

Understanding the Relationship between Malaysian Communication and Culture

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the barriers of cross-cultural communication in electronic-based companies. The subjects for this study, comprising company operators and middle to top management were randomly selected from electronic-based companies domiciled in Northern Peninsular Malaysia. This study adopted a quantitative approach method, where questionnaires were distributed among 200 employees. Analysis of data compiled was carried out using the SPSS version 20.0 mode. Through an in-depth analysis and application of this study, there is a bigger impact of multinational firm communication in the cross-cultural communication. In addition, the dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communication, language and communication system have no apparent effects on the cross-cultural communication. A lesson to company managers is that issues such as misunderstanding, miscommunication and misinterpretation will arise in the workplace if managers and employees do not fully understand the cultures of each other.

Keywords: Cross culture management, Communication system, High and low context communication and Dimensions of national cultures.

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to analyze the relationships between dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communications, multinational firm communication, language and communication system that affect cross cultural communication in an organization. In typical international environment workplace, there exists workforce diversity with differences in religion, gender, belief, perspective, behavior and attitude, thus giving rise to problems and conflicts in cross-cultural communication. This research was inspired by Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, which described the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members and how these values relate to behavior. The model suggested five dimensions of cultural

differences, these being power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity and the long versus short-term orientation. Having employees coming from varied cultures and social background, managers can improve their ability to supervise their employees effectively by developing an understanding of the cultural dimensions (Maloney, 2003). In addition, the high and low context communications as proposed by Edward Hall shall be also be used to analyze the expressions of “high context” and “low context” in cultural differences. By using the high and low context communications, managers can know to what extent their employees rely on things rather than using words to express their meanings. Nishimura, Nevgi, & Tella (2005), and referring to Hall (1976), have suggested the categorization of cultures into “high context” versus “low context” in order to fully understand the basic differences in communication styles and cultural issues.

Research Problems

Globalization requires any company to fulfil their organizational needs in terms of procurement of raw materials, availability of skilled labor forces and looking for opportunities in new markets. As a result, globalization and economic enrichment have made the internalization of company’s becoming more prevalent. In global companies, effective cross-cultural communication enables businesses to run smoothly (Duggan, 2013). Managers would encounter numerous problems, conflicts as well as challenges to handle their employees coming from different cultures, habits and social background. Cross-cultural communication competency is thus an important component of a manager’s ability to address any performance challenges (Matveev & Nelson, 2004). Dimension of national cultures can also give rise to some problems in the cross-cultural communication conflicts.

Matveev & Nelson (2004) had emphasized five cultural orientations that could influence cross-cultural competencies: richness of the communication context, power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance and performance orientation (Hall, 1978, 1989; Hofstede’s, 1980). Power distance styles management have given rise to barriers in cross-cultural communication. Countries like China, Russia and France have high power distance management styles, while Sweden, Australia and the United States, prefer to be on low power distance orientation. Interaction between managers from countries with different power distance orientation may cause some dissatisfaction with either party (Klimina, 2011). For instance, a Swedish manager might suggest that before making any final decision, he or she wants to take the subject matter back to his or her team for further discussion. On the contrary, a manager from the high power distance oriented country will not take similar route before making any decision.

Language is also a factor that can end in both misunderstanding or miscommunication among employees at the workplace. Misunderstanding occurs when managers and employees do not speak in the same language. Since both sides come from different cultures and practicing a totally different language, henceforth there must exist a certain level of language consistency to speak in the same platform in order to avoid

miscommunication. Otherwise, this can later lead to problems in having to achieve a mutual consent on conflicting issues, thereby enhancing dissent and dispute, combined with negative emotions and conflicts (O'Leary & Weathington, 2006). Nonverbal communication is also important in business communication because people will have to look for nonverbal clues in the event the verbal messages are unclear or vague, especially where it involves different languages. Each culture uses different methodologies in understanding of gestures, postures, silence, emotional expressions, touch and physical appearances. For instance, in the Anglo-Australian culture, maintaining an eye contact through communication is a norm, deemed as a sign of honesty and showing an interest in the subject, while in other cultures, like Japan, such eye contact methods may be construed as a sign of disrespect. Apparently, differences in the understanding of non-verbal communication can contribute to misunderstanding, while differences in interpretation, may lead to conflicts or escalating existing conflicts (Le Baron, 2003).

Study Rationale

In cross-cultural communication, the medium of information transfer must be done effectively and efficiently in order to avoid uncalled conflicts. Various kinds of conflicts identified from the cross-cultural communication are misinterpretation, miscommunication and misunderstanding. However, if the manager can manage the communication effectively it will bring about distinct advantages to his or her team and eventually to the company. A diversified workplace can influence the strengths and complements the weaknesses of each employee, making the impact of the workplace becoming greater than the sum of its parts. In short, cultural diversity in workplace would stimulate innovation, which paid odd in superior firm performance (Richard, McMillan, Chadwick, & Dwyer, 2003). Evidently, cultural diversity at workplace can increase the productivity and performance of the company. This research mainly concentrates on the cultural differences in the communications context. In addition, this study could initiate interest for any company to explore further on the effects and benefits of handling cross-cultural communication effectively. Previous researches have suggested that cultural diversity can enhance an organization's performance by expanding the perceptions of each team member. There is a strong empirical evident that successful diversity management and a resulting improvement in organizational performance are positively correlated (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2008).

Research Questions

Effective communication is a primary function for all successful organizations, whether at initial start-ups, growing or in international companies. Communication is a key component in any organization as it involves processes such as informing, controlling and coordination during business operations. By means of communication, an organization can control and follow their business guidelines accurately to achieve their desired goals. This research has been performed with the immediate aim of discovering what kind of barriers that could affect cross-cultural communication in the electronic-

based industries. Therefore, in this research, the following statements will be investigated:

1. To explore what are the biggest barriers of cross-cultural communication caused by cultural differences.
2. To explore the importance for people, from different cultures involved in communication, to have a sincere desire to understand each other.
3. To explore the importance of knowing about the other culture when communicating with a person of that culture.
4. To understand another culture and their basic cultural assumptions in order to determine where they might be different from other cultures.
5. To understand how cross-cultural communication process can be improved within the organization.

Significance of Study

This research is premised on the communication problems faced by many international business companies having varied cultures, organizational behaviors, perceptions, beliefs, norms and values. The aim of this study is to analyze a company that has gone through an internationalization process that has also hired their employees from other countries. By understanding the differences of having the high and low context communication, multinational firm communication, language and communication system between different cultures, the barriers of cross-cultural communication in the internationalized company could be detected. In increasing the cross-border management operations, the knowledge and application of the operational cross-cultural communication between the managers and employees are crucial for the survival of the company.

Scope of Study

This research shall develop a better understanding of the barriers of cross-cultural communication. There are countless challenges to develop a managerial implication of cross-cultural management in companies having varied workforce diversity. This study focuses on companies in Northern Peninsular Malaysia (Penang, Perlis and Kedah), where 200 employees were needed as participants. The respondents comprised selected employees from several electronic factories based in the North Peninsular Malaysia. Survey questionnaires were distributed amongst the employees of these electronic factories to gauge their feedbacks and comments on cross-cultural communications in the company.

Literature Review

Culture is an essential part of conflict and conflict resolution. Having varied cultures invite a host of barriers in cross-cultural communication. By definition, cross-cultural communication is a concept on the communicative activities of people coming from different cultural background, the essence and rules of the communicative activities

(Zhou, 2008) and referring to Jia (1997). These concepts look at how people, from different cultures, communicate and exchange information. Obviously, it does not only involves communication of different countries, it also involves communication between people from different nations, social status, communication styles, behaviors, norms, expectations and life experiences. In a nutshell, it involves people from different cultures working together under a single roof in an organization. David Thomas, Dean of Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business, said that "Diversity is one of those topics in which many people and many companies, they hear the anecdotes and they think they are the exceptions to the rule" (Huffington, 2013).

Challenges in cross-cultural communication are manifold, as significant cultural differences between the communicators would result in miscommunication. Miscommunication in an organization may lead to conflicts and affect the company's performance. Researchers such as Congden, Matveev, & Desplaces, (2009), referring to Jackson, May, and Whitney (1995); Snow, Snell, Davison, and Hambrick (1996), Wheelan and Hochberger (1996), have documented that successful performance of multicultural teams is vital and contributing factor to any organizational success. They should be alert and be able to understand the cultural differences and try to adapt and have tolerance during the communication processes or while performing their responsibilities. Miscommunication or even to a certain extent misinterpretation, is more likely to occur among managers and employees coming from different ethnic background and nationality, rather than those coming from homogenous background (Okoro, 2012).

Dimension of National Cultures

Hofstede's (1980) Research in the areas of Culture and Management is known worldwide. In Hofstede's studies, there are varied dimensional approach to the national cultural differences and cross-cultural comparison affecting company's management. Hofstede's had conducted a research among International Business Management (IBM) employees worldwide and argued that there were four (4) dimensions of national cultures, these being power distance, masculinity vs femininity, individual vs group orientation and lastly uncertainty avoidance. Following further studies carried out by researchers with "Eastern minds" in 1985 and by McSweeney (2002), Hofstede's added a fifth dimension, which was long vs short term orientation.

High and Low Context Communications

Edward Hall, an anthropologist and a cross-cultural researcher, has studied communication patterns across the world and came out with a concept that included a set of behaviors, known as a „high” and “low” context communication processes. This is because communications by means of “high context” or “low context” relates to the framework, background and nature of the communications and events happening. “High” or “low” context communication theory is one of the important theories in cross-cultural researches, which can be viewed as a culture based or messages that people within the culture prefer to use (Richardson & Smith, 2007). Chaney & Martin (2011), reported that

the use of “high” context communication can be very confusing to the uninitiated and non-sensitive intercultural business person. Here, communication cannot be effectively and efficiently transmitted.

Carte & Fox (2008), noted that “high” context communicators tend to communicate more implicitly, as the intended message is interpreted heavily based upon the overall situation and therefore the spoken message can be considered as ambiguous (Guirdham, 2005). In contrast, in the “low” context communication culture, where society tends to be individualized, alienated or fragmented, people do not interact with each other too much. Usually, in this culture, dissemination of information is contained in the message itself. Rutledge (2011), stated that a “low” context culture is one in which things are fully (though concisely) spelt out. Basically, the message will be transmitted directly and clearly to the receiver. Nishimura, Nevgi, & Tella (2005) and referring to Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey (1988), asserted that communication is direct, precise, dramatic and open and based on feelings or true intentions. Hall & Hall (1990) concluded that world societies exhibit some characteristics of both “high” and “low” context cultures and could be tabulated along a scale showing their ranking as follows:

High Context Culture
Japanese
Chinese
Korean
African American
Native American
Arab
Greek
Latin
Italian
English
French
American
Scandinavian
German
German-Swiss
Low Context Culture

Figure 1: High/Low Context Cultures (Hall & Hall, 1990).

From the above table, Asian countries such as Japan, China and Korea are placed at the uppermost level in the context of high culture category. Societies in these bands are very homogeneous in nature in terms of experience, information network and the likes. Moreover, their messages are not necessarily in the form of words. Qingxue (2003) and referring to Foster (1992), asserted that in the high context cultures, information is transmitted through gestures, through the use of space or even silence.

Multinational firm Communication

In multinational firms, there are diversified distribution of workforce, thus exhibiting varied differences in the culture and social background, which can influence communication between the workforce. Ybema & Byun (2009) stressed that the cultural differences can influence communication between people with different identity. There are two parts in the internal communication of an organization, management style and staff behavior. Blazenaite (2011) suggested a functional comprehensive communication system model as a tool for supporting effective communication to reach individual and integrated goals in an organization.

Management Style

Management style is a way of making decision and relating such decision to subordinates. Culture is a factor influencing the style of management. Several researchers such as Williams, et al., (1998), Morden (1995) and Koopman Hartog, & Konrad, (1999), stressed the importance of culture on management style. Williams (et al., 1998), discussed the different ways managers have applied to solve conflicts within the organization. For example, in solving conflicts, Chinese managers rely on an avoiding style approach while United States managers prefer a competing style approach. In leadership style, Morden (1995) argued that it is influenced by cultures, whether in centralized or decentralized organization. For instance, China is one country that has been using the centralized orientation and Martinsons & Westwood (1997) said that the Chinese used a different point of view on the concept of leadership with western norms. Chinese leaders are not used to listening to subordinates nor adopting a team perspective.

Staff Behavior

Subordinate is an important asset for any organization. This is because the success or failure of the organization depends largely on the employees' contribution. Each subordinate will bring along their knowledge, skills and experiences into the organization. Past researchers such as Labianca, Gray, & Brass (2000) and Kirkman & Rosen (1999), stressed that efficient staff empowerment within the organizations would lead to high productivity and high performance, as well as the satisfaction of the employees themselves.

Language

Language can be an intermediary in any communication with another person when the transfer of the message takes place. Language is our greatest mediator that allows us to relate and understand each other (Imberti, 2007). It can be defined as a system of conceptual symbols that allows us to communicate. In cross-cultural communication, language can be divided into two spheres, verbal and nonverbal. Verbal communication can be simply described as computing thoughts through words, while the latter can be described in terms of body language, facial expression, gesture, smell and eye contact.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication begins when a sender has the intention of conveying messages, ideas or feelings through the use of. Key components of verbal communication are words, sound, speak and language. Language is one problem that occurs in any typical cross-cultural communication, because in the workplace, they will be a diversity of workforce coming from different background and culture. Dowling & Welch (2005), contended that language fluency is a key to expatriate's social adjustment, helping to improve organizational effectiveness and enhancing negotiating ability. However, even sharing a common language does not guarantee that they have a perfect understanding during the communication process. Scollon & Scollon, (2001), said that "intercultural communication" vocalized: "language is ambiguous. This means that we can never be certain of what the other person is saying, whether in speaking or in writing, as language can never fully express our feelings". For example, in Japan, most companies have ineffective command in English language, whereas English is a common language that serves as language intermediaries world-wide.

A good command in English helps to avoid misunderstanding and communication failures. Ogawa (2011), placed Japan in second to last in Asia in terms of English language skills, with 191 points in the year 2004 to 2005, only one point higher than North Korea. De-hua & Hui, (2007) commented that "Cross-cultural communication requires not only knowledge of another language but also familiarity with non-verbal behavior, cultural practices, values and customs". By not possessing any cultural knowledge (values, norms, traditions and the lifestyles) of a country where he or she seeks to do business or work, he or she may face communication difficulty during the early stage of their communication. Klimina (2011) and referring to Lin (2004), claimed that although people may have language skills and intelligent elements, such as the abilities of thought (motivation, purpose, emotion and control), they might not be able to comprehend the language knowledge completely without thorough understanding of the cultural background.

Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is a process of sending and receiving messages without the use of words, either spoken or written. Nordquist (2014) and referring to Judee Burgoon (1994) identified seven different non-verbal dimensions:

1. Kinesics or body movements, including facial expressions and eye contacts
2. Vocalic or paralanguage, that includes volume, rate, pitch and timbre
3. Personal appearance
4. Physical environment and the artifacts or objects that compose it
5. Proxemics or personal space
6. Haptics or touch
7. Chronicemics or time

Non-verbal communication can be the main source of misunderstanding and can also be a dominant factor in communication barriers. Muhammad Handi Gunawan

(2001), has emphasized on the importance of non-verbal communication concepts, because without them, an actual communication cannot be conducted smoothly and successfully. Browaeys & Price (2011) and referring to Browaeys (1989), asserted that in communication, the French are very expressive and use the whole upper parts of their body, while the Dutch normally limits gestures to using the upper parts of their body. In addition, silence culture can also create misunderstanding in communication. Examples of differences between the Western and Asian in the silent cultures are several. According to Lim (2003), in Thailand, silence is not only a sign of respect, of agreement or disagreement, but it is also highly appreciated as a style of discourse. Likewise, in Korea, silence is preferable to the improper use of words, while in Japan, it appears to be the exception. Even if silence is preferred to verbalization, it can also be considered as being impolite in situations where active participation by the interlocutors is expected. Lustig & Koester (2006) cautioned that miscommunication would always occur in the understanding of non-verbal behaviors because different social contexts might create extremely different rules for appropriate and effective use of nonverbal behaviors.

Communication System

Communication system is a set of procedures and rules, involving both formal (plans and budgets) and informal, which communicates plans and goals; monitors the organization and informs others of status development within the organization (Hitt W. D., 2003). In an organization, communication supports the way in which an organization functions. Communication can be at the exchange of oral, non-verbal and written messages within or across the boundaries of the system that are interrelated and interdependent for the people working to achieve the organization's requirements. Besides that, communication system can be used to maintain the patterns in organizational activities, not only by those that can be predicted, but also by the surprised ones (Simons, 1995).

Formal Communication

Formal communication is defined as an official process flow on interchange of information. The flow of communication is controlled with deliberate effort. Formalization refers to rules, policies and procedures or norms governing the behaviors of employees in an organization for the purpose of making these behaviors being more predictable by standardizing it (Ashraf, 2008). Basically, the sender and receiver are communicating in respect of organizational relations. Formal communication maintains constant relations among the superiors and their subordinates and as a result, the dignity of line superiors is maintained (Pujari, 2013). Consequently, it is a suitable way to control the subordinates and determine their responsibility that is needed to fulfil the organization's requirement. In Lee (2001), employees identified their immediate superior as the primary source for receiving information from the top management. In this way, communication is capable of ensuring that the information conveyed is clear, effective and systematic. This statement has been supported by Ivancevich, Konopaske, &

Matteson (2011), where in order to have an efficient communication system, it is necessary that the receiver understands the meanings of the message and indicates it to the sender through some expected reaction.

Informal Communication

Informal communication is a casual form of transfer of information applied in personal conversation with friends or family members. Shade & Nargundkar (2006) identified that certain channels of informal communication, such as rumor, gossip, grapevine activity and breakdown of formal communication constitute an informal communication. It is thus imperative for management to pay close attention to control all these channels of informal communication, otherwise impacting organizational functions. Typical communication in the workplace involves informal communication, both during conversation and in meetings. This informal communication can bring out the social relations beyond the restrictions of the organization. If the informal communication is controlled by the organization, it could provide several benefits for the organization. In Kraut, Lewis & Swezey (1982), informal communication can be more effective than formal channels, as participants in the conversation elaborates or modify what they have to say in order to deal with someone else's objections or misunderstanding.

Interpersonal communication can also be classified as an informal communication, crucial in building and sustaining the human relationships at the workplace. There is a closed relation between interpersonal communication and culture (Erez, 1992). Interpersonal communication is one of the elements of organization's communication system. Communication forms will be playing a pivotal role to help group members in transmitting the social values and facilitating knowledge sharing. Cross-cultural communication may bring a lot of benefits to the organization, thereby increasing their productivity. However, it also can lead to conflicts in the workplace if the differences are not managed properly, ending with the employees becoming unsatisfied and unmotivated, directly affecting the organizational performance. The cross-cultural communication will also lead to the misunderstanding, miscommunication, misinterpretation and misevaluation if managers and employees are not aware or fail to understand the values of the other cultures very well.

Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

This study focuses on procedures necessary to ascertain and be able to explore the factors that hinder cross-cultural communications in electronic-based companies. The barriers of cross-cultural communications can be dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communication, international firm communication, language and communication system. In ensuring that this research achieves the desired accuracy and quality, the researchers have been careful on the data collection, by preparing appropriate questionnaires, applying appropriate research sampling techniques and lastly ensuring a correct data analysis method in order to develop relevant, valid and reliable findings.

Research Methodology

This research applied the quantitative approach methodology because it is generally associated with positivism, especially when the researchers used pre-determined and highly structured data collection techniques. Apart from this, the researchers can examine the relationships between the variables, measuring them numerically and analyzing using the range of statistical techniques. Quantitative approach research often incorporates control mechanisms to ensure the validity of the data, as in an experimental design (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). Evaluating both the independent and dependent variables in more detail will produce research outcome which are more precise. Testing of all the hypotheses are more applicable using the quantitative research methodology.

Theoretical Framework

Generally, an organization with a diversified workforce will likely face several barriers in having effective communication flow in their organization. In respect of the theoretical framework of this study, the independent variables embedded factors that enhance barriers for cross-cultural communication. These independent variables being the dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communication, multinational firm communication, language and communication system. In addition, the sole dependent variable of this research was the cross-cultural communication. Figure 2 showed the relationships between all the independent and dependent variables.

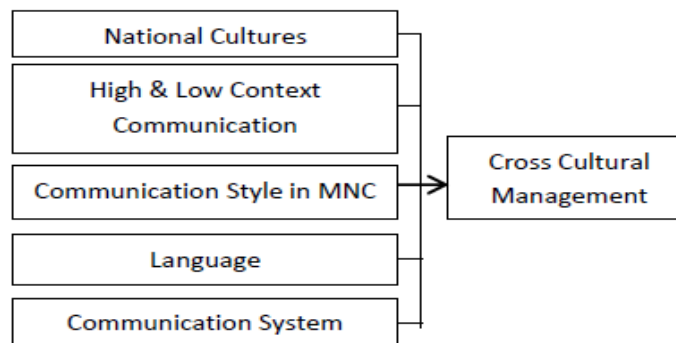


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework

Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses constructed under this research were:

- H₁: Dimension of national cultures will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication.
- H₂: High and low context communications will lead to conflicts in cross-cultural communication.
- H₃: Multinational firm communication will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication.
- H₄: Language will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication.
- H₅: Communication system will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication.

Sampling and Sample Size

Respondents were randomly selected from several electronic based companies in the States of North Peninsular Malaysia (Penang, Perlis and Kedah), where the questionnaires were distributed. In addition, questionnaires were also distributed through the survey builder's web sites. In order to obtain a reliable and accurate result, a total of 200 questionnaires were distributed. Respondents were of legal age 18 years old and above.

Data Collection Techniques

Primary data was used in this study, collected through feedbacks received from these respondents. Secondary source documents were obtained from any interpretations and evaluations from the primary sources. The secondary sources were more easily acceptable compared to the primary sources. In general, the secondary data can be referred to the data that have been collected by searching through the journals, websites and from previous researches relevant to this study. Secondary data provided benefits in terms of time saving, speed and cost savings during the data collection process.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are best used for collecting actual data, thus designing appropriate questionnaires are essential to ensure that researcher obtains valid responses to the questions (Leung, 2001). Obviously, by using questionnaires, the researcher will know more in-depth what are required in the study and how to measure the variables of interest. Questionnaires were distributed to a group of people to obtain feedbacks from all the data regarding the research. The questionnaires consisted of three sections, namely Section A, B and C. Section A dealt with demographic profiles. In this section, the entire questions required information on the respondents' profiles such as gender, age, occupation, position, income and the state of origin. The main purpose of these questions is to ensure the correlation of the demographic profiles of respondents with diversified workforce in the electronic factory. Section B included questions having relations with the independent variables, while Section C dealt with the sole dependent variable. For Sections B and C, the questions were constructed by using the Likert-style rating questions, often used by researchers to collect data. In the Likert-style rating system, each respondent will be asked on how strongly she or he agrees or disagrees, with the statement. Usually, the Likert-style rating will appear in a four-, five-, six-, or seven-point ratings scale. However, in this study, the questions used the fivepoint ratings scale, based on a range of from "1" to "5", as follows:

- 1- Strongly Disagree
- 2- Disagree
- 3- Uncertain
- 4- Agree
- 5- Strongly Agree

Likert-style rating was used in this research during the data collection stages to generate the required statistical measurement of cross-cultural communication issues. The Likert-style rating in this research was presented in a straight line to avoid confusing the respondents. Both the positive and negative statements were stated together to ensure that each respondent read every statement carefully before making their decision. (Dillman 2009) commented that if the intention of a researcher is to use a series of statements, the researcher should keep the same order of response categories to avoid confusing respondents. Thus, the researcher must include both the positive and negative statements to ensure that all the respondents read each question carefully before deciding which box to tick. Section B consisted of statements about the independent variables, which were dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communication, international firm communication, language and communication system. Finally Section C incorporated the statement about the sole dependent variable, i.e. the cross-cultural communication.

Reliability Analysis

A reliability analysis is used to determine data consistency and stability, allowing the researcher to study the properties of the measurement scales and the items composing the scales. In addition, such analysis process will calculate a number of commonly used measurement scales to measure the scale of reliability, showing data relationships between individual items in the scale. In the reliability analysis, there are the intra-class correlation coefficients that will be used to compute the inter-rater reliability estimates. Reliability analysis is done by using Cronbach's Alpha Technique. This technique analyzes when the correlations between the items are increasing and normally the Cronbach's Alpha Technique will increase as well. The value of alpha coefficient of 0.5 and above will be taken as reliable and acceptable in this particular research. Frequency and percentage were used to show the general distribution of the profiles with respect to the respondents. Consequently, goodness of measures was examined by taking both the dimensional factors and the reliability analyses, followed by the third section, which provided the inter-correlation between all the variables that were studied and a descriptive statistic (the mean and standard deviations of the factors). Finally, the hypotheses from the proposal model were tested through a hierarchical regression analysis.

Findings

Overview of Data Collected Figure 3 below summarized the sample profiles of the questionnaires distributed. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed among the randomly selected respondents. However, only 172 questionnaires were collected back (accounting for 86% of total questionnaires distributed) and each was found to be satisfactorily completed. Finally, the data was tested using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Number of Questionnaires Distributed	200
Number of Questionnaires Collected Back	172
Response Rate	86%
Number of Questionnaires Used for Analysis	172

Figure 3: Sample Profile

Data Presentation

Figure 4 summarized all the demographic data of the respondents, including gender, nationality, age, job position, number of years of service, level of education and income per month. It can be seen that out of the 172 respondents, there were more female than male respondents. The results showed that 52.3% of the respondents were female whilst the remaining 47.7% were male. On the nationality parameter, 130 respondents (75.6%) were Malaysians, with the remaining 42 respondents (24.4%) coming from the “other” countries category. A total of 64 respondents (37.2%) were aged under 26 years old, followed by 58 respondents (33.7%), aged between 26 to 35 years old, 40 respondents (23.3%), aged between 36 to 45 years old and the smallest group, with 10 respondents (5.8%), were aged between 46 to 55 years old.

On the job position, 120 respondents (69.8%) were working as operational/subordinates, 49 respondents (28.5%) were working as middle management and there were only 3 respondents (1.7%) working as the top management level. Next, on the number of years of service in the company, majority of the 74 respondents (43.0%) had been working in the company between 2 to 5 years, 44 respondents (25.6%) had worked less than 1 year, 33 respondents (19.2%) had worked between 6 to 10 years and lastly, only 21 respondents (12.2%) had been working for between 11 to 18 years. As for the highest level of education category, bulk of the 71 respondents (41.3%) came from High School degree/equipment; followed by 32 respondents (18.6%) having a Bachelor’s degree and 31 respondents (31%) did not complete their High School education. Diploma holders totaled 25 respondents (14.5%), Master’s degree consisted of 12 respondents (7.0%) and finally only 1 respondent (0.6%) had a PhD qualification. Last but not least, for the income level, the greater number of 153 respondents (89.0%) were drawing monthly income of between RM 1,000 to RM 5,000, 16 respondents (9.3%) drawing around RM 5,000 to RM 10,000 and only 3 respondents (1.7%) drew around RM 10,000 to RM 15,000.

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	82	47.7
	Female	90	52.3
Nationality	Malaysia	130	75.6
	Others	42	24.4
Age	Under 26	64	37.2
	26 to 35	58	33.7
	36 to 45	40	23.3
	46 to 55	10	5.8
Job position	Top Management	3	1.7
	Middle Management	49	28.5
	Operational/Subordinate	120	69.8
Years of Service	0-1	44	25.6
	2-5	74	43.0
	6-10	33	19.2
Highest level of education	11-18	21	12.2
	Did not complete High School	31	18.0
	High School degree/equipment	71	41.3
	Diploma	25	14.5
	Bachelor's degree	32	18.6
	Master's degree	12	7.0
	PhD	1	0.6
Income level	RM 1000 to RM 5000	153	89.0
	RM 5000 to RM 10 000	16	9.3
	RM 10 000 to RM 15 000	3	1.7

Figure 4: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Reliability Analysis

Figure 5 showed Cronbach's alpha coefficients and items of each independent variable, namely dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communication, multinational firm communication, language and communication system. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient values of all factors, ranging from 0.534 to 0.751, indicated good inter-items consistency for each factor. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was categorized under three levels of reliability, the high reliability (having a range of between 0.70 to 0.90), moderate reliability (ranged between 0.50 to 0.70) and low reliability (0.5 and below) (Hinton, Brownlow, McMurray, & Cozens, 2004).

Variables	Number of Items	Items Dropped	Items Recoded	Cronbach Alpha
Dimensions of national cultures	7	-	-	0.689
High and low context communication	5	1	-	0.534
Multinational firm communication	5	1	-	0.738
Language	5	-	-	0.706
Communication system	6	1	-	0.751
Cross-cultural communication	5	1	-	0.703

Figure 5: Results of Reliability Test

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Dimensions of national cultures	3.5781	0.48778
High and low context communication	3.7616	0.54129
Multinational firm communication	3.6831	0.60022
Language	3.5337	0.60642
Communication system	3.7244	0.53474
Cross-cultural communication	3.8590	0.55748

Figure 6: Presents the Means and Standard Deviations, for all the study variables

Based on the Figure 6 above, the mean for all variables had ranged from 3.5337 to 3.8590. Measurements of the mean and standard deviations of all the independent variables were dimensions of national cultures (3.5781 and 0.48778), high and low context communication (3.7616 and 0.54129), multinational firm communication (3.6831 and 0.60022), language (3.5337 and 0.60642) and communication system (3.7244 and 0.53474) respectively. Finally, for the dependent variable, the cross-cultural communication, recorded a mean and a standard deviation of 3.8590 and 0.55748 respectively.

Correlations

		Dimension	Context	International	Language	System	Cross Cultural
Dimension	Pearson	1.000	0.315**	0.310**	0.346**	0.534**	0.168*
	Correlation						
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.014
Context	N	172	172	172	172	172	172
	Pearson	0.315**	1.000	0.502**	0.318**	0.363**	0.288**
	Correlation						
International	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.291**	0.543**	0.365**
	N	172	172	172	172	172	172
	Pearson	0.310**	0.502**	1.000	0.291**	0.543**	0.365**
Language	Correlation						
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.480**	0.213**
	N	172	172	172	172	172	172
System	Pearson	0.534**	0.363**	0.543**	0.480**	1.000	0.214**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002
Cross cultural	N	172	172	172	172	172	172
	Pearson	0.168*	0.288**	0.365**	0.213**	0.214**	1.000
	Correlation						
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.014	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.002	
	N	172	172	172	172	172	172

(**) Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

(*) Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Figure 7: Presents the correlation, sig. (1-tailed), and N for all the study variables

Variables	Beta	t-Ratio	Sig.t
Dimensions of national cultures	0.034	0.394	0.694
High and low context communication	0.115	1.354	0.177
Multinational firm communication	0.297	3.223	0.002
Language	0.106	1.274	0.204
Communication system	-0.058	-0.572	0.568
R square = 0.157			
Durbin Watson = 1.679			
F = 6.201			
Sig. F = 0.000			
Condition Index = 29.253			

Figure 8: Results of Regression Analysis on Turnover

Based on the regression analysis performed to determine the factors that could influence cross-cultural communication between employees in the electronic based companies, the dimensions of national cultures factor was found to have no significant effect (sig. t = 0.694) on the employee's performance. This finding showed that the dimensions of national cultures did not affect communication in the workplace. Thus, employees' communication and performance were not being affected by the diversity that had been occurring in the workplace. It can safely be concluded that they could handle their differences in the workplace arising from conflicts between them. Hypothesis H1,

which stated the relationship between the dimensions of national cultures and cross-cultural communication, was not substantiated. The regression analysis also indicated that high and low context communication did not show significant effect (Sig. $t = 0.177$) on the cross-cultural communication. This showed that differences in the communication context did not have any effect on the workplace. The employees did not face any conflict or problem even though having wide differences, because they could adapt to each other's culture. Thus, hypothesis H2 which stated that high and low context communication will lead to conflict of cross-cultural communication was not supported.

Multinational firm communication was found to have significant effect with (Sig. $t = 0.002$), meaning that conflicts and problems at workplace have arisen, caused by the multinational firm communication in having diverse workforce. Diversified employees will have varied forms of thinking and acting that will make it difficult for them to work as a team effectively. Hypothesis H3, which stated the relationship between multinational firm communication and cross-cultural, was substantiated. In addition, language was shown to have a significant effect (with Sig. $t = 0.204$). This showed that language did not influence cross-cultural communication amongst the electronic based employees. Their belief was that problems in language can be avoided by attending language training sessions before or while working in the other country. By attending language training classes, the expatriates or foreign workers will enhance their ability to speak and understand the country language. Thus, hypothesis H4, stating that language will lead to conflict of cross-cultural communication was unacceptable. Lastly, hypothesis H5 tested whether communication system will lead to conflict of cross-cultural communication, was also not supported. Evidence from the regression analysis showed employee's satisfaction having a significant effect (Sig. $t = 0.568$). By this finding, it has been proven that the dual communication methods, either formal or informal communication, did not affect the employees' communication.

The main reason why the dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communication, language, and communication system did not affect the cross-cultural communication was also due to the demographic section. According to the data collected, the highest category of respondents (120 respondents or 69.8%) was from the operational /subordinate levels, being less involved in meetings, discussions or with management. Normally, this category of employees will accept all the instructions given and follow their responsibility. Secondly, this analysis also showed that the highest respondent category (71 respondents or representing 41.3%) had a high school degree/ equipment qualifications. Obviously, they were not aware of the circumstances surrounding the theory been developed in this research. Such theory and ideology included in this research are common syllabus found at academic levels in courses such as for diplomas, bachelor's degree, master's degree or PhD. Dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communication, international firm communication, language and communication system can only explain 15.7% (Rsquare = 0.157) variation of conflict handling. The Durbin-Watson value fell within the accepted range of 1.679; therefore there was no auto correlation problem with the data. Multi-collinearity problems did not exist in this

regression model for condition index, VIF and the tolerance levels which fell within the accepted range (condition index = 29.253, VIF =1-10, tolerance = 0.1-10). F-value was found to be significant at the 1% significance level (Sig. F = 0.000). This concluded that the regression model used in this study was adequate or in other words, the model was fit.

Summary

In summary, the analysis carried out and the results of the hypothesis tested, are tabulated in Figure 9 below.

No of Hypothesis	Statement of Hypothesis	Results
H1	Dimensions of national cultures will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication.	Rejected
H2	High and low context communication will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication.	Rejected
H3	Multinational firm communication will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication.	Accepted
H4	Language will lead to conflict of cross-cultural in communication.	Rejected
H5	Communication system will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication.	Rejected

Figure 9: Results of Hypothesis Testing

Conclusions and Recommendation

This study was initiated to examine the relationships between the barriers of cross-cultural communications on employees in electronic-based companies. There were five independent variables in this study, these being dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communication, multinational firm communication, language and communication system. Hypothesis 1 (H1), examined whether the dimensions of national cultures will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication. There are differences in the employee's attitudes, behaviors, communication and perception arising from the different background of each culture. These differences will create some form of misunderstanding among the employees working in similar organization. There are five dimensions of national cultures closely related to the cross-cultural communication, being power distance, individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs femininity, long vs short term orientation and uncertainty avoidance. In power distance orientation, power will be distributed unequally among the employees. Based on this power distance, if allowed by the employer to the employee, it will provide an opportunity for the authorities to participate and give their contributions to the organization. Low power distance orientation can help made communication to be more efficient.

Obviously, it will allow employees to be more convenient in communicating and sharing their ideas with the employers. Power distance orientation can affect the efficiency of any communication (Xie, Rau, Tseng, Su, & Zha, 2009). The individualism

vs collectivism orientation indicates the degree of individuals that are supposed to prioritize themselves or they can be integrated into a group. House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfmann, & Gupta (2004) quoted that “In organizations, institutional collectivism likely takes the form of strong team orientation and development. To the extent possible, task (and rewards) are likely to be based on group rather than individual performance. Personal independence has low priority in institutionally oriented collective societies. The notion of autonomous individuals, living free of society, is contrary to the norms of societies that embrace institutional collectivism. Societies characterized by lower institutional collectivism tend to embrace a preoccupation with self-reliance and independent personality”. In other words, individualism will encourage the employees to make their own decision and have high desire to appraisal for their performance. Meanwhile, collectivism employees will maintain their role in the group. This is because they will make a decision and take an action according to the interest of the group. When an organization has diversified workforce in their workplace, there will be certain impact in the working environment. Differences in the individualism and collectivism orientation will affect the cross cultural communication in the workplace.

In the masculinity vs femininity orientation, masculinity is more synonymous as being assertive and competitive, rather than femininity, which can be more careful to the society value and protection of the others. Studies have shown that masculinity uplifts the employment of dominating and collaborating approaches while femininity is associated with avoidance and accommodating approaches, because of the different concerns on achievement and harmony respectively (Tsai & Chi, 2009). Differences in the masculinity and femininity will lead to conflicts in the workplace, because a diversified workforce from various cultures would adopt different styles in decision making process, thus giving rise to conflicts in the workplace. Besides that, the long vs short term orientation refers to the time horizon directly relating to the future, compared with the past and present. The long term orientation will prefer to have a long term business relationship, but taking a longer time to reach a decision. Meanwhile, the short term orientation group prefers to have a short-term business relationship and need a shorter time to make a decision. The decision to choose either orientation will be influenced by the culture itself. When there is workforce diversity in the organization, they will face some problems implementing the task given. National dimension can affect the cross-cultural communication ending with conflicts. Conflicts would include misunderstanding, miscommunication and misinterpretation of the data and information.

Matveev & Nelson (2004) had emphasized five cultural orientations that could influence cross-cultural communication competencies: richness of the communication context, power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance and performance orientations. From previous researches, there is a positive relationship between the dimensions of national cultures with the cross-cultural communication (Erkkila, 2010). On the contrary, based on this research outcome, there was a negative relationship between this hypothesis, where the dimension of national will lead to conflict of cross-cultural communication. The regression analysis found that there was no significant

effect (sig. $t = 0.694$) in the workplace. It showed that employee communication was not affected by the diversity that had been occurring in their workplace. Based on the analysis in the demographic data, there was some evidence that can support to reject this hypothesis, since the majority of respondents involved in this research graduated from the high school degree or equipment only. It was obvious that they did not have or not familiar with or not knowledgeable on subject of the dimensions of national cultures. In respect of their educational level, it could not be denied that they were not being too careful nor conscientious when answering the questionnaires.

Nowadays many companies keep changing people to ensure that they can adapt and be more alert about the cultural differences. Here, it clearly showed that dimensional national culture did not affect the cultural differences in the workplace. Probably Hofstede's dimension has been too outdated and inapplicable in this globalization era. From previous researches, there are strong empirical views stating that Hofstede's dimension is too outdated (Jones, 2007). Hypothesis 2 (H2), examined whether the high and low context communication will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication. Some conflicts originate with differences in communication styles. The high context communications usually prefer to communicate on indirect basis and more extensively communicate through nonverbal communication. Meanwhile, the low context communication would be more direct but aggressive in their communication styles. These different styles and different background could lead to misunderstanding between each other. Gamsriegler (2005), while referring to Hall (1979), commented that low context systems tend to be more complex as the words spoken has to make up for the missing elements in the context. As a result, low context communication styles show less intuitive understanding, which makes them slow to respond and less efficient, while for the high context communication styles, are being faster and more efficient, since they rely on intuitive understanding.

However, they are slow to adapt to changes and need time in order to create a common understanding between senders and receivers. Obviously, these two contexts of communications are different according to their cultures. From previous studies, there is a strong relationship between the high and low context communication with the cross-cultural communication (Klimina, 2011). However, based on this study, it was evidenced that there was a negative relationship between the high and low context communication with the cross-cultural communication, with no significant effect outcome analysis (sig. $t = 0.177$) on the cross-cultural communication at the workplace. Thus, communication between employees is not affected by the workforce diversity. Based on the researchers' analysis, majority of the respondents were under 26 years old. The younger workers can be more flexible, adaptable and are fast learners, hence they can adapt quickly with the different cultures compared to the older workers, who are comfortable with their own cultures and styles. The high and low context communication did not affect their communication in the workplace.

Hypothesis 3 (H3), examined whether multinational firm communication will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication. In multinational firm, there are internal

communication in the organization depending on management styles and staff behaviors. Management styles usually involve the ways and actions applied by the Managers to solve any organizational conflicts. The differences in the leadership styles can influence the decisions and actions of the Managers. If the manager has used the wrong leadership style, it will directly affect the employee's satisfaction and performance. Here, the manager needs to understand and appreciate the employees coming from different cultures to avoid from facing future cross-cultural problems in the workplace. International management skills are needed for increasing the scope of global trades and investments over the past decades, Harris & Moran (2000) and Chaney & Martin (2011). Obviously, the manager should have an international management skill to ensure fairness in decision making processes which can increase the employee's satisfaction.

In addition, staff behavior can also affect the communication system within the organization during the transmission of information. The manager needs to play an appropriate role to show their credibility and integrity, as etiquette manager, being a role model for their employees. This is to avoid from committing a wrong decision that can create any misunderstanding between the managers and their employees. Chaney & Martin (2011) and Cook & Cook (2004), placed a high premium on managers' manners, public or professional behaviors and appropriate self-comportment when conducting official duties in international business or social settings. From previous researches, there were positive relationships between multinational firm communication and cross-cultural communication (He & Liu, 2010). Based on this study, it was discovered that there was also a positive relationship between the multinational firm communication and cross-cultural communication. The analysis found out that there was significant effect (sig. $T = 0.002$) on the cross-cultural communication in the organization. The multinational firm communication can affect the cross-cultural communication by the management style and staff behavior, creating conflicts in the workplace if the cultural differences are not addressed promptly.

O'Rourke (2010) identified the most common factors contributing to managers' failure to perform effectively in international business assignments as being the inability to understand and adapt to foreign ways of thinking and acting, as opposed to technical or professional incompetence. The awareness and cultural differences are increasingly significant to the success of multinational corporations (Chaney & Martin, 2011). This shows that there is a strong relationship between multinational firm communications with cross-cultural communication. Hypotheses 4 (H4), examined whether language will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication. Language is the moderator that will connect a sender and a receiver to receive information appropriately. It will enable each person to be more understanding and sharing the information values together. Language is our greatest mediator that allows us to relate and understand each other (Imberti, 2007). There are two characteristics in the language which can affect a typical conversation process, verbal and non-verbal. Globalization in the industry will increase the interaction between various cultures. Nowadays, increased globalization has forced a growing number of business managers and employees to interact across linguistic boundaries

(Lauring, 2008). In aspect of non-verbal language, various problems have arisen in the workplace regarding this cultural differences. Nonverbal languages vary from the other cultures, so it highly possible for some misunderstanding to occur in the conversation. It is indicated in many studies that failure or misunderstanding in intercultural communication are largely caused by the misinterpretation or misuse of nonverbal behaviors (Arasaratnam & Banerjee, 2007).

Here, it is very important to understand and be aware with non-verbal communication in cross-cultural communication. From previous studies too, there was a strong relationship between language and cross-cultural communication at the workplace. Since language affects almost all aspects of everyday life, there is a need to focus more on communication barriers by researchers and practitioners engaged in international business and management (Henderson, 2005). However, based on this study, there was a negative relationship between the language and cross-cultural communication, with no significant effect (sig. $T = 0.204$) on the cross-cultural communication in the organization. The language does not affect the cross-cultural communication because most of the employees at the organization, especially the expatriates and foreign workers, have been given a cross-cultural training (CCT) prior to employment. From the CCT, the employee can learn about the local language and be more aware of the nonverbal language of the other cultures. The CCT have made improvement in the employee's self to make an adjustment with other cultures.

Most researchers agreed on the positive effects of CCT on intercultural adjustment (Österdahl, 2009). The CCT has been implemented by many organizations to help their employees to successfully adapt and be comfortable with the others' culture during the implementation of their assignment. Caligiuri, Lazarova, & Tarique (2005) pointed out that cross-cultural training aims at helping employees to feel comfortable both in living and working in the host country, thus enhancing their cross-cultural adjustment and strengthening their ability to understand and appreciate multiple cultural perspectives. Obviously, by virtue of the CCT training, the employees will not faced any problems in dealing with future cultural differences. Hypothesis 5 (H5), examined whether communication system will lead to conflict in cross-cultural communication. Communication system is the most crucial element in the transfer of international knowledge. In the organization, they can choose the best communication system to disseminate their information to all their employees. Communication comes into two forms, formal and informal. Formal communication will process the interchange of information by officials. Basically, the employee will communicate according to the organizational relations only. Meanwhile, the informal communication will be more relaxed and with no protocol between the employees.

Subramanian (2006) claims that informal communication appeared in people due to array of reasons, proximity, perception of each other as a reliable or knowledgeable member, friendship and trust. Communication system can also be influenced by the structure of the organization. Here, the communication system can be affected by the cultural differences. He & Liu (2010) and referring to Ouchi (1977), argued that

communication system of an organization is influenced by the structure of the organization. Ergen (2011) and referring to Housel and Davis (1997), defined upward communication as being the process of transmitting information from the lowest to the top level in an organization. On the other hand, downward communication implies the adequate amount of information passed from managerial levels to the lowest level of the organization. Ergen (2011) and referring to Goris et al., (2000) concluded that these types of communication affect job performance and job satisfaction. From previous researches, strong relationship holds between communication system and cross-cultural communication in an organization (He & Liu, 2010). However, based on this study, there was a negative relationship between the communication system and cross-cultural communication, where the analysis found out that there was no significant effect (sig. T = 0.568) on the cross-cultural communication in the organization.

The communication system did not affect the cross-cultural communication because in an organization, both formal and informal communication were feasible. So, there was not much affect on the employees satisfaction and performance. At the organization levels, both formal and informal communication have been used during the flow of information process. Obviously, communication system will not affect the workplace because nowadays, organizations have been more open and fair in using both formal and informal communication to increase their productivity. Mudiganti (2011) discovered that apart from the formal communication structures in a workplace, it has also a very ripe informal structure or grapevine, which is not encouraged overtly but playing a very important part in the communication network.

Implication of the Findings

Researchers have discovered factors that can be barriers to effective cross-cultural communication in the organization. The result of this research can create awareness within any organization that cultural differences can affect the effectiveness of communication in their management. This is because cultural differences could result in highly potential conflicts in organizational workplace if these are not addressed earlier. Conflicts that could develop by virtue of having the cultural differences are miscommunication, misunderstanding and misinterpretation. With different social background, they would not be aware and fully understand each other's cultures. By investigating barriers in cross-cultural communication, the researchers can identify the exact problems in the workplace with diversified workforces. After going through an in-depth study of this topic, the manager will be more aware on the importance of knowing and understanding other cultures as well.

Culture can influence day-to-day activity in terms of decision making, action, attitude and perception. Having a workforce diversity at the workplace, can affect job satisfaction, productivity and organization's profitability. From a practical standpoint, building an awareness of both visible and invisible manifestations of culture, is an important first step in determining how to manage this key institutional resource (Lillis & Tian, 2010). This clearly shows that as a first step, a manager should take time and effort

to learn about the differences of the communication and the cultures at the workplace. From this, the organization can make some improvement by developing proper and efficient communication processes to encourage high team performance across the cultural differences.

Recommendations

Based on the results shown in Chapter 4, Section 4.5, it can be summarized that only one independent variable, the multinational firm communication, was found to be significant as barrier to the cross-cultural communication. Meanwhile, the dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communication, language and communication system variables were found to have insignificant effects on the cross-cultural communication. Multinational firms usually do not allocate resources to conduct any research on their new plant cultures. They simply open new plants or premises without fully understanding the host country's cultures and styles. In the long run, these multinational firms will face various differences and conflicts, especially in the dimensions of national cultures. Some companies prefer to be on low power distance orientation, whereas they have opened new plants in the countries which prefer to use high power distance orientation. Ultimately, it will give rise to conflicts between parent manager and host managers. In order to avoid business failures, the parent company needs to understand and adapt to the host country's culture. At the same time, they can make some innovation by choosing the best management styles to conduct their business. This is because by adapting the host country's culture, the employees will be more comfortable with doing their job, thereby increasing job satisfaction and performance.

Limitations of Research

This study has its own limitations because the results of the findings may be biased, as the data obtained may not be adequately represented or totally distributed to the correct respondents. This sample was limited to the electronic based companies only. In addition, the questionnaires were randomly distributed to the respondents, limiting the sample sizes of the respondents, as the majority of respondents were operators only. This group has an influence on the social and personal factors as well and may not be serious enough in completing the questionnaires to counter these effects.

Suggestions for further research

This study has been designed to elucidate the barriers of cross-cultural communication by employees in electronic based companies. These problems have been faced by companies that have workforce diversity especially in multinational companies. In addition, the sample company typically has a problem with the cultural differences in the workplace. Through this analysis, the researchers can conclude that some companies do not conduct any research on cross cultures, even though they have a responsibility to ensure cooperation with the individuals that come from different cultures. This problem typically exists during the cross-cultural management. Hopefully, this study can change

the manager's mindset so as to be more aware and be flexible in helping them face this kind of problems.

Managers need to understand the other's cultures very well to ensure that they can manage their employees efficiently, indirectly increasing their job satisfaction. From there on, the employees will be more motivated and can improve their performance, thereby increasing productivity of the organization. To ensure that they can achieve their goals, organization needs to change their business strategy by changing their business structures and cultures. Subsequent to this, the employees can enhance their abilities, skills and knowledge. The organization should implement empowerment in their management to encourage their employees to give full commitment and contribution to the organization. This is because the employees will be more comfortable to give their full commitment in completing their tasks because they will feel that they are being appreciated by their organization.

Conclusion

This study shows that multinational firm communication very significantly influences the cross-cultural communication in a diversified workplace. Other factors such as dimensions of national cultures, high and low context communication, language and communication system have no apparent influence on the cross-cultural communication. This study suggests that in order to manage the workforce diversity, a manager need to be aware and to fully understand the other cultures as well. The employees will be more motivated and be able to achieve job satisfaction. When managers are able to comprehend an organizational environment with varied cultures, it will be easier for them to make cultural adjustment to solve conflicts arising thereof.

Managers need to be trained by professional anthropologists to ensure they are highly sensitive to any cultural differences. Nowadays, anthropological studies on cultures have been widely applied in various fields in the business world. It helps train the managers to be more effective in understanding of cross-cultural issues in the communication. Communication becomes more effective when there are some interactions between managers and their employees. This is because managers can understand their employees' needs and wants. Thereafter, they can manage their employees easily. Giving some empowerment to their employees can increase the latter's job satisfaction and performance. However, the managers still need to monitor their employees closely to avoid from abuses of power among their employees.

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