


Chapter 6

Cross–Cultural Communication in the Digital Business Environment

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ABSTRACT

In the digital era, cross-cultural communication in the business environment has become more widespread than ever before. Many organizations have spread their business units overseas not only to strengthen their financial status but also to establish a strong business network worldwide. Cultural awareness shapes the behaviour of business organizations in cross-culturally reflected international markets. Therefore, understanding cultural differences is one of the significant skills for organizations to develop to have a competitive advantage in international business. Digital technologies are changing the business environments through which they interact with their clients. The chapter articulates the changing business environment and the need for cross-cultural communication in the digital environment. The influence of globalization on cross-cultural communication, adoption of various communicative strategies, cultural impacts, issues faced by global managers, overcoming barriers to cultural adaptations, and key areas influencing adoption of digital communication are assessed.

INTRODUCTION

The management of cross-cultural communication expresses the working conditions of employees and clients from different cultures in an organization. Organizational culture refers to norms, shared values, and expectations that regulate an organization. It states an individual's approach and communication at the work (Lewis, 2014). It is deceptive that culture contributes significantly to organizational effectiveness, if not it may signal the need for either internal or external deviations for an organization. The internal

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sources may include a change in managers, employees or infrastructural aspects, while the external sources may be of political, economic, or technological aspects (Onyusheva, et al., 2020).

With the increased importance of international business and the growing number of multinational organizations, the issue of cross-cultural communication has become critical as it impacts many managerial processes including planning and organizing activities, decision making, and public relations (Kesari, et al., 2014). Within the global business environment, the ability to communicate effectively can be a challenge. Even when both parties speak the same language there can still be misunderstandings due to ethnic and cultural differences. Understanding the impact of globalization on cross-culture communication is imperative for organizations seeking to create a competitive advantage in the global market. As society becomes more globally connected, the ability to communicate across cultural boundaries has gained increasing prominence. Global businesses must understand how to communicate with employees and customers from different cultures to fulfil the organization's mission and build value for stakeholders (Okoro, 2013).

New technologies, globalization and changing organizational cultures affect cross-cultural communication. Communication is one of the most important functions to master for any business to be successful in today's increasingly competitive markets, particularly for organizations doing business internationally. The role of cross-cultural communications has been significantly contributing to the success of business operations. (Bauman & Shcherbina, 2018). The use of technology has a profound impact on how businesses communicate globally and market their products and services across the globe. Cultural factors have long been known to influence the communication and success potential of competition. Cultural awareness shapes how business organizations behave in cross-culturally reflected international markets. It is broadly recognized that cultural factors act as invisible barriers in international business communications (Guang & Trotter, 2012).

Digital technologies and digital media are changing the environments through which business organizations interact with their clients. The evolution of digital organizational forms, customer technology use, and the nature of customer journeys differ significantly across global markets. The explosive growth of innovative digital technologies over the past two decades has revolutionized the way customers browse for information, compare products and services, make purchases, and engage with organizations and other customers. Customers today interact with the organizations and other customers through multiple online touchpoints in multiple channels and media. Although the basic technologies underlying digital innovations are much the same all over the world, the nature of customers' interactions with different touchpoints in a digital environment differs significantly across global markets (Nam & Kannan, 2020).

Cross-cultural business communication demands that organizations be aware of and sensitive to cultural differences. To respect the right to culture by consumers in various cultures and marketplaces, marketers should understand that their customers have a right to their cultures. If the marketers want success in cross-cultural marketing, they must work in a way to respect the consumer's values and the right to their culture. Therefore, to match marketing with consumer preferences, purchasing behaviour, and product-use patterns, marketers benefit from understanding the market's cultural environment. Organizations should not focus on cultural differences only to adjust business communication programs to make them acceptable to consumers. It requires that organizations discover if markets are viable by including the study of the culture in which the company is going to do business in its business and marketing planning. To do this the organizations should identify cultural factors that can be employed to support business communication in proposed markets.

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