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**Assessment 1**

**Student's Name: Desislava Yordanova**

**Student ID: 1912503**

**Lecturer' Name: Husam Alharahshen**

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## 1. Introduction

International business can be regarded as the method of trading goods or services across the countries and borders from one country to another and from one part of the world to another. The business organisations that trade across the border and in different areas of the world make use of international marketing strategies to gather large numbers of consumers from all across the world. This is the reason why communication is an important aspect in enhancing and establishing the relation with the consumers settled in international locations with the help of distribution and supply chain networks. Marks and Spencer is an international of the United Kingdom that is established in the UK falls under the retail industry and has been successful in serving people with the best quality service for over more than 138 years (Marks and Spencer, 2022). The company was built by Michael Marks and Thomas Spencer. The company has more than 78,000 employees who are continuously working and managing various organisational processes of Marks and Spencer in an efficient way which has influenced the development and growth of the company in a drastic way. Apart from these aspects, the company assists the employees is going through various training and development programs which assist them in providing efficient quality services to the consumers. The aim of the report is to define international business as well as communication by taking the example of Kenya in which the company wants to expand its business by using various communication and international business strategies which will influence the overall development and growth of the business in a positive manner. Cultural differences using the Hofstede model and the cultural sensitivity of the company will be discussed. Along with communication barriers and challenges followed by communication strategies and recommendations.

## 2. Introduction to Kenya

Kenya is a country located in Eastern Africa. Kenya is estimated to be the 48th largest country in terms of area with 580,367 square kilometres. The Capital city and largest city is Nairobi. In the 2019 census, it was found that Kenya has a population as more than 47.6 million (Arego, 2020). Kenya ranks in the 29th position of the most populous country in the world. The culture of Kenya has quite multiple traditions, customs as well as trends. Kenya specifically does not have a single prominent culture which identifies them. The country's cultural heritage as well as modern expression of the culture rather contains several cultures,

moulded and practised by the different communities of the country. However, Kenya has great and brilliant ethnic diversity as a lot of the country's ethnic communities are of Bantu origins. The largest ethnic group in Kenya is regarded as the Kikuyu people. The two official languages of Kenya are Swahili and English. A lot of people speak Kikuyu as their major regional language in Kenya. There are 85.5% of the population follow Christianity in Kenya (Droz and Gez, 2021). Uhuru Kenyatta is the serving president of Kenya serving since 2013. The total GDP of Kenya in 2021 was estimated to be \$333.268 billion. Moreover, the Currency used in Kenya is the Kenyan shilling. The economy of Kenya is regarded as a market-based economy. Most of the industries in Kenya include agriculture, fishing, forestry, mining and manufacturing. Until the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country, Kenya became a rapidly rising and growing economy in the whole of Africa. With A GDP of almost \$95 billion, the country Kenya has recently reached the status of lower-middle income and has been successful in establishing a diverse as well as dynamic economy. Kenya is regarded as one of the most advanced technology as well as innovation locations in Africa. The innovation and evolution of large scale telecommunication infrastructure in Kenya have been regarded as quite an advancement in technology development. Moreover, the integration of technology in Kenya has moved a notch higher. People with age 25-29 years are the largest contributor to Kenya's labour force in 2020. Approximately 3.3-3.4 million Kenyans of this particular age range are recently employed (Statista, 2022). Some are unemployed but are seeking for work as well as unemployed but are up to work. People who are aged between 30 to 40 years, an estimated 3.3 to 3.4 million of them are in the same condition. The overall young age group of Kenya ranging from 15-29 years accounts for 40 per cent of the country's whole workforce. Moreover, the rate of unemployment in Kenya rose to 6.5 per cent in the first three months of 2021 (Statista, 2021). Kenya has sufficient land area which is devoted to the habitat of wildlife. Kenya is regarded as a hot country and it faces a great amount of sunshine every month. Kenya is regarded as one of the fastest-growing companies in Africa both economically and technologically.

### **3. Cultural differences**

The cultural difference between Kenya and the United Kingdom can be understood efficiently through Hofstede's cultural dimension.

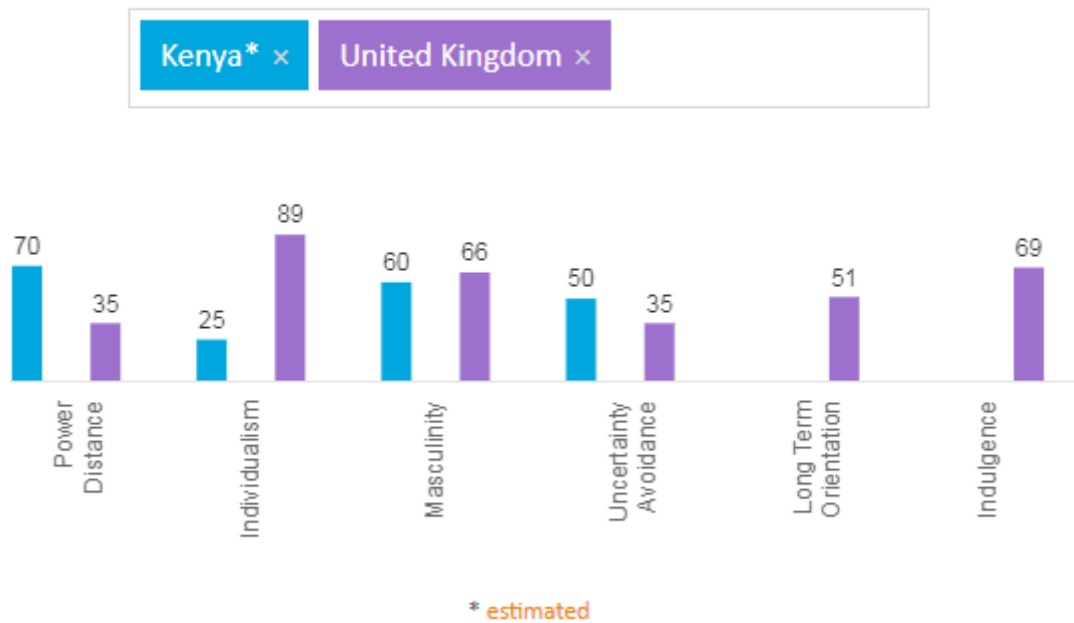


**Figure 1: Hofstede cultural dimension**

(Source: Hofstede Insight, 2022)

**Power Distance**- with a score of 70 reflects that Kenya has a hierarchical society. it implies that individuals do agree with the hierarchical structure in which the people are placed. The inherent inequalities are reflected by the hierarchy in the organisation, moreover, centralisation is quite popular. The subordinates are told to do so, however, the boss is a benevolent autocrat. At the power distance, Kenya ranks higher than the UK which is at 35. Which implies that people are treated more equally in the UK (Hofstede Insight, 2022)?

**Individualism**- with a score of 25 in this area, Kenya is regarded as a collective society. Loyalty in the collectivist society is most significant. The community highly fosters strong relationships in which everyone steps up to take the duty as well as responsibility for the group member. With a score of 89, the UK is considered an Individualist society; people look after their well-being and take care of the direct member of the family only. (Dhaundiya *et al.*, 2020).

**Masculinity**- a higher score in this regard shows that society is more concerned as well as accelerated through success, competition and achievement. According to a high score of 60, Kenya is hence regarded as a “Masculine society”. The people strive to be the best as much as they can. In this dimension, Kenya ranks lower than the UK as the UK scores at 66. They are more proud of their achievements as well as success in their life. The major motive is to win.

**Uncertainty Avoidance-** this has to deal with the method in which the society will deal with the future and the fact that the “future can never be known”. Whether people can try to control the future or let it just happen (Hofstede Insight, 2022). With the score of 50, it reflects that the level to which the people of the cultural experience is under the threat of the uncertain situation and has generated beliefs as well as institutions to ignore these is shown in the uncertainty avoidance. In this dimension, the UK ranks lower than Kenya at 35.

**Long Term Orientation-** it demonstrates how the society has to manage and handle the relationship with the past as well as going on with the hurdles of the present as well as of the upcoming years. There is no relevant rank for Kenya in this regard; this implies that Kenya prefers to maintain the time-honoured norms and traditions (Hofstede Insight, 2022). Moreover, the UK takes a more pragmatic dimension as they motivate thrift as well as effort in modern education to prepare for the upcoming years.

**Indulgence-** is identified as the level to which individuals attempt to control their desire, control and impulse based on the manner they have been raised. There is no score for Kenya in this dimension however the UK scores at 69 which means that it has higher indulgence.

#### 4. Cultural sensitivity

Respect is the most integral part of successfully dealing with business in Kenya (Stevens and Newenhm-Kahindi, 2021). This implies that while greeting people who are of higher rank in the business environment it is a symbol of showing respect to lower the eyes and assist the right forearms with that of a left hand while greeting or shaking hands. It is also followed by the general asking about the person’s well-being and about their family as well as business. Rushing this greeting process is regarded as poor etiquette in Kenya. Hence businesses who want to shift their operation to Kenya must adhere to this. Kenya as a country is not too strict with the cultural dimension however; a little thing can offend them highly. Thus it is significant to stick to their cultural customs, tradition and norm so that respect and dignity are maintained. The cultural values which impact the mindset and behaviour of the people of Kenya are generosity, respect, honesty and peace (Mutua and Kiruhi, 2021). In the business aspect education level is greatly termed as important in the Kenyan business setting. Irrespective of one's own expertise, the individual who has higher qualifications will be more respected and acknowledged by other people.

A lot of Kenyan businesses have great significance in corporate social responsibility. This emerges from contributing and donating to the local community as well as environmental

projects as well as to promote the Kenyan culture. Efforts made to help the Kenyan company in its pursuit of corporate social responsibility will be greatly appreciated by them. It is common to experience and find nepotism in the Kenyan business thus; Marks and Spencer who would like to shift their operation here to Kenya will have to face it. Thus, while doing business in Kenya, One must adhere to the social and cultural norms laid by them and follow them thoroughly.

## 5. Communication barriers and challenges

Operating in Kenya brings in wide opportunities as well as challenges for the business. The communication barrier and challenges are:

**Language barrier-** Kenya is a country that has its own language which is Swahili (Nassenstein, 2019). The wide number of people speak this language in the country as it is their official language. While doing business the company will face great barriers in communication such as speaking a different language. As English is most widely used in the UK, people may face difficulties in understanding it. The business of the UK will mostly find it difficult to operate in Kenya as there is quite a vast difference in language spoken. While recruiting and dealing with the employees the workers may face challenges in coping with the agendas as well as what actually is happening in the business. Moreover, the cultural difference restricts the free flow of communication among the business and people of Kenya.

**Physical barrier-** physical barrier can heavily hinder the process of communication in Kenya (Ireru *et al.*, 2020). As the company is considering moving its own production to Kenya, the communication between the UK and Kenya can highly be disturbed by geographical location as well as long physical distance. The process of communication can be slowed down too.

**Psychological barrier-** this barrier arises because of the emotional barrier among the people. This barrier can lead to fear of sharing ideas from one person to another. Moreover making wrong assumptions regarding the people of Kenya can lower the efficiency as well as communication.

## 6. Communication strategies and recommendations

There are several communication strategies as well as recommendations that assist can assist in enhancing the communication in Kenya

It is quite significant to embrace and know the difference between the culture, tradition, lifestyle and language of the new location. Embracing the diversity of Kenya will help companies in being viable in the Kenyan market.

Using technical devices as well as digital software on the Smartphone can assist in making small communication (Watson *et al.*, 2021). Digital applications such as Google Translator will be termed as a viable option for the employee as they can communicate with the help of it at the starting phase of the business.

Kenyan employees must actively and with patience in a clear manner to overcome any problem and error as well as miscommunication. One may just focus more on listening rather than speaking this will lead to better communication and reduce the gap between the communication flows.

If one faces difficulties in verbal form communication they can choose and go for the non-verbal form of communication or written form in order to keep a record of the communication as well as facilitate better communication in the company (Arsenijevic *et al.*, 2018).

Offering a language training program in Marks and Spencer can be regarded as a great communication strategy. It is significant to know the primary languages well as basic terms of the language of Kenya in which Marks and Spencer want to operate.

Moreover, it is significant to be more precise and informative while communicating, the sentence must also be precise and concise, and it should be as such that it is understandable by both the parties.

It is important to reduce the communication barrier like physical barriers, language barriers, status barriers and so on through certain measures to mitigate the challenges of communication problems.

Utilising the right channel of communication is recommended to the individual and the business coming to Kenya to do the business.

Making and utilising an efficient marketing strategy and social media can assist Mark and Spencer in being viable in Kenya (Simiyu, 2021).

## 7. Conclusion

It can be concluded that Kenya has the fastest growing economy in Africa. As a result, the purpose of this report is to define international business and communication by using the example of Kenya, where a company wants to expand its business by employing various

communication and international business strategies that will positively impact the company's overall development and growth. The Hofstede model will be used to analyse cultural differences, as well as the company's cultural sensitivity. This indicates that people accept the hierarchical framework in which they find themselves. Communication difficulties and challenges are discussed, as well as communication tactics and solutions. It was found out that Kenya is the only country with its own language, Swahili. This is the official language of the country, and it is spoken by a large number of people. As the corporation is considering shifting its own production to Kenya, the communication between the UK and Kenya can be severely hampered by geographical distance and significant physical distance. Individuals and businesses going to Kenya to conduct business are advised to use the appropriate communication channels.

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