Culture and Communication

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# Introduction

Culture and communication are an integral part of any individual’s professional life. Culture essentially refers to the collection of the set-specific language, practices, habits, lifestyles and liberties exclusive to a group of people; that gives them a common identity. Cultures are not developed overnight, instead they build up gradually when practices are exchanged. Communication, on the other hand, is the exchange of information, thoughts and feelings. To have a strong grasp on communication, one must take into account the effect and the profound link between culture and communication.

# Linkage between Culture and Communication

Culture plays a critical part in either developing or crumbling a communicative environment between two individuals. The very style and mode of communication is solely based on the culture one was in, essentially, making culture act as a bridge to communication. It can be seen that the effect of culture varies from person to person, however, it never leaves an individual unfazed. Following points further emphasize on the relationship between Culture and Communication:

### Inception

To start off, the very basis of a culture is created through communication. Should there be an absence of communication among members of a group, there would not be any sort of intermixing of different schools of thoughts, different ideas and personal opinions. Likewise, the reverse is also true; without culture, practices and customs of communication would cease to transmit.

### Judgement and Conflicts

Different cultures have different systems and customs to treat with a conflict of a similar nature. A survey conducted in 2016 showed that Americans are 23% more likely to resort to violence in a heated argument than people living in Finland. In a similar fashion, the extent to which people judge other’s actions are also varied from culture to culture. Conflicts also arise from the fact that each person tend to think of themselves as factual and correct, so when another disagrees with them, they immediately have a negative opinion of them.

### Expressiveness

The extent to which one discloses their personal affairs differs significantly based on the origin of that individual. Different cultures have varying tendencies to disclose their personal feelings; to express their emotions by communicating. A German is very likely to not show much of an emotion; Europeans in general, tend to keep their business to themselves and not indulge in communicating needlessly. In the same way, Norwegians tend to use as few words as possible in a reply, the opposite of Italians who fancy longer conversations.

### Miscommunication

In cross-border communication, a misinterpretation is very likely to happen. Phrases may mean their complete opposite in a different culture. Not only verbal communication, but nonverbal communication such as hand gestures, body language and the physical appearance is misunderstood as well. Although it is more or less globally conceived what formal speech is, when a non-native speaker translates directly from his own language to suppose, English, the actual meaning of the sentence is lost and thus, not properly conveyed.

### Stereotypes

The biggest obstacle in cross-border communication is stereotypes that have taken a significant rise in the recent years. Stereotypes are predominantly negative in nature and leads to overgeneralizing of people belonging to different culture. This, further, acts as a destructive catalyst in ruining the general image of a specific culture in other’s minds.

Now that we have become more aware of general relation between communication and culture, we shall take a glimpse at what cross-border communication is and a few general pros;

# Cross-Border Communication

Cross-border communication is referred to as the communication and sharing of information between people of various backgrounds using diverse methods. The term *cross-border communication* is often used interchangeably with *intercultural communication*.

Following are a few benefits that come with the encouragement of cross-cultural communication;

### Broadened Perspective

When an individual with a concrete separate culture communicates and interacts with people of other cultures, it helps widen his perspective not only on other’s culture, but his own culture as well. Naturally, humans judge each other and after being subjected to something different, one can make inferences and compare that diversity with his own culture, so in a sense, it helps one grow.

### Gradual Acculturation

Curiosity, naturally, leads to a path of learning; to question whatever a person is curious about. In the case of cross-cultural communication, one can observe exceptional differences in a certain practice ultimately reaching and achieving the same goal. A considerable amount of time spent in such an environment is bound to get etched into the morality of the said person; this also helps in the spread of that culture as well.

### Promoting Teamwork

Cross-cultural communication incites a sense of team among people working under a same wing. Such teamwork is a key to enhance the basis of any foundation. As a consequence, innovation and creativity also arises due to people of different cultures having diverse and different school of thoughts. When organizations promote collaboration on an international level rather than restricting to own people, a wide range of information is spread with sound credibility.

# Conclusion

Communication shapes culture and culture shapes communication; both communication and culture are related in a complex and intimate way that it is erroneous to understand one setting aside the other. A practice interlinked with the preceding terms is cross-cultural communication and it is one of the best strategies to develop a structured and innovative environment. However, there are many obstacles that administrations must overcome before developing said environment. The biggest obstacle in the way of cross-border communication being miscommunication; however, as long as overgeneralized misconceptions and conservative practices remain; to not take risks and seek feedback to widen our perspective, misconceptions cannot be mitigated. Hence, not only should we seek out information to learn more about other cultures, we should also encourage cross-cultural communication whilst being tolerant upon misinterpretations. Only then can cultural and communications barriers weaken and improve the overall understanding of the general public.