

Intercultural Communication
Analysing Indo-Emirati Culture in the Multicultural Perspective

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Abstract

Despite the wealth of research and literature on the subject of the effects of cultural differences in work and life, there has been a sizable amount that lacks the depth needed to offer managers working abroad or in partnership with foreign colleagues useful advice that could overcome the challenges associated with this. Therefore, when evaluating people from different cultures, there is a common tendency to rely on oversimplified generalisations and stereotypes, such as thinking that the French only communicate subtly or that the Japanese strictly adhere to hierarchical structures. These oversimplifications can lead to biased and incorrect assumptions, such as thinking that French people always use indirect means to provide negative feedback or that Japanese people always make decisions from the top-down. Nevertheless this report will specifically look into the Indo-Emirati culture with the help of two scales derived by Erin Meyer who uses the Culture Map Model to describe such differences in various aspects. The scales used are communication, which is either low context or high context and trusting, which is either task-based or relationship-based. The second topic this article will tackle will be where the Indo-Emirati culture stands in terms of other countries' cultures within the context of the communication and trusting scales. Data has been collected from a total of 83 Indians living in the United Arab Emirates which will also be used to measure against 6 different cultures ranging from, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Mexico, U.S.A, among others.

Amalgamation of Indian and Emirati Culture: Fabric

The Indo-Emirati culture is a fusion of Indian and Emirati influences that arose in the United Arab Emirates as a result of the large Indian expatriate presence. It represents the shared cultural aspects and interactions between Indians and Emiratis within the UAE's social fabric. For instance, Emirati traditions such as hospitality, respect for elders, and close-knit family values predominate, they coexist with Indian practices such as joint family structures, traditional marriages, and the importance of festivals and festivities. In fact, through the survey created for Indians living in Dubai, a shocking 83 persons participated. The culture has a rich tapestry

woven with shared dialects, religion, social customs, food, entertainment, and entrepreneurship that have led to strong ties between both countries.

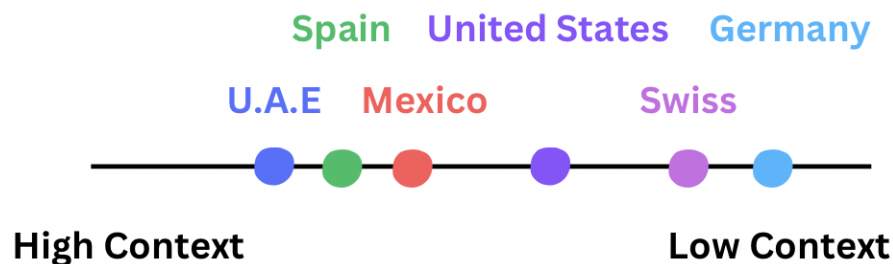
How do Emiratis communicate through the Indian Lens?

Do you think Indians need to adhere to formal attire when speaking to Emiratis, or have to be mindful not to cause offence? How many gestures are used or how many times is it required to read between the lines? These were some questions asked to the 83 participants of the survey. The results showed that 70% of Indians do not need to wear a kandura or an abaya to gain more respect from Emiratis. Over 65 people answered that they feel the need to be extremely careful in order to not cause offence when communicating with locals. There is a mixed variety of responses on how many gestures are used in a conversation, this is also something Indians can understand and is not foreign for them, which is why the data is split equally. 55% of participants believe that Emiratis are between direct and indirect with Indians, and occasionally one has to extremely decode to read between the lines. This shows a middle mix which portrays a small extent of unclarity and clarity in communication.

Many have preconceived notions that the Emirates is an extremely high context culture, however, the data surrounding this statement has been low to none. Through this survey conducted, it is obvious there is still a great deal of sophisticated and layered communication, mix of directness and indirectness, or even the fact that there is much emphasis on the words being communicated such that offence is not caused. However, the extreme use of gestures which is how it has been traditionally characterised is generally balanced in this case, it could also be that the Indians do not find it something difficult to understand. The survey shows that 21.7% of Indians have never recalled seeing gestures being used at all in a conversation. This could depend on many factors such as age, type of job, or the relationship with the local. Largely, the Indo-emirati culture has shown a solid deal of high context culture with a slow transition towards low-context as this culture comprises Indian immigrants. It is known to be high context among locals themselves, it is definitely clear that to an extent that same comfort in talking to an Indian as a local is present as the base of this Indo-Emirati culture is somewhat high context.

How High-Context are other countries?

Through the survey for multicultural backgrounds, the scale below shows the results in comparison to the United Arab Emirates. It is common in Switzerland to speak directly (the truth) with not much offence being caused when communicating. Spain, Mexico are famous for using gestures, but still speaking fairly directly while being a bit cautious. Germans prefer to give importance to what is being worn while communicating, which should be formal for both locals and immigrants, while the communication itself is direct. America, is relaxed on the outfit, placing emphasis on the difficulty of reading in between the lines, and being careful in causing offence.



Indo-Emirati scale of Trusting

Relationships and the trust that comes with it can be explained through the concept of Wasta in U.A.E. Wasta is an Arabic word referring to the practice of using personal connections and influence to gain favours or advantages. It plays a significant role in building trust within the Indo-Emirati community, as individuals can sometimes rely on their networks and relationships to establish trust and navigate through social and professional settings.

Relationship-based

Task-based

References:

<https://hbr.org/2014/05/navigating-the-cultural-minefield>