
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

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Introduction

The curriculum of this course encompasses diverse facets of business communication, encompassing interpersonal communication, designations, semantic subtleties, and cultivating associations to promote proficient affiliations (Veltsos, 2017). The act of engaging in a dialogue with an unfamiliar person can be perceived as intimidating due to the cultural norms and expected conduct that are prevalent in British society. Business communication refers to the process of distributing information both internally within an organisation and externally to other entities. Efficient communication between management and employees is crucial for achieving organisational objectives within the workplace. The aim is to improve the efficiency of organisational processes and minimise inaccuracies. Business communication refers to the process of sharing information between employees and external entities. Effective communication is a crucial element for both employees and management to establish a connection, with the ultimate goal of achieving organisational objectives. The aim is to enhance operational processes and minimise the frequency of errors.

Organisational Overview

Tesco plc is a global company headquartered in the United Kingdom that focuses on the retail of both food and non-food products. The company's corporate headquarters is situated in Welwyn Garden City, England, with a specific geographical location. As of 2011, the organisation is third globally in gross sales and ninth in terms of incomes. The retails of the company are located in various countries including the United Kingdom, Ireland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. The case presently being discussed holds a prominent position within the business industry of food and household goods in the United Kingdom. In the early 1990s, Tesco pursued international expansion, resulting in the establishment of its operations in eleven additional worldwide countries. The company under consideration disengaged from the U.S.A. in the year 2013. However, expansion in other regions has been observed in 2018.

Hofstede's Theory

Tesco has frequently employed the Hofstede cultural model and its various dimensions. The organisational culture of Tesco is representative of the broader international and global

culture that the company espouses. This culture is also enforced and practised internally throughout all of its varied locations and offices.

1. Power Distance Index

The notion of power distance concerns the degree and scope of inequality among individuals and groups within an organisation, as determined by their respective levels of power. This inequality is widely recognised by the general public. Tesco exhibits a corporate culture that is marked by a tendency towards low power distance across a wide spectrum. Tesco's organisational structure is characterised by a relatively low number of hierarchical levels, indicating a flat hierarchy (Allan, 2022). The adoption of a less hierarchical organisational structure promotes increased transparency and greater managerial accessibility. Cultivating a perception of trust and a feeling of belongingness among employees has the potential to augment their drive to attain peak levels of productivity. The level of social interaction that an individual engages in can be influenced by their proximity to a governing body, irrespective of their position in society. Individuals in the United Kingdom, where social and cultural distances are comparatively narrow, have a tendency to cultivate a restricted comprehension of the divergences in norms and values. The United Kingdom's culture is distinguished by a low power distance, wherein individuals occupying distinct roles possess the capacity to ascend to managerial positions, irrespective of their prior status as subordinates.

2. Collectivism vs Individualism

This concerns the attributes of employment responsibilities and operations within an organisation. Organisations that prioritise individualism tend to emphasise personal accomplishments, and their employees tend to exhibit a preference for engaging in competitive endeavours with one another in pursuit of shared objectives (Krummel, 2022). This endeavour is pursued with the motivation of not only attaining exceptional results but also for possible monetary gains, if relevant. Collective organisations prioritise the utilisation of teamwork and group collaboration as a means of achieving a shared goal through combined effort. Tesco maintains a balanced approach towards individualism and collectivism in its organisational culture to effectively enhance employee performance and facilitate business growth. Tesco places great importance on safeguarding the privacy of its employees, both in the professional setting and in their personal domains. The individualism index score of 89 indicates a significant degree of individualism in the United Kingdom.

British citizens demonstrate a notable tendency towards valuing privacy and individualistic tendencies.

3. Femininity Vs Masculinity

The notion of masculinity posits that ambition and achievement drive society, with success being predicated on the exceptional performance of individuals in their respective domains. The aforementioned value system begins with the attainment of scholarly accomplishments and extends to the professional path of an individual. Conversely, the notion of femininity is linked to the principles of placing a premium on the welfare of others and endeavouring to attain a higher level of living standards within a specific society. In societies that exhibit feminine traits, the acquisition of an enhanced quality of life is perceived as a positive indication of success, whereas diverging from the group is typically discouraged. This concerns the distribution of job roles and obligations among male and female employees within the organisation (Trojanowska, 2015). This implies that there is a high degree of job role overlap between male and female employees within the organisation, and that the job descriptions are not influenced by gender bias or stereotypes. The dominant organisational culture is mainly shaped by the significance attributed to the standard of living, encompassing the quality of life encountered in the work environment. The level of competition is impacted to a lesser extent by compensatory variables and perks, and to a greater extent by the inherent characteristics of the designated duties.

4. Uncertainty Avoidance

The dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance functions as an evaluative tool for assessing a given society's capacity to manage the acknowledgement of the inherent uncertainty of the future. The concept of Uncertainty Avoidance pertains to the level of unease experienced by individuals within a given society when confronted with ambiguous circumstances, and the extent to which they have developed belief systems and frameworks to mitigate such situations. Based on the score of 35, it can be inferred that the United Kingdom exhibits a relatively low degree of Uncertainty Avoidance. The statement above implies that the management strategy of the country prioritises a clear goal, streamlined procedures, and adaptable processes over insignificant particulars. The societies mentioned above exhibit a tendency towards risk reduction and prioritise the implementation of thorough risk management procedures over the encouragement of extensive innovation and creativity (Ogbeibu et al., 2018). A society characterised by lower levels of uncertainty avoidance is

marked by an increased tendency towards openness and comfort. The organisational culture of Tesco is characterised by a combination of high and low uncertainty avoidance tendencies, with a slight preference towards the latter.

5. Indulgence Vs Restraint

The ability of a person to control their impulses and desires is dependent on their upbringing. The term “indulgence” pertains to a condition characterised by a comparatively lower level of control, whereas “restraint” signifies a state marked by a relatively higher level of control. Cultures can be categorised into indulgent or restrained based on the extent of indulgence they demonstrate. The United Kingdom’s culture has been categorised as an Indulgent society, with a score of 69. The personality trait in question is characterised by a tendency towards optimism and a favourable outlook. The current cohort values leisure time greatly and gives precedence to pursuits that provide individual gratification, allocating expenses in accordance with their inclinations (Charinsarn et al., 2023). A higher score in indulgence is suggestive of a societal context that is more lenient towards the fulfilment of individual needs, desires, and well-being. On the other hand, a culture exhibiting a higher level of constraint is distinguished by adherence to established social norms and regulations. The organisational culture of Tesco is typified by a harmonious blend of two cultural orientations, with a marginal inclination towards indulgence.

6. Long Vs Short-Term Orientation

The dimension in question pertains to the varying levels of significance that distinct cultures attribute to the two fundamental objectives of maintaining historical links and tackling present-day issues. The English culture’s lack of a clearly dominant tendency is evidenced by the average score of 51. Cultures that place a higher value on long-term orientation tend to demonstrate a proclivity towards practicality and frugality. The individual demonstrates comprehension of temporally-oriented concepts that entail enduring impacts, which are widely dispersed across forthcoming temporal horizons (Brannen et al., 2017). In contrast, societies that exhibit a short-term orientation have a tendency to give precedence to principles and values that are nationalistic in nature. Tesco’s strategic direction and growth are marked by a focus on the long-term, whereas its implementation and related endeavours are predominantly influenced by a short-term outlook.

Critical evaluation of cultural sensitivity when doing business in the UK

The business culture of the United Kingdom is based on essential values of civility, decorum, self-control, and promptness. The British are known for their use of “tongue-in-cheek” and ironic humour, which they may employ in the context of conducting business (Burrows, 2015). When contrasted with numerous mainland European countries, the business culture displays a reduced level of hierarchy, wherein managers uphold a comparatively unassuming power distance. However, hierarchies continue to be definitive and have an impact on the decision-making process.

In general, hierarchical structures are employed for the implementation of decisions, although there may be a delay in their enforcement among personnel. Rather than being conveyed as suggestions, these are expressed as imperatives or guidelines that should be followed. The decision-making process usually involves a significant amount of time, and senior executives carefully consider their organization’s annual financial plan, especially before undertaking a major transaction (Bada et al., 2019). Email is a commonly utilised mode of communication among British individuals, which is often followed by more intimate forms of interaction such as face-to-face meetings and teleconferencing. It is recommended to send electronic communication directly to the designated recipient, utilising their appropriate honorific and full name, and utilising a formal tone.

The adherence to punctuality and efficient time management holds great importance in the United Kingdom. The importance of punctuality cannot be overstated, as it is recommended to arrive at the designated location promptly or even earlier than the scheduled time. The aspect of punctuality holds significant importance in the realm of professionalism. It is recommended that individuals from different countries should inform their British counterparts in case of any delays, accompanied by a valid explanation and a gesture of apology (Khan et al., 2015). Handshakes are a commonly used form of greeting among individuals of diverse genders. The individual’s mode of communication is generally characterised by brevity and confidence. Maintaining consistent eye contact during the exchange of initial greetings is typically viewed in a favourable light. It is a frequently observed phenomenon in social interactions between individuals of different genders that women are more likely to initiate the act of handshaking.

Discuss and analyse different communication barriers experienced by a diverse workforce

The ability to communicate effectively across cultures is crucial for preventing conflicts and attaining organisational objectives, as it enables individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds to engage in meaningful dialogue. Collaborating within a team composed of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds can pose various challenges, disagreements, and contentions. The challenges and conflicts have a certain impact on both the individual and organisational performance. It is imperative for businesses to devise a strategy to enhance communication within a multi-ethnic internal environment.

Misunderstanding

The primary obstacle to effective communication in a multicultural setting is the lack of shared comprehension. The existence of cultural diversity often results in varying values and beliefs among individuals (Guirdhamand Guirdham, 2017). The existence of varied cultural backgrounds has the potential to result in heightened levels of uncertainty and unease, which may ultimately lead to misunderstandings. The entire duration has been marked by a persistent misunderstanding, which can be attributed to the prevailing state of anxiety and uncertainty.

Norms and Rules

Norms are a set of regulations that are constructed socially and culturally, which determine the appropriate and acceptable conduct. Individuals independently create rules for themselves and expect others to do the same. Each cultural group has its own distinct set of norms that govern what is considered acceptable and appropriate conduct(Guirdhamand Guirdham, 2017). Individuals functioning in a multicultural environment often face challenges in understanding the traditions of diverse cultures and reacting suitably. Roles are a predetermined set of standards that are relevant to specific groups. Cultural norms play a variable role across societies, and in a team consisting of members from diverse cultural backgrounds, it is possible to observe multiple instances of role transgressions. The aforementioned phenomenon leads to increased levels of anxiety, which consequently hinders the process of communication.

Beliefs and Values

Individuals possess diverse sets of beliefs and values. The cultural background of an individual has an impact on their beliefs and values within a globalised workforce (Guirdham and Guirdham, 2017). Cross-cultural competence is essential for effective communication as it enables individuals to understand and appreciate the prevailing beliefs and values of diverse cultures.

Provide appropriate communication strategies and other relevant recommendations

Communication strategies are a set of methods utilised to convey information that is linked to a particular topic or audience. The aforementioned strategies provide a structural basis for effectively interacting with the community, stakeholders, and peers. The incorporation of intercultural communication strategies is crucial for executives involved in international business, as they participate in exchanges with individuals from varied geographical locations worldwide. In the context of international business, individuals may unintentionally commit cultural blunders as a result of insufficient knowledge of varied customs and practises. Encouraging diversity within the workplace is considered a moral and practical responsibility by successful organisations, with the goal of reducing communication barriers. The benefits encompass heightened coherence, augmented drive, and enhanced proficiency. Consequently, the workforce fosters a positive perception and cultivates a sense of interdependence amongst one another. Developing the capacity to proficiently communicate and interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds in personalised settings, various communities, and large teams is an essential element in attaining success in a multicultural environment. The presence of a varied workforce can potentially improve the overall satisfaction and efficiency of the entire staff.

Research has indicated that obtaining instruction in negotiation tactics can improve an individual's capacity to utilise language that reduces conflict in their communication. To mitigate stereotyping and offensive remarks, organisations can implement policies that prohibit behaviours that may result in feelings of marginalisation or exclusion among individuals. The implementation of protocols for acceptable conduct and the pursuit of legal action in the event of transgressions are fundamental practises of thriving organisations. Competent managers not only foster an environment in which employees are motivated to minimise interpersonal conflicts and collaborate towards accomplishing the objectives of the organisation, but also facilitate the cultivation of a fruitful corporate ethos. In professional

settings, the implementation of managerial practises plays a crucial role in fostering collaborative performance among employees during social interactions.

Conclusion

It is crucial for corporations to have a comprehensive grasp of the current viewpoints and modes of communication. Therefore, it is likely that individuals who have counterparts possess the ability to engage in more effective communication and cultivate long-lasting relationships in cross-cultural business situations. Hofstede's Six Dimensions of Culture are subject to the impact of societal and environmental factors that contribute to an individual's upbringing. The six qualities encompass individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. The list of dimensions comprises six elements, namely indulgence, long-term orientation, and power distance. A score is assigned to each dimension, indicating the degree of strength or weakness of the country's connection to that particular characteristic.

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