



University of Wales, Trinity Saint David

Coursework: Individual Essay

Module Name: International Business Communications

Module Code: LCBB6001

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Introduction

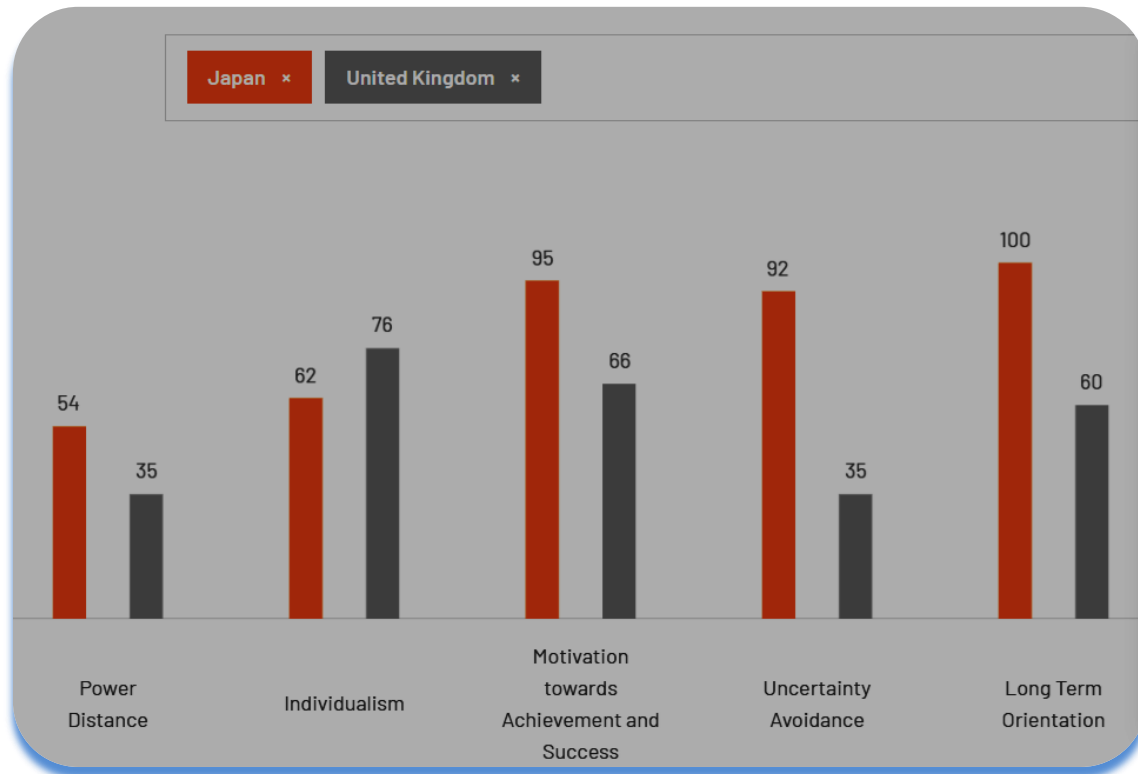
With the advent of rapid economic and technological changes, companies must meet the demand of a modern globalized world. The efforts of different organisations to expand the business ventures across different countries requires the enhancement of business communication (Khan *et al.*, 2024). The various styles of communication, electronic, written and various others help in developing trust and in the proper flow of information. The establishment of an effective communication system in business, helps in mitigating conflicts and gathering the attention of various stakeholders like new employees and customers. This helps in the establishment of a successful business venture. Various barriers might exist in establishing international business communication. Primarily language and culture gaps might initially be difficult to imbibe. Technological advancements vary between different countries and organizations. Organisations planning to expand business ventures in different countries might strive to conduct research on the cultural aspects and organise various training programs to provide insights to new employees regarding the aims of the organisation and the culture of the organisation. Organisations also use the Hofstede model of culture to determine the effects of culture on a business organisation.

Overview of the company - Octopus Energy Group

Octopus Energy Group is a British renewable energy company that operates in multiple countries and is involved in many aspects of energy. Additionally, Octopus Energy Group invests in, builds, and manages renewable energy projects, including solar energy and offering the cheapest deals to its customers. Furthermore, they have invested £150 million in research into low-carbon energy through the Centre for Net Zero to give their customers the lowest variable tariff in the UK (octopus.energy, 2024). In addition to this, an organisation that partnered with Japan energy's manufacturing companies to create a unique global technology ecosystem across the world. Moreover, they stand for 100% green power which makes it valuable to the UK's businesses. Their mission has to create and transform energy businesses into sustainable businesses. As a result, they make energy clean and simple where clients use its services at affordable prices.

Analyzing cultural differences between the UK and Japan using Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

The cultural differences between Japan and the UK can be figured out with the help of Hofstede's cultural dimensions:



Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

The power distance score of Japan is 54, the individuals within Japanese societies tend to follow an organised structure of hierarchies, therefore the distribution of power distribution tends to be unequal (Taoka, Kagohashi and Mougenot, 2021). Several studies have indeed reported high expressivity of Japanese people in terms of hierarchical relationships.

The decision-making process of business organisations established in Japan tends to be slow. Japanese society is meritocratic, therefore focusing on excellence and being hardworking. Whereas the rank of the UK in power distance is 35, the British society strives towards reducing the inequalities that exist between different hierarchies, this leads to swift decision-making due to the flat structure of most of the organisations. The low power distance characteristics of the UK

establish a sense of flexibility within the society. The score of Japan for the individualism dimension is 62, Japan tends to follow collectivism, the workforce within the society tends to emphasize teamwork and collaboration, this also helps in the enhancement of belongingness and family values. The workforce of Japan tends to maintain loyalty and are very unlikely to leave an organisation. The organisations within Japan usually follow the honeybee approach of leadership which helps in emphasising on sustainable practices and aims at fulfilling long term goals. The score of the UK in individualism is 76, the society of the UK tends to be individualistic. The workers of the UK focus on improving their performances and development, they also emphasise on the importance of independence and privacy. Society is usually competitive. The score of Japan in the aspect of Motivation towards success and achievement is 95 (Chen, Lake and Padilla, 2021). Japan can be considered to be a decisive society; the workforce of Japan is usually motivated and understand the importance of trade policies that exist within the society. The society also possesses a sense of competitiveness, wherein the focus of every individual is to strive for excellence. The society is workaholic. One of the negative aspects of Japanese society is gender inequality, the working hours of the organisations operating in Japan is high. The score of the UK for motivation towards success and achievement is 66, the emphasis on self-compassion by British society enhances the growth of the workers and induces motivation (Bohórquez *et al.*, 2021). The decision-making process of British society is swift. British society might seem to be similar in terms of decisiveness, however the working hours of the organisations of the UK are not that stringent. Japan scores 92 in avoiding uncertainties. Society tends to be familiar with vague and unstructured situations that are unstructured. The society has battled with various natural calamities; therefore, the society strives to have a plan B for emergencies. The society is renowned for its predictability, the workforce of Japan abide by rules and regulations to avoid uncertain situations (Astvansh *et al.*, 2023). However, the UK tends to have a low score of 35 in the case of avoiding uncertainty. The workforce of the UK tends to adapt to unfamiliar situations. The risk-taking abilities of the UK is high in order to enhance the potential of improving business ventures in the future, British society tends to encourage an inclusive ambience and informal communication processes. The long-term orientation score of Japan is 100 (Gallego-Álvarez, and Pucheta-Martínez, 2021), therefore the workforce of Japan tends to be futuristic, the social belief of task division and team management helps in achieving goals, the constant perseverance proves to be advantageous for the organisation. The score of the UK in long term orientation is 60, the practical thought procedure of

the UK society might help the workers in taking actions according to the systems. Japan has a low score of 42 in case of indulgence due to the pessimistic nature of the society and less importance to leisure, the score of UK in case of indulgence is 69, as the society tends to emphasize leisure.

Assessing Differences in Communication Styles in the UK and Japan

As per the opinion of De Leon (2021), cultural differences in communication basically can be defined as the variations in how people communicate with each other from multiple cultures within different places to interact with each other. As a result, different communication styles such as passive, aggressive, and assertive communication can be characterised by how a person transfers their feelings, thoughts, and opinions to another. Additionally, communication is affected by different factors such as cultural and social conventions, genders and social roles and environment and language medium respectively. In addition to this, individuals come from different cultures and traditions which can be seen in their body language and their behaviour. These aspects impact communication styles. Moreover, different languages are key agent in the transmission of information and knowledge about cultural and social values.

Furthermore, the UK belongs to a low-context culture that focuses on indirect communication and avoids conflict by suggesting their meanings of sentences. On the other hand, Japan comes from a high context culture where the communication processes are direct. Besides these, formal language is desirable in business communication to avoid misunderstandings in information. (Traylor *et al.*, 2021). These formal lounges make British people polite and reserved, and through stress protocol. On the other hand, Japanese people often use mysterious language, polite terms, and hesitation to avoid direct refusals and negative responses. In Japan, people can break eye contact with no reaction. Additionally, people may smile to show politeness and niceness in the UK.

Implication of Cultural Differences in Communication

Cultural differences in communications can have a lot of implications like misunderstandings, conflict attitude, information delivery and negotiation respectively (Higgins *et al.*, 2022). This means if people might fail to get the understanding of cultural differences, the circumstances like misunderstanding, conflict or tension can occur. For example, if people communicate with each other who come from different cultures then effective communication can be even more difficult to understand. Additionally, when people are not aware about cultural and tardind differences, it can lead to an imbalance in contribution between native and non-native parties in conversations.

From business perspectives, it might be taken as a serious block area as customers could be misinterpreted while discussing the products or services and this could restrict the business growth. In addition to this, people from the UK and Japan follow different cultures and traditions where they use different words, gestures, phrases, and language to express their feelings and thoughts. In this context, the business faces challenges in the area of ineffective marketing strategies and which impact on healthy business strategy. Additionally, language differences in communication might impact productivity which is responsible for working well together (Wang *et al.*, 2021). As a result, the UK and Japan follow totally different languages which can lead significance to build trust and support with business partners. Moreover, organisations may face challenges in building relationships within new customers where they want to expand business.

Cultural Challenges to be faced by British Business for expansion in Japan

The different style of communication depends on the location's cultural and social aspects which can lead to difficulties for others to understand and communicate to avoid misunderstanding. Additionally, British business is facing many barriers such a language barrier, consumer preferences, and hiring and retaining talents respectively. As per the opinion of Mamajanova and Yu (2022), a language is a system of verbal and nonverbal speaking where individuals use symbols and signs to transform their thoughts and knowledge to communicate effectively. In addition to this, almost 123 million people speak Japanese among the Japanese diaspora which is the national language of Japan. On the other hand, English is a native language across the UK with 52.6 million people who use this language (statista.com, 2024). In addition, all the consumers in Japan are well acquainted with the Japanese language but this Octopus Energy Group is unable to use these languages not well which can create communication problems between the buyers and the marketers. For this reason, the organisation has faced challenges in converting brand messages and marketing contents effectively. Additionally, consumer preferences are known as the choices and demands of people during buying products and services, based on their likes, dislikes, and other factors such as lifestyle and behaviours (Thiele *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, Octopus Energy Group has faced challenges in understanding Japanese people's expectations which has an impact on organisational decision-making process which led to complex social etiquette and business protocol. From the viewpoint of Alexander *et al.* (2021), employees are the workforce of an organisation who are responsible to work within the hierarchy structure of the company to achieve organisational goals. As a result, this organisation needs to understand Japan's employment

practices and their expectations to attract and retain top talent within the Japanese market. Moreover, talented staff has helped Octopus Energy Group to meet Japanese consumers where they expect new companies to provide unique services based on consumers preferences.

Discussing strategies to mitigate drawbacks of communication and evoking a good work environment

A positive environment is the workplace of a company and organisation where employees feel valued and importance's which help industry to be more productive in work (Luthans and Broad, 2020). Additionally, many strategies to mitigate the drawbacks of communication and enhance an effective work environment. Its strategy includes getting feedback, using communication tools, conducting a communication audit and understanding the audience respectively. Besides these, organisations can use easy and native languages to avoid partial communication which helps to communicate face to face without hesitation. According to Bar *et al.* (2023), getting feedback from employees is a technique of understanding staff expectation and their problems within the workplace to resolve conflict in misunderstanding. Additionally, Octopus Energy Group might gather information about their employees within the Japan market through asking questions about difficulties faced while working, thus the organisation can use Japanese staff practices and regulations. Moreover, this business has the responsibility to analyse customers' needs and fulfil them through providing compression packages and increasing salaries when employees will do their best and it will also help to enhance workplaces.

As per the opinion of AlAfnan *et al.* (2023), communication tools are the digital platforms which help businesses to communicate with panthers and workforces without going to a physical location at any time. Additionally, its tools such as Zoom, Slack and Gmail respectively. Furthermore, these tools will allow businesses to collaborate with their stakeholders and shareholders in effective manners. In addition to this, it helps to improve engagement with the team with the video call, chat, and audio for transforming information without misunderstanding. Moreover, these tools make it easy to share file and commercial information of the organisation without any misleading the file. Furthermore, Octopus Energy Group can conduct a communication audit which will help to understand the target audiences in Japan. Thus, the organisation can help this business to increase awareness of barriers to perception of consumers. Although, advanced technology such as project management software and messaging platforms has helped businesses to focus on

nonverbal communication signals, emotional intelligence, and empathy which has helped staff to build confidence and improve team engagement. Moreover, leveraging technology has the right way to improve workforce better using smartphones and technical machines within the team work which help to reduce overload work. Additionally, tools provide security and safety of organisation's employees information from cyber-attacks.

Recommendation for expanding British business

In order to expand the business in Japan, the organisation might strive to establish transformational leadership. The organisation might strive to improve the non-verbal communication system and means of negotiation. Japanese society tends to abide by sustainability practices; therefore, the expansion of Octopus Energy group might be feasible. The organisation might design different interactive training programs, which will help mitigate the communication and cultural gaps between the societies. The organisation might incorporate feedback from the workforce of Japan, which will help the organisation in researching cross-cultural aspects of business (Alipour and Yaprak, 2022). Octopus Energy group might also implement a shared value strategy of business, this will help the organisation in connecting with the community, the organisations might improve the productivity of the organisation with the help of various innovations, like social and environmental. Incorporating shared value will also help the organisation in mitigating various losses involved in the business.

Conclusion

From the above study, it has been described that communication is one of the variables that play an important role in developing knowledge and capabilities, particularly in the post-merger stage, and in educating, training, knowledge transfer, and learning in cross-cultural management situations. Additionally, cultural differences in communication in different places for the transmission of information and knowledge with each other have been explained in this essay. In addition to this, people from the UK and Japan follow different cultures and traditions to build trust and support with business partners has been analysed in this study. Furthermore, Octopus Energy Group has faced challenges such as branding messages and marketing effectively through language barriers. The Hofstede model of culture helps organisations identify the different behaviour and cultural characteristics of different societies. Expanding the business venture across Japan might be feasible for Octopus Energy Group due to the tendency of the society to accept innovative ideas.

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