is that certain voters (taken from surveys) in the United States would not willingly elect an atheist as president, suggesting that believing in a God is a generally shared value.

### ****BELIEF****

Belief is the state of mind in which a person thinks something to be the case regardless of empirical evidence to prove that something is the case with factual certainty. Another way of defining belief sees it as a mental representation of an attitude positively oriented towards the likelihood of something being true. In the context of Ancient Greek thought, two related concepts were identified with regards to the concept of belief: pistis and doxa. Simplified, we may say that pistis refers to “trust” and “confidence”, while doxa refers to “opinion” and “acceptance”. The English word “orthodoxy” derives from doxa. Jonathan Leicester suggests that belief has the purpose of guiding action rather than indicating truth.

# Impact of Cross Cultural Communication

In this age of globalization, workplaces are increasingly integrated. This makes communication and cross-cultural understanding more crucial for everyone, including executives, business leaders, workplace managers, and employees. In order to develop skills as communicators, we must gain practical knowledge of the factors that make communication across cultures succeed or fail. According to experts in the field, some of those factors include:

* Cultural identity
* Racial identity
* Ethnic identity
* Gender roles
* Individual personalities
* Social class
* Age
* Roles identity

### ****Cultural Identity****

Culture can be defined as the values, attitudes, and ways of doing things that a person brings with them from the particular place where they were brought up as a child. These values and attitudes can have an impact on communication across cultures because each person’s norms and practices will often be different and may possibly clash with those of co-workers brought up in different parts of the world.

### ****Racial Identity****

Racial identity refers to how one’s membership to a particular race affects how they interact with co-workers of different races.

According to an article by Professor Daniel Velasco, published in the 2013 Asian Conference on Language Learning Conference Proceedings, there are exercises for intercultural training that asks participants to describe, interpret, and evaluate an ambiguous object or photograph. “If one is going to undertake the unpleasant goal of uncovering underlying racism in order to learn how to better communicate with other cultures,” Velasco writes, “it is necessary to engage in exercises that confront racism head-on.” His method, called E.A.D., asks participants to objectively describe what they see first and evaluate what they see. “By moving backwards through the . . . process, we are able to confront underlying racism, which will hopefully pave the way for self-awareness, cultural respect, and effective intercultural communication.”

### ****Ethnic Indentity****

Ethnic identity highlights the role ethnicity plays in how two co-workers from different cultures interact with one another. In the United States, white European Americans are less likely to take their ethnicity into account when communicating, which only highlights the importance of addressing different ethnicities in a workplace as a way of educating all co-workers to the dynamics that may arise between individuals of the same or different ethnic groups.

So what is the difference between race and ethnicity? According to experts from PBS, “While race and ethnicity share an ideology of common ancestry, they differ in several ways. First of all, race is primarily unitary. You can only have one race, while you can claim multiple ethnic affiliations. You can identify ethnically as Irish and Polish, but you have to be essentially either black or white.”

### ****Gender Roles****

Another factor that impacts intercultural communication is gender. This means that communication between members of different cultures is affected by how different societies view the roles of men and women. For example, this article looks at the ways that western cultures view government sanctioned gender segregation as abhorrent. A Westerner’s reaction to rules that require women in Saudi Arabia to cover themselves and only travel in public when accompanied by a male family member as repressive and degrading. This is looking at the world through a Western lens. Saudi women generally view themselves as protected and honored. When studying gender identity in Saudi Arabia it is important that we view the Saudi culture through a Saudi lens. Women in America struggle with these traditional stereotypes, while women in Saudi Arabia embrace their cultural roles.

### ****Individual Identity****

The individual identity factor is the fifth factor that impacts cross-cultural communication. This means that how a person communicates with others from other cultures depends on their own unique personality traits and how they esteem themselves. Just as a culture can be described in broad terms as “open” or “traditional,” an individual from a culture can also be observed to be “open-minded” or “conservative.” These differences will have an effect on the way that multiple individuals from the same culture communicate with other individuals.

### ****Social Class****

A sixth factor which influences intercultural communication is the social identity factor. The social identity factor refers to the level of society that person was born into or references when determining who they want to be and how they will act accordingly.

According to professors Judith N. Martin and Thomas K. Nakayama, authors of Intercultural Communication in Contexts (McGraw-Hill ), “scholars have shown that class often plays an important role in shaping our reactions to and interpretations of culture. For example, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1987) studied the various responses to art, sports, and other cultural activities of people in different French social classes. According to Bourdieu, working-class people prefer to watch soccer whereas upper-class individuals like tennis, and middle-class people prefer photographic art whereas upper-class individuals favor less representational art. As these findings reveal, class distinctions are real and can be linked to actual behavioral practices and preferences.”

### ****Age****

The age identity factor refers to how members of different age groups interact with one another. This might be thought of in terms of the “generation gap”. More hierarchical cultures like China, Thailand, and Cambodia pay great deference and respect to their elders and take their elders’ opinions into account when making life-changing decisions. Cultures like the United States are less mindful of their elders and less likely to take their advice into account when making important decisions. Such attitudes towards age cause the age identity factor to impact intercultural communication in the workplace.

### ****The Roles Identity Factor****

The roles identity factor refers to the different roles a person plays in his or her life including their roles as a husband or wife, father, mother or child, employer or employee, and so forth. How two members of a workforce from two different cultures view these various roles influences how they will interact with their fellow colleague or counterpart.

**Kohlberg, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King**

A half-century after their deaths, Martin Luther King Jr, Kohlberg and Malcolm X was the world’s most revered political activists.

They were respected leaders of the American Civil Rights movement, struggling for racial equality and freedom. But at the start of the 1960s, the media were constructing a conflict that stirred the civil rights debate: Malcolm X versus Reverend Martin Luther King.

While King advocated non-violent direct action and passive resistance to achieve equal civil rights, Malcolm X was the spokesman for the Nation of Islam (NOI), the black Muslim movement which violently rejected white America and its Christian values, and preached the supremacy of blacks over whites.

# Relativism vs. Development

### ****RELATIVISM****

Relativism is the idea that views are relative to differences in perception and consideration. There is no universal, objective truth according to relativism; rather each point of view has its own truth.

The major categories of relativism vary in their degree of scope and controversy. Moral relativism encompasses the differences in moral judgments among people and cultures. Truth relativism is the doctrine that there are no absolute truths, i.e., that truth is always relative to some particular frame of reference, such as a language or a culture (cultural relativism). Descriptive relativism seeks to describe the differences among cultures and people without evaluation, while normative relativism evaluates the morality or truthfulness of views within a given framework.

### ****DEVELOPMENT****

One of the challenges facing organisations today is creating a culture of learning that encourages employees to increase their knowledge, develop their skills and enhance their performance on a continuous basis, not just once or twice a year. Yet, organisational L&D programmes are falling short when it comes to creating a learning culture that reflects how people learn in today’s workplace.

More Features

* The challenges of matrix management
* Overcoming noisy communication​
* The challenge of free will
* Keeping abreast of change

It is becoming more apparent that HR and L&D professionals need to approach learning in new and different ways. There is no place now for forcing employees into an outdated model of what learning should look like – such as sitting in a classroom for days on end.

For a variety of reasons, economists have avoided getting too closely involved with the concept of culture and its relationship to economic development. There is a general acceptance that culture must have a role in guiding a population along a particular path, but, as Landes (1998) points out, a discomfort with what can be construed as implied criticism of a particular culture has discouraged broader public discourse.

# Respect Cultural Differences vs. Stages of Development

### ****Respect Cultural Differences****

Technological advances continue to shrink the world and bring disparate and far-apart cultures much closer together. Participation in today’s global society requires showing respect and understanding to members of all cultures even when they contradict one’s own culture. Cultural differences are inevitable; showing respect for those differences is imperative for successful intercultural relations.

* **Self-Awareness:** Intercultural respect begins with the awareness that your culture is no more valuable or “correct” than any other. Being part of the majority culture in a given country does not change this; in fact, it only makes that awareness more important, since it may be even easier to see your culture as normal and dismiss or mock others for being strange. To show respect for any cultural differences you encounter, keep in mind that you see the world through a cultural “filter” that not everyone shares.
* **Education:** Lack of understanding often plays a role in intercultural tension, so it’s important to educate yourself on other cultures to help minimize that tension. For example, a German doctor who deals primarily with patients from Peru is likely to find that his patients’ view of time is different from his own. He may place a high value on punctuality, while the patients see arriving after the appointment time as completely normal. Neither is right; they’re just different ways of dealing with time. Educate yourself on the cultures around you so that you’re prepared and equipped to deal with any disparities.
* **Engagement:** It’s natural to gravitate toward those with whom you share a culture, but interacting with those from other cultures will broaden your worldview and help you show respect when cultural differences arise. Without being pushy or critical, ask questions and exchange views. Take an interest in what it means to be a member of another culture, being careful not to make unfair or insulting comparisons. For example, it is not uncommon for the parents of Chinese university students to choose their child’s area of study, but Western cultures may see this practice as controlling or even wrong. Instead of making judgments, talk to members of the other culture to understand the context of their decisions.
* **Flexibility:** Be willing to defer and adapt to another culture when differences arise, as this is often the ultimate show of respect. For example, an American traveling in Palestine may be repeatedly offered cups of tea, food and myriad other forms of hospitality. In the United States, it’s often more polite to decline, with the goal of not inconveniencing your host. In other cultures, however, declining anything offered is considered disrespectful; on the other hand, it is often perfectly acceptable to take one sip of tea and leave the rest untouched. Deferring to another culture is in effect saying, “Let’s do things your way. I respect and value your way of life.”

### ****Stages of Development****

Social Scientists identify cultures as passing through four stages. These are the sometimes called the stages of cultural development.

* The development and use of tools
* The control and use of fire
* The development of Agriculture
* The development of a writing system

When cultures develop a writing system, we usually refer to the culture as a civilization.

Some cultures, though very few, never progressed to later stages.  There were, and still are, a few societies that are “hunter-gatherer” cultures, which passed away with the development of agriculture.  People like Professor Jared Diamond argue, convincingly, that societies that remained hunting and gathering did so because of the geographic “hand that they were dealt,” not that they did not possess the intelligence to develop agriculture.  Some societies, developed agriculture, but did not develop a writing system.  No American Indian tribes of the present day United States ever developed a writing system before contact with Europeans.  In the video that we will watch, Guns, Germs, and Steel, Professor Jared Diamond will describe the cultural complexities that we need to understand about the development of writing systems.

**The Possibility of an International Subculture**

**Subcultures traditionally** represent alternative cultures and practices to the dominant culture of the established society. While they often construct themselves within and against the governing culture from which they are born, their comparatively smaller population size, their associations with emergent youth culture and the manifold novelties of the day, and their occasionally politically resistant and activist temperaments all serve to ensure that subcultures are constructed so as to be more than mere reproductions of the grander cultural forms, themes, and practices. If the dominant culture provides the semantic codes by which groups attempt to transmit and reproduce themselves, then subcultures represent a challenge to this symbolic order in their attempt to institute new grammars and meanings through which they interpret the world, and new practices through which they transform it.

Our present moment, however, is highly turbulent and complex, and can be characterized as a “postmodern adventure” in which traditional forms of culture and politics are being resurrected, imploded into and combined with entirely new cultural and political modes in a global media culture that is becoming increasingly dominated by the corporate forces of science, technology, and capital (see Best and Kellner 2001). To speak of post-subcultures, then, is to recognize that the emerging subcultures are taking place in a world that is saturated with proliferating technologies, media, and cultural awareness. Post-subcultures are constructed in new cultural spaces and with innovative forms, entering into novel global configurations by technological advances such as the Internet and multimedia which help produce alternative forms of culture and political activism.