



CHALLENGES TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN GLOBAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract

The aim of the present article is to examine the subtle impact of cross-cultural interactions in global environments. This problematic will be analyzed by reviewing the magnitudes of these interactions in attempt to better understand their multidimensional aspects. Indeed, under the globalization effect, societies are liable to share multicultural principles of transnational communication. Therefore, it is necessary to approach the study of the compatibility between globalization and cross-cultural challenges from different perspectives in order to comprehend how it is manifested on the field. This exploration seeks to assess how the globalized environment affects the interconnectedness of multicultural norms and the perceptions of people working in global settings.

Keywords: Challenges, Intercultural Communication, Global Contexts.



Introduction

The process of globalization, depending mainly on technological and economic characteristics, needs to be boosted by an extensive improvement of multicultural dimensions. These dimensions potentially represent the main patterns of individuals' interactions and communications. Witnessing interactions between cultures in different circumstances calls for analyzing the hazards of cultural classification in characterizing people only according to their cultural backgrounds. However, in a context of set globalization at the expense of national identities, cultural aspects should always be taken into account in order to build adequate channels of communication between people worldwide. From a similar standpoint, the organizational culture across the globe is progressing as a comprehensive collection of ideologies, behavioral norms, and fundamental values that are collectively embraced within the organization. These elements significantly influence the organization's ability to achieve its objectives and contribute to the effective regulation of the participants' behavior. That is, the globalized world interconnections have become inevitably overwhelming, which is likely to trigger sensitive response from indigenous cultures.

Global Values versus National Identities

During the last decades, cultures and nations have become largely interconnected in complex and delicate ways. This alteration seems to be shaping the principles on which human contact has been relying in favor of transnational communication process impregnated with universal morals. Therefore, communication depends structurally on the extent to which people from divergent cultural backgrounds can interact with one another without clashes. This calls obviously for their preparedness to put aside their indigenous susceptibilities for the benefit of open-minded interaction. However, even if individuals involved in multicultural settings agree to adopt a common system of communication, they generally cannot get rid of their sociocultural specificities. Hence, effective management of intercultural communication necessitates a steady consciousness of the standards that go along with the globalization process. In due course, the way in which communication between individuals and communities takes place should fit the global conditions. This view is well articulated by Watson (2017) who contends that



“a rudimentary version of world culture is taking shape among certain individuals who share similar values, aspirations, or lifestyles. The result is a collection of elite groups whose unifying ideals transcend geographical limitations” (p. 1). Put differently, the global cultural landscape has bewilderedly expanded and has been molded by people with divergent cultural origins who are involved in cross-national encounters. In such encounters, intercultural aspects need to be taken into consideration to ensure an effective cross-functional processing, which is necessary to reach the common objectives intended by teams gathered for multinational accomplishments such as peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance.

For the creation of productive transnational contexts, cultural differences are supposed to be managed with high subtlety so as to avoid obstacles susceptible to hinder cooperative connections. According to Thomas et al. as cited by Adler and Aycan (2018) “culturally intelligent individuals switch between cultural frameworks or systems in response to environmental demands” (p. 311). Clearly then, cross-cultural interaction between individuals and groups of divergent ethnic identities is fundamentally governed by universal standards, which entails that management of cultural differences draws its principles from the full understanding of the globalization ethics. Nevertheless, the tricky situation of the international cultural landscape seem to generate potential challenges for global encounters. Such challenges are likely to hinder successful interaction between contributors who expect to enhance the output of these encounters. Therefore, globalist managers are invited to build platforms able to facilitate intercommunication within multicultural organizations gathered from different cultural backgrounds. Then, this dynamic could be reached by improving cultural awareness among these organizations.

However, the intricate intermingling of diverse cultures, combined with the limitations imposed by cultural divergences, often hinders collaboration among these cultures, which is crucial for maintaining global harmony. This abstruseness necessitates a shared determination among the different partakers to foster intercultural understanding and reconciliation.



Transcultural Complexity and Global Constraints

Globalism is steadily antagonized by the combination of cultural worries and conflicting hopes as well as discrimination threats. An assessment of this combination reveals that, in spite of the challenges of global relationships, multiculturalists can cultivate appropriate mechanisms of intercultural communication. Therefore, social multiplicity within transnational associations should be developed as potential sources of multicultural dynamics in order to improve the wide-ranging communication related to such dynamics. Hence, the performance of real multiculturalist achievements calls for a kind of cultural hybridity. This hybridity is susceptible to put into interaction different competences of cross-cultural intelligence to generate openness between individuals and communities throughout the globe. As cited by Hall and Theriot (2016), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner claim that “the cultural awareness and skills that make people culturally competent are lacking today, in a time when these qualities are most needed. Without cultural awareness and skills, operational gridlock can occur at great cost to the workplace” (p. 35). Moreover, coordination needs in socioeconomic dealings have led to a significant removal of local cultural barriers, which transferred the international cultural landscape from individual identities to globalized atmosphere. Likewise, the globalization of culture, boosted by the information and communication technologies, is perceived as a tendency to establish a common experience everywhere. In this respect, Mazur (2010) points out in his description of the intrinsic change made by globalization for peoples’ interconnections that “increasing globalization requires more interaction among people from diverse cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds than ever before. People no longer live and work in an insular marketplace” (p. 5). That is, in today’s global background, multicultural expertise is highly required to boost people’s ability to make their way across any deadlocks related to antagonistic responses emanating from cultural individualities.

Correspondently, individuals and groups, attending international meetings, should give up their personal egocentrism in favor of collaborative interactions. That is, what finally matters in cultural diversity is the outcome of values and viewpoints emerging from it. People endowed with global culture understand that



other cultures possess distinct lifestyles and convictions. This notion is well illustrated by Moran et al. (2011) who argue that

A global person does not believe that his/her nation is the best at everything and that everyone else wants to be just like him/her—rather he/she is aware that other cultures of the world have lives and viewpoints different from his/her own (p. 9).

Clearly then, successful globalists should have transnational principles and be impregnated with full respect for the different cultural identities constituting the world's cultural landscape. Actually, communication between cultures has been driven by globalized systems that have started to implement universal cultural approaches recommended to deal with transnational frameworks. These systems are inherently based on humankind equality regardless of their cultural backgrounds. For that reason, cultural knowledge and sensitivity have become extremely important for their reciprocal understanding. In this regard, Einstein, cited by Moran et al. (2011), holds that “all people are to some extent like some other people. This is the cultural aspect which we share, in part, with people from our own tribe” (p. 10). That is, to create global multiculturalism persevere, cross-cultural policymakers should build their approaches as to boost minded–openness and encourage cultural flexibility and tolerance.

Nonetheless, the globalized cultural system constitutes a dynamic process that generates a kind of cultural hegemony susceptible to trigger potential confrontation with national identities. Hence, multicultural manifestations should be measured from their different angles to assess their real magnitude and their effects on a community's behavior and how it relates to the conduct with other communities. That is, the depiction of social mechanisms relevant to this process needs to be oriented toward agendas that help set balance between the global and local characteristics of cultural identities. Some individuals hold the belief that the growing cross-cultural interaction are likely to create a common cultural framework, eventually converting the universe into a global village. In this respect, Remhof et al. (2013) propose in their study about the influence of cultural intelligence on the intention to work in the ‘global village’ that “international exposure influences the intention to work abroad through the development of



cultural intelligence, which in turn positively affects the intention” (p. 226). Explicitly, universal standards could assimilate individuals and groups from dissimilar cultural backgrounds. This agreement is expected to reduce personal conflicts by connecting people worldwide. Therefore, universal cultural frameworks should be free from biased perceptions.

In light of the above, to live globally it is necessary to adopt the posture of a world characterized by multi-faceted interdependences. Hence, attenders of cross-national sceneries should possess the required degree of multicultural competences to understand the landscape where they evolve and how to cope with it. This achievement depends essentially on the ability to develop cross-cultural skills that constitute key elements of cross-cultural integration. With respect to cultural divergences, they should be delicately controlled in order to transcend sociocultural obstacles. However, unfriendliness feeling is likely to generate low morale for individuals coming to work in an unfamiliar context, which would impede their performance. Hence, participants in global work teams need to be prepared to manage their cultural dissimilarities in the sense of adapting their consciousness and conduct according to the environment in which they evolve. Subtle management of these dissimilarities is likely to create the needed atmosphere for cross-cultural comprehensiveness. According to Belhoste and Monin (2013), “people still refer to national culture, but without essentializing or negatively evaluating cultural differences. Rather, national differences call actors to adapt their attitudes and behaviors according to what they understand” (p.13). As a result, multicultural managers are solicited to develop effective mechanisms so as to vulgarize information exchange between communities worldwide. Individuals worldwide cannot forget to acknowledge national culture, without essentializing or making negative judgments about cultural differences.

These mechanisms are likely to make it more practical for managers and followers to carry out cross-national activities in better contexts. In addition, linguistic approaches, such as verbal interpretation and transcultural orientation courses, could be operational in ensuring clarity of communication, which is vital to the overall success of cultural rapprochement. Furthermore, in global perceptions, cultural diversity constitutes a constructive action for the enrichment of



communication within work groups, especially when the intended level of collaboration between the groups' members is reached.

Multicultural Awareness and Global Organizations

Naturally, global perceptions constitute a permanent characteristic of communication between people who work in a multicultural organization. These people reach their self-satisfaction through the mutual understanding with the other members of the organization. Therefore, the respective viewpoints of all participants in global teamwork should be taken into account for the sake of the collective input. Moreover, to avoid miscommunication in organizational dealings, cultural sensitivities are to be addressed with tact and professionalism by the partakers. In this regard, Stefanovska and Tanushevski (2016) contend that

The organizational culture is a complex set of ideologies, norms of behavior, attitudes, opinions, symbols and core values shared throughout the organization, affecting the way the organization meets its objectives, and certainly helping the regulation and control of employee conduct (p.2).

It could be gleaned from the quote that organizational culture refers to a complex combination of ideologies, behavioral norms, attitudes, opinions, symbols, and core values that are shared throughout an organization. It influences how the organization achieves its objectives and plays a crucial role in regulating and controlling the members' behavior. Management of organizations at any level depend on the interrelation of their members' beliefs and particularly their perception of collective interactions. Accordingly, the accomplishment of fruitful communication within an association relies on the degree of adaptation to the collective values of the association. According to McPhee and Zaig, cited by Keyton (2017), "communication is also tailored to interrelated and overlapping organizational functions" (p. 3). Nevertheless, for a rational process of communication, the involved members should be able to maintain a fine balance between their own perceptions and those adopted by their associates.

Thus, all multicultural organizations need management structures that take into account the ability of people from one cultural background to cooperate smoothly with others from dissimilar cultures. For that reason, successful communication



constitutes, for managers of a multicultural organization, an ultimate objective that they must achieve through cultural comprehensiveness of the adherents of that organization. As cited by Chhetry (2020), Adler and Gundersen argue that “every leader and employee working in the organizations which are globally operated requires multicultural skills. It is because, in the multinational companies, multiculturalism has huge effects” (p. 4). Obviously, it could be assumed that multicultural platforms should be structured so as to make their attendees open-minded and tolerant with divergent cultural identities. This level could also be enhanced by orientation courses that seek to reach a higher degree of intercultural consciousness. Such a process would undeniably reduce miscommunication and help take advantage of cultural diversity to enrich the organization’s productivity. That is, regardless of people’s initial attitude towards cultural differences, it is important to develop genuine intercultural sensitivity in order to be an active member of a multinational organization. The perspective through which cultural diversity is perceived must be adjusted to the universal perceptions and standards. In this respect, transnational encounters are meant to reinforce this tendency.

Eventually, regardless of people’s initial attitude towards cultural differences, it is crucial for the participants in multinational organizations to cultivate intercultural rapprochement. Actually, such an achievement calls for understanding and successfully addressing cross-cultural antagonisms that may challenge global meetings. In order to mitigate these conflicts, it is imperative to devise unique strategies aimed at enhancing multicultural awareness among individuals hailing from diverse backgrounds. Yet, certain possible disruptions may impede communication in international settings.

Potential Nuisance for Global Encounters

Global meetings pertaining to multinational interactions need comprehensive communication between the participants. These interactions suppose evidently the existence of appropriate homogeneousness and mutual understanding. Therefore, such encounters should be arranged so as to promote dialogue and sustain multidimensional activities related notably to socioeconomic and security issues. Accordingly, cross-national teams that contribute to global encounters should be prepared to face many challenges inherent essentially to cross-cultural interactions.



In this respect, Hussain (2018) holds that “in a multicultural organization, it is only through the effective communication that the information is shared, trust is built, and constructive relation is developed and maintained. Organizational communication is as broad in its domain as the field of communication itself” (p. 45). It could be assumed from the quote that preparedness for global meetings must be based on the ability to decipher the participants’ cultural characteristics and to develop cross-cultural communication techniques. Another dimension of cultural challenges faced by global assemblies, is building friendly relations with the different attendees whose misunderstanding may lead to failure. For this purpose, coaching programs should be applied to manage the complexity of intercultural contexts. Furthermore, practical mechanisms, such as linguistic and communication styles uniformity, are to be operationalized with full respect of cultural individualities in order to mitigate cultural clashes.

At that point, to reach the needed interoperability amid global organizations, common sense needs to be integrated in the members’ activities. In this regard, Kubicek et al. (2011) state in their analysis of organizational interoperability

For gaining efficiency or for increasing customer convenience, this division of labor might be virtually overcome by integrating the different processes. There are different kinds of integration, in response to different kinds of interdependencies between the units involved” (p. 81).

Along with this description, it is supposedly inferred that the balance between the national and global cultural agendas might be neutralized if multicultural coherence within global associations is not completely established. Naturally, cross-cultural settings are multifaceted and very difficult to manage. However, a communal willingness of rapprochement could give birth to prosperous multicultural encounters. That is, the anthropological dimension that takes into account cultural diversity is likely to promote the dynamic necessary for this achievement. According to Constantin et al. (2015), “Cultural awareness becomes essential mainly when we have to interact with people from other cultures. Individuals should be aware that it is difficult to think and behave in the context of their own culture within the confines of another culture” (p. 3). It is then assumed



that the settlement of a global communication system calls for cross-cultural reconciliation. It is crucial for people to recognize the challenges of thinking and behaving within the framework of their own culture while navigating a different cultural context.

Subsequently, international conferences focusing on interactions between different countries require thorough communication among the attendees. These interactions rely on the presence of suitable uniformity and mutual understanding. As a result, such meetings must be organized to encourage discussion and support various activities linked particularly to economic and security matters.

Conclusion

In summary, living in a globalized world, people today are intrinsically doomed to apply an interactive communication process with other individuals and groups that constitute the world cultural landscape. Therefore, transnational communication standards should be developed so as to achieve the required level of mutual understanding. National identities are to be fashioned to cope with the global standards governing the international communication system. Multicultural awareness is then highly required to mitigate cross-cultural antagonisms and boost coherence within global encounters. This dimension constitutes a source of concern for peoples' streams related to their frequently shifting aspects. Put otherwise, intercultural communication is perceived as a platform that allows for the development of successful interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds. Such interactions would create mutual understanding that paves the way for the submergence of more collaborative relationships based on universal values.

Being an ineluctable process, globalization stands for an overriding phenomenon that imposes potential alterations for national cultural identities in terms of human contact, morals, and life styles. Experts' prospections pertaining to this issue lead us to the conclusion that transcultural communication is increasingly shaped by the globalization tendency based on universal human values. The main emphasis seems to be on the opportunities that cross-cultural communication could offer to boost the globalization process. At that point, it could be suggested that intercultural



communication studies need to be oriented toward the establishment of globalized transcultural institutions. Such an establishment is normally expected to help people worldwide obtain the level of cultural rapprochement necessary to make multicultural communication account for the enhancement of universal interconnections. The interconnectedness of the globalized world has reached a point where it can be quite overwhelming, potentially provoking a sensitive reaction from the national cultures. This dichotomy undoubtedly necessitates a subtle transcultural awareness aimed at achieving equilibrium between the worldwide and local aspects of the intercultural landscape.



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