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1.0 Introduction

The aim of this essay is to analyse international business communication situations and challenges that British companies may face when they are trying to expand their market internationally, which in this case is South Korea. With the obvious differences when it comes to office culture, language and the market behaviour, British companies are bound to face some challenges while expanding their market globally. Culture impacts individuals' values, beliefs and behaviour on how they communicate through their work relationship. Culture is an important component in business, especially in an international context where employees will be meeting other people from different cultural backgrounds (Tarner, 2023). This essay will cover the international business situations, the difference between British companies and South Korean companies' communication style, the challenges that the company faces, and will cover the strategies on how British companies could evaluate and overcome those challenges to avoid any miscommunication that may occur during the process of expanding the market.

2.0 Main Findings

2.1 International Business Situations

International business has become important in the business world. Whether it is by working with someone in another country or having clients that are from abroad, companies need to be able to maintain effective communication in order for the partnership to go smoothly (*The Complete Guide To International Business Communication*, 2022). Language barrier is one of the contributing factors to the company when they are trying to expand their market globally. Having employees that speak or have an understanding of the language, in this case, Hangul. British companies' employees need to learn the language to avoid any misunderstanding, since South Korea is very proud of their national language (*The Complete Guide To International Business Communication*, 2022).

International business communication is very important because it will help companies to understand and interact with other companies that have different cultural backgrounds and respecting the other culture to avoid any clash. In today's globalised era, when you are trying to expand your organisation to a country where English is not the main language being spoken, not being able to communicate with their native language can be a missed opportunity to try and attract your new market target. (*The Complete Guide To International Business Communication*, 2022). It does not matter if you are a large market or small business. If you are trying to reach a foreign market, cultural differences often cause miscommunication. British companies need to learn about South Korea's local law, customs and regulations. Being aware of potential issues might help you communicate more effectively and expand your market globally. Communications issues are frequently caused by fundamental disparities in values between culture. However, with careful preparation, skilled training, and a fundamental grasp of cross-cultural communication concepts, you may overcome these obstacles and effectively execute foreign commercial transactions (Farnen, 2019).

Depending on which region in South Korea you are trying to expand in, understanding their local culture is important, since having regional dialects in South Korea is very common, some slangs are not as acceptable, what might seem acceptable in Seoul might not be in other parts of SK. Therefore understanding the different culture in South Korea, whether it is the market, consumer behaviour and even employees will benefit your management and the company cross-cultural business relationship will increase (*Know in detail the Top 12 challenges in international business*, 2022).

2.2 Business Communication Situation in UK and in South Korea

2.2.1 Hall's High and Low Context

In 1976, Hall proposed that there are two types of culture: high context cultures and low context cultures. The purpose of displaying differences in verbal and nonverbal communication between high and low context cultures is to call attention to these differences. High context cultures will utilise communication that uses the message's underlying context, meaning, and tone rather than just its words. High context is used in South Korea. Low-context cultures prefer communications to be presented simply to avoid misunderstanding, and communication will be limited if a message is not obvious. Leaving any room for interpretation can be disastrous in the worst-case situation. British companies use low context culture as a part of their daily cultural environment (*Communicating in high context vs. low context cultures*, 2022).

2.2.2 Trompenaars 7 Dimension to Culture

The Trompenaars 7 Dimensions to Culture is differentiated by 7 dimensions; “*universalism vs. particularism, individualism vs. communitarianism, specific vs. diffuse, neutral vs. affective, achievement vs. ascription, sequential time vs. synchronous time, and internal direction vs. external direction*” (*Trompenaars cultural dimensions – the 7 dimensions of Culture* 2021). The concept that ideas and practises may be applied wherever without modification is known as **universalism**, whereas the notion that conditions define how ideas and practises should be implemented is known as **particularism**. High universalism cultures view one world and emphasise on regular principles, whereas high particularism cultures regard reality as more subjective and place a strong premium on connections (Prayoga et al., 2020). South Korea uses particularism because they favour a great relationship in the organisation as for the United Kingdom, they favour universalist culture (*Trompenaars' Model of National Culture Differences*, 2020).

Individualism means that people are more likely to make negotiated decisions on the spot by a representative, accomplish things alone, and assume great personal responsibility, whereas in Korea and the United Kingdom, where **communitarianism** is high, people value group-related issues, refer decisions to committees, accomplish things in groups, and jointly assume responsibility (*Trompenaars' Model of National Culture Differences*, 2020). When individuals are **neutral**, they are adept at managing their emotions, reason drives their actions more than their feelings, and they do not show what they are thinking or how they are feeling. **Emotional** is when individuals try to discover methods to express their feelings, even if it is spontaneous; in these societies, showing emotion is appreciated and acceptable. People in South Korea and the United Kingdom were quite silent in public, especially in business settings.

In particular, age is an important factor in recruiting in South Korea, and the usage of Korean reflects social standing. People from a **sequential** culture value and respect time when they observe a timetable or timeline for one event after another (Prayoga et al., 2020). They place a great emphasis on being on time, establishing and keeping to a timetable, and being on track. These folks cherish and respect time since it is money (Wittwer, 2019). People experience **synchronous** time when they regard the past, present, and future as interrelated. They can concentrate on numerous tasks at the same time, are more forgiving when they are late, and their ideas are more detailed (Prayoga et al., 2020).

2.3 Business Communication Challenges that British Company Faced

Every company that wants to expand their market in foreign country whose English is not their main language, in this case British companies to the South Korean market, they need to learn how to speak the language, Hangul. South Korea is very proud of their culture. Therefore, the cultural difference between British and South Korean companies is big, it can influence the intercultural communication between the two companies (Ylikortes, 2020). Two of the common challenges that British companies faced during the expansion of their market in South Korea are language barrier and the cultural difference (*5 Common Challenges of International Business*, 2020). Like any other country that does not use English as their first language, they also have very specific cultural traditions such as holidays, arts, foods and social norms that were passed down from tradition (Fabrique, 2023).

Many businesses are no longer capable of managing the resulting cultural shifts brought about by globalisation. Legal, political, technological, and economic barriers have been the focus, but cultural barriers are frequently ignored or dismissed. Ignoring these kinds of customs may result in a low or negative return of capital, missed opportunities and damaging the company's reputation and brand image, it could also lead to legal issues, decreasing productivity, and foreign issues, termination of contract and partnership (Menzies, 2015). Consumer attitudes and behaviours are heavily influenced by culture. When a firm enters a new market, its business models should be modified to match local tastes, conventions, and habits. Cultural barriers may be just as important inside a country as they are worldwide. Consumer preferences and market circumstances vary significantly among developing countries, while distinctions within countries are generally disregarded (Menzies, 2015). Four-fifths of multinational businesses, for example, believe that their offshore decision-making occurs at the country level rather than the city level. Demonstrating that you have taken the time to understand their cultures can project the respect and emotional intelligence necessary to conduct business successfully when managing teams in offices abroad, selling products to an international retailer or potential client, or running an overseas production facility (*5 Common Challenges of International Business*, 2020).

3.0 Strategy to Overcome the Challenges

The phrase "cross culture" in the business sector refers to an organisation's attempts to ensure that its personnel communicate effectively with professionals from diverse backgrounds. Similar to the word cross-cultural, it expresses a desire to bridge national, regional, and ethnic variations in manners and approaches. Cross-cultural business recognises the distinctions between businesspeople from other nations, cultures, and races, as well as the need of linking them (*Top Ten Tips for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication*, 2016). As a result of globalisation, businesses today place a high emphasis on cross-cultural education. Cross-cultural communication is becoming increasingly important as firms become more global. Many firms' efforts to extend their product markets include training personnel on how to communicate and interact effectively with individuals from various cultures (Bechervaise, 2018).

One of the most prevalent challenges while working in a multicultural team is language gaps between personnel. If everyone on your team speaks a different language, you should select a language that everyone can readily communicate in. Speaking patterns and nonverbal communication are two components of communication that are practised throughout all cultures. Nonverbal communication extends beyond words and includes gestures, facial expressions, and body language. It is critical to understand the various cultural communication styles and to follow these principles while communicating with coworkers (Kopp, 2021). For instance, since the United Kingdom is a low context culture, they tend to rely on the words themselves, where the communication is verbal and open. When there is conflict, they do not fix it straight away necessarily. South Korea is a high context culture, where they use social cues a lot. Their communication style is indirect, and if the British companies are not aware of this it can cause miscommunication (*Top Ten Tips for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication*, 2016).

South Korea's Hangul has many dialects from different regions, and they have a language hierarchy. They value formality in daily lives and more importantly in business. You have to address someone who is in a higher position by 'nim' to show respect, it is similar to calling someone by 'mr' or 'madam'. South Koreans, normally bow to people show a deep respect whereas British tend to shake hands and even a hug. In a business setting using a formal language is very important, especially when you are talking with someone who is older than you. Thus, maining a good etiquette when doing business is important to avoid any misunderstandings and miscommunication. Learning Hangul before going to South Korea is very important to get a better understanding of the country.

British sarcasm has a negative connotation on an international scale, it is something to be mindful of because it can be seen as inappropriate or even offensive to South Korean culture. They may understand the words you've said, but not their meaning or context. As a result, you risk confusing them or, worse, offending them. Many cultures believe in always conducting business properly and following protocol. As a result, they dislike it when jokes and humour are employed in business. If you do decide to utilise comedy, make certain that it will not insult anyone and that it will be understood and enjoyed in the other culture (*Top Ten Tips for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication*, 2016). Having cross-cultural training before departing to South Korea is very important to avoid all of those problems that British companies may face to a minimum, especially when South Korea is very high in culture. This training is done to build trust, effective communication and maintaining a good work etiquette to respect the South Korean culture.

4.0 Conclusion

To conclude all the statements above, it is concluded that South Korea is very rich in culture, they respect someone in a higher position and need to address them by a formal greeting. Cross-cultural training is very important to avoid any misunderstanding between the two companies because what may be seen as normal in British companies' organisational culture, it may not be seen that way by the South Korean organisational culture. Learning the local custom is very important as well, understanding how South Koreans show respect, how they address someone who is in a high position. Knowing their consumer behaviour is very important as well. Culture impacts individuals' values, beliefs and behaviour on how they communicate through their work relationship. Culture is an important component in business, especially in an international context where employees will be meeting other people from different cultural backgrounds (Tarner, 2023). One of the most prevalent challenges while working in a multicultural team is language gaps between personnel. If everyone on your team speaks a different language, you should select a language that everyone can readily communicate in (Kopp, 2021).

5.0 Recommendation

Before British companies start sending employees to go to South Korea, they need to extensively research about the market culture, the consumer behaviour, the local custom when it comes to work with foreigners. That is why cross-cultural training is very important. During the training, employees are being trained to be emotionally intelligent to know the social clues and indirect communication since South Korea is a high context culture country. They will also be given language training since South Korea does not use English as their first language. Practising a certain traditional tradition to immerse ourselves in the culture and understanding the history. Because of the cultural difference, they are bound to have challenges, to keep it at a bare minimum, British companies need to be mindful when it comes to a certain slang and humour. Different regions have their own differences when it comes to slang, humour and traditional traditions, what may be acceptable in one region does not mean it is acceptable in another. This training is done in order to prevent any misunderstanding that could affect the company's reputation and the termination of contract. Having cross-cultural training before departing to South Korea is very important to avoid all of those problems that British companies may face to a minimum, especially when South Korea is very high in culture. This training is done to build trust, effective communication and maintaining a good work etiquette to respect the South Korean culture.

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