

Chapter 51

Globalization and Media's Impact on Cross Cultural Communication: Managing Organizational Change

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ABSTRACT

Diversity and change are key concepts facing the world, today. In the 21st century, organizational leaders recognize the importance of diverse perspectives and adaptations to changes. Globally, cultures have many definitions and difference as nations collectively strive to communicate with one another. Organizational leaders must understand the importance of cross-cultural communications in establishing trust and respect in business relationships. Doris E. Cross is an educator and researcher on diversity issues influence on organizational cultures competitive advantage. This chapter identifies factors, such as changing demographics, tumultuous economies, and workforce dynamics and effects on individual perceptions of organizational cultures.

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly global environment the ability to communicate effectively becomes a challenge for business leaders. Although, a common language may be shared among cultures misunderstandings may exist due to ethnic, cultural, and differential levels of understanding. For the last decade, business sectors have experienced declining organizational performance due to poor communication or a lack of understanding or information about their employees and clients. Understanding the impact of globalization on cross-culture communication is imperative for organizations aspiring to capitalize from a competitive advantage in the global market. Today's economic challenges further highlight the need for organizational leaders to develop and obtain accurate information on to control, understand, and monitor economic markets. As nations become more globally connected their ability to communicate

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across cultures has established itself as a primary focal point. Global businesses must understand how to communicate with employees and customers from different cultures in order to increase performances and increase their values to stakeholders.

In the 21st century, America faces a tumultuous environment that challenges its economic stability. Demographic shifts and workforce changes have impacted businesses performance requirements and this nation's ability to compete on a global level. Currently, a worldwide market has evolved with representation from diverse groups that include race, ethnicity, gender, national origin and age. This global market of distinct consumers creates opportunities for businesses to increase performance levels by tapping into the priceless contributions of its constituents.

Creativity is a highly prized commodity in an expanding global economy. Diversity among global workforces and consumers serves as a pivotal force for leaders to develop strong world-wide partnerships and teams for economic survival and prosperity. Business and education leaders strive to understand and embrace difference to develop a highly competitive and skilled workforce. In a global community, economic survival motivates the increased reliance on the entrepreneurial spirits of diverse populations. Individuals from different cultures, backgrounds, genders and personal preferences stimulate innovation and creativity through their communications and differences (Driskill & Brenton, 2005). Bok (2006) contend that in today's global economy, universities in Europe, Asia, and America focus on individuals' education, skills development, ability to communicate, and performance approaches to develop a highly skilled and diversified workforce.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

Globally, definitions of race and ethnicity are based on varying factors such as heredity, genetics, and socio-economic statuses. In the United States and other nations, the issue of race and ethnicity heightens the interest of demographic realities. The two concepts remain vague, wide-ranging, and misused by many. In the literature, the concept of race is ascribed to a person's group based on their biological and physical appearances. These characteristics are considered inherent, heritable, persistent, or predictive in nature. Yet, this notion is considered unverifiable based on scientific conjectures on pure phenotype origins and social and cultural traits. Biological blending among groups with different prototypes makes it difficult to substantiate this premise. In some countries, social and cultural traits are often used to classify race among groups with identical phenotypes (Chang & Dodd, 2001; Perez & Hirschman, 2009). For example, Brazil's racial classifications based on skin shades vary from South Africa's black-white-colored paradigms (Deng, 1996, 1997; Stam, 1997). Koreans and Japanese who are classified in the same racial category are considered two different "races" primarily by Japanese's notion of blood affinities (Dikkster, 1997; Min, 1992). Racial classifications are often influenced by a group's socio-economic status. Brazilians social-economic statuses affect racial identifications or assignments. Also, research scholars state that in the Mexican society it is difficult to distinguish between Indians and Mestizos phenotypes. However, both groups are identified by their social and cultural traits (Hanchard, 1994; Reichmann, 1999; Twine, 1998). Nutini (1997) confirms that Indians "become" Mestizos by the acquisition of social and cultural traits irrelevant to phenotypes.

On the other hand, ethnicity is a culturally derived term that embodies the values, institutions and patterns of behavior of a group (Chang & Dodd, 2001; Perez & Hirschman, 2010). Ethnicity is considered a composite whole of the group that represents its holistic experiences, world views, and aspira-

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