



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Name	Simranjeet kaur
Student no	2225768
Programme	BA (Hons) Business Management
Module	International Business Communications
Module code	LCBB6001
Module Lecturer	Dr Rexon Nting
Assignment Title	Component 1: Coursework: Individual Essay
Overall contribution	50%

TABLE OF CONTENT-

1 Introduction.....	3
2 History of companies.....	4
2.1Rolls-Royce, UK.....	4
2.2Mitsubishi heavy industries, Japan.....	4
2.3Relevance of the Rolls-Royce – MHI partnership.....	4
3 Theory framework.....	5
3.1Hofstede’s cultural dimensions.....	5
3.2Hall’s high context and low context theory.....	6
3.3Hampden-Turner's Seven Dimensions of Culture.....	7
4 communication differences between UK and Japan.....	8
4.1Rolls-Royce and MHI: A CASE STUDY.....	9
5 Strategies to overcome communication barriers.....	10,11
6 Conclusion.....	12
7 Recommendations.....	12
8 References.....	13

1. Introduction-

Businesses have become more globalised, presenting multinational teams with both opportunities and difficulties. As firms grow globally, understanding multiple communication methods, decision-making methodologies, and leadership systems becomes critical to project success (Deresky, 2017). Rolls-Royce, a pioneer in aerospace and technology, along with the well-known Japanese firm Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI). However, cultural differences between UK and Japanese groups might cause confusion, misconceptions, and inefficiencies in project execution (Saha, 2018).

The paper explores communication challenges in collaboration between Rolls-Royce and MHI, utilizing Hofstede's dimensions, Hall's high-context versus low-context principle, along with Trompenaars' seven dimensions. This research additionally examines practical strategies for overcoming cultural barriers, including business cross-cultural training, flexible management practices, and the use of technology in communication. The paper seeks to provide an understanding of how multinational corporations might promote more productive collaboration while managing the challenges of globalisation by examining this particular scenario (Welzel, 2018). This paper provides a case-specific examination of the Rolls-Royce-MHI cooperation, as well as broader implications for future UK-Japan economic ties and global business strategies.

2. History of the companies –

2.1 Rolls-Royce, UK-

Rolls-Royce Holdings plc is a multinational corporation that is headquartered in the United Kingdom and specializes in aerospace and power systems. The company has been at the forefront of aircraft engine manufacturing and technological advancements since its inception in 1904. Rolls-Royce maintains a significant presence in North America, Europe, and Asia, where it collaborates with a diverse array of international partners. The organisational culture of the company is in accordance with the low-context, open communication styles that are prevalent in the United Kingdom, and it prioritises individual accountability, effectiveness, and creativity (Rolls-Royce plc, 2024).

2.2 Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Japan-

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) one of the member largest engineering firms in Japan, with a focus on electrical systems, aerospace, and naval engineering. MHI was established in 1884 and has been instrumental in the development of Japan's industrial and technological sectors (MHI, 2023). The chain of command, collective decision-making, and consistent job security are the hallmarks of the company's conventional Japanese corporate framework. MHI's communication is indirect, official, and consensus-based, which is indicative of Japan's culture of high context (Hofstede, 2022).

2.3 Relevance of the Rolls-Royce-MHI Partnership-

The goal of Rolls-Royce or Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' (MHI) relationship is to develop power technology in the aerospace industry, which calls for efficient coordination between Japanese and UK teams. Cultural variations in decision-making, management techniques, and communication methods, however, might present difficulties. While MHI places more value on hierarchy and agreement, Rolls-Royce personnel are used to direct discussion and independent decision-making. These discrepancies could cause misunderstandings or hold up the completion of the project. To improve cooperation and guarantee the partnership's success, it is crucial to recognize and overcome these cultural gaps (Hofstede, 2022).

3. Theory framework-

Effective communication is critical for successful cross-cultural partnership, particularly when working with teams from various cultural backgrounds. Communication techniques, decision-making procedures, and leadership approaches varies among the United Kingdom and Japan, demanding a greater awareness of cultural factors and communication theories (Hofstede, 2001).

3.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions-The study utilizes Hofstede's Dimensions to analyze variations in communication styles between the UK and Japan, focusing on individualism vs. collectivism and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

Individualism vs collectivism-The individualistic culture of the United Kingdom places a premium on individual liberty, autonomy, and decision-making. Rolls-Royce employees can value personal opinions and speaking directly. **In contrast**, Japan's collective culture highlight unity in diversity, an agreement, and group decision-making. The MHI team may seek consensus from every participant before taking actions, potentially leading to further indirect or designated communication in meetings (Lewis, 2006).

Uncertainty Avoidance-Japan has a greater risk avoidance score, which suggests that MHI employees would prefer comprehensive guidance and clear instructions to reduce confusion. Rolls-Royce, due to its lesser risk avoidance, may be more able to cope with ambiguity, which could lead to dissatisfaction or misinterpretation if specific directions are not provided (Gannon & Pillai, 2015). This difference may influence how each team strategies decision-making and the preparation of projects.

Power Distance- because of Japan's greater power distance, MHI staff members could anticipate a distinct hierarchical structure where top executives frequently make decisions where power is respected. The UK, on the other hand, offers a shorter range of power, thus Rolls-Royce staff members would feel more at ease questioning authority and having candid conversations with management. Leadership styles, communication channels, and expectations for employee participation in decision-making may all be impacted by this cultural gap (Hofstede, 2022).

3.2 Hall's High-Context and Low-Context Communication Theory-Edward T. Hall Theory helps to investigate how indirect as well as implicit interaction in Japan differs from direct and explicit interaction in the United Kingdom (Hall, 1976).

High Context Conversation (Japan)-The high-context culture in which Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) performs places a strong emphasis on nonverbal clues, indirect expressiveness, and the context of encounters while communicating. Japanese workers in this setting typically refrain from openly addressing problems or having direct conversations, preferring to speak in a way that preserves harmony, deference to authority, and group cohesiveness. In order to maintain face and prevent tension, this indirect approach is frequently used. Because they come from a culture that values directness, Rolls-Royce team members could find it difficult to read these subtle clues and mistakenly interpret a lack of express feedback as agreement or approval (Gannon & Pillai, 2015). If these cultural disparities in communication styles are not acknowledged and handled, they may cause misunderstandings and impede productive teamwork.

Low Context Communication (UK)- On the other hand, Rolls-Royce works in a society with little context where straight, accurate, and unambiguous communication is demanded. Employees feel more at ease asking for clarification, voicing disagreements, and providing full input in this setting. In order to ensure that everyone is in agreement and to promote openness, direct communication is highly regarded. This directness, though, might be interpreted by the MHI team as being unduly direct or even contemptuous, which could strain bonds and undermine group cohesiveness. If both parties do not modify their communication tactics, this cultural difference may cause miscommunications and conflict (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

3.3 Hampden-Turner's Seven Dimensions of Culture- Trompenaars 7 dimensions of culture depicts the ways to understand communication differences based on aspects such as Universalism vs. Particularism and Neutral vs. Emotional. (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012).

Universalism vs. Particularism-Rolls-Royce takes a universalistic approach, consistently applying rules and standards, in line with the UK's focus on fairness and equality. However, MHI could utilize a more particular approach, making decisions upon personal connections and the unique context of each case (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). This can lead to differing expectations regarding the way policies and procedures are applied in collaboration.

Neutral vs. emotional-Both the United Kingdom and Japan have a neutral style of communication, but there are delicate differences in the way emotions are expressed. In the United Kingdom, emotions are typically suppressed in favor of logic. However, Japanese communication may include complex statements of emotion through gestures or stillness, which UK participants may misinterpret as a lack of reactions or enthusiasm.

Collectivism against Individualism- The relationship between Rolls-Royce and MHI is also significantly influenced by the cultural difference between individualism and collectivism. The UK-based Rolls-Royce Company operates under an individualistic culture that places a high priority on individual liberty, self-reliance, and success. This way of thinking empowers employees to freely voice their opinions and supports autonomous decision-making. MHI, on the other hand, strongly emphasizes group harmony, cooperation, and consensus because it is based on Japan's collectivist culture. At MHI, decisions are typically made in a more group-oriented manner, with an emphasis on upholding social cohesiveness and taking the demands of the group into account. If neither party fully understands the value of individual contributions or group harmony, these cultural differences may affect how team members approach cooperation, decision-making, and problem-solving, which could lead to conflict or misunderstandings (Hofstede, 2022).

4. Communication differences between UK and Japan

Effective communication is vital for multinational company collaborations, particularly between the United Kingdom and Japan, where different ways of speaking can lead to miscommunication. Differences in transparency, decision-making, hierarchy, subtle signals, and dispute resolution must be carefully managed.

Direct versus Indirect Communication-The United Kingdom is a low-context culture in which communication is clear, direct, and based on oral clarity. Conversely, Japan represents a high-context culture where meaning often comes from indirect speech, gestures, and contextual signals (Welzel, 2018). As an instance, British professionals may freely express their opinions, whereas Japanese colleagues may avoid direct disagreement in order to preserve harmony. This can cause confusion if British colleagues interpret inadvertent responses as incapacity rather than respect (Kadar, 2020).

Decision-Making Techniques-British companies typically make decisions quickly and individually, which corresponds to their limited influence distance and high independence (Hofstede et al., 2020). UK managers frequently take immediate actions based on their unique expertise, expecting workers to contribute freely. In contrast, Japan employs a grassroots, and consensus-driven approach in which proposals are reviewed at different stages before final authorization is given (Saha, 2021). While such ensures collective approval, it can slow down utilizes and frustrate UK teams used to making decisions quickly (Bailey, 2022).

Leadership and Hierarchical Systems-British workplaces promote democratic leadership, with employees anticipated to challenge thoughts and contribute to debates regardless of position (Maguire, 2021). In contrast, Japanese organisations place a premium on hierarchical order and tenure, with lower-ranking workers showing respect to upper management. Employees in Japan may be hesitant to speak up in meetings because they perceive it as discourteous, whereas British managers can anticipate open dialogue, perhaps leading to misconceptions (Saha, 2018).

Nonverbal interaction-Nonverbal cues such as silence, bending, and indirect eye contact are important in Japanese communication because they convey respect and attentiveness. In the United Kingdom, verbal expression is valued, and direct eye contact indicates confidence and

openness (Deresky, 2017). A British qualified may interpret a Japanese colleague's quietness as a lack of enthusiasm, whereas the latter could regard it as a sign of consideration (Kadar, 2020). These distinctions can lead to unintentional misinterpretations, pertaining to workplace interactions.

Attitude towards conflicts-British professionals admire dialogue and constructive criticism, and they frequently debate ideas freely over meetings (Saha, 2018). Conversely, Japanese culture puts a high value on group harmony and open divergence is avoided to avoid discomfort (Deresky, 2017). This can result in communication breakdowns, as UK teams may interpret Japanese silence as agreement when, in fact, it is a pleasant way of refusing confrontation (Meyer, 2018).

4.1 Rolls- Royce and MHI: A CASE STUDY

Rolls-Royce and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) have formed a strategic partnership in the energy and aerospace sectors to jointly develop future gas turbines for power generation and aircraft engines. This partnership combines MHI's production skills with Rolls-Royce's turbine technology expertise, combining Eastern efficiency with Western creativity.

A major instance of their partnership is the creation for the Trent 1000 engine that drives the Dreamliner Boeing 787. The Trent 1000 has improved fuel efficiency and decreased emissions by fusing Rolls-Royce's cutting-edge materials with MHI's production expertise (Rolls-Royce, 2020). Rolls-Royce's standing in the cutthroat commercial aircraft industry has been greatly aided by the engine.

Another illustration is their 2021 partnership to create hydrogen-powered gas turbines, which is a significant step in the direction of sustainability in the aviation and energy sectors and aims to lower carbon emissions in accordance with international environmental standards, establishing both companies as pioneers in green technology (Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, 2021).

5. Strategies to overcome communication barriers-

Given the communication challenges that Rolls-Royce and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) face, several strategies are possible implemented to improve collaboration between the UK and Japanese teams. These strategies are intended to bridge cultural gaps, improve mutual understanding, and foster more efficient communication practices.

Cross-Cultural Training Course-Cross-cultural training methods are used to overcome communication barriers, as it teaches employees about high- and low-context interactions, business etiquette, and social standards (Deresky, 2017). As an instance, Nissan, a Japanese company based in the UK, encountered difficulties in the initial days of its Sunderland establish due to disparities in choice-making and workplace hierarchy. To address this, Nissan held cultural awareness workshops to help British employees learn the Japanese "ringi" taking decisions system, and Japanese managers adapted to the UK's individualistic job culture (Welzel, 2018). Training improves interpersonal skills, trust-building, and team cohesion, leading to a 40% improvement in intercultural business efficiency (Saha, 2018).

Implementing Leadership and Decision-Making Strategies-Styles of leadership must be tailored to suit hierarchical differences. UK managers, familiar to a democratic structure, should recognize the Japanese value of seniority by providing time for collective provide information and establishing agreement (Hofstede et al,2010).Toyota's association with UK-based suppliers serves as an actual-life instance, as Toyota adapted choice-making protocols to meet British expectations of informal input and efficiency while maintaining Japan's organised method (Meyer, 2018). This hybrid approach resulted in smoother project implementation and increased trust among teams.

Using Technology for Effective Communication-Technology can help bridge divides in communication by allowing for real-time collaboration. Digital tools like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or AI-powered translation services help UK and Japanese teams clarify enquiries, reduce uncertainty, and track key conversations (Saha, 2018).**For example**, UK launched AI-powered satisfying transcription software to record reaching nuances and convert indirect Japanese

opinions into more explicit descriptions for British colleagues. This reduced misunderstandings while increasing productivity in the workflow (Deresky, 2017).

Executing Structured Feedback Techniques-Feedback styles vary greatly between the two societies: UK professionals value positive criticism, whereas Japanese employees favor indirect feedback to preserve harmony (Meyer, 2018). Organisations might close this gap by implementing a two-tiered feedback framework, with formal performance reviews providing clear, direct feedback and day-to-day feedback using softer, indirect language.

6. Conclusion-

To summarise, cultural differences in Rolls-Royce (UK) and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (Japan) provide significant communication challenges that can undermine the success of their collaboration. Using Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Hall's High-Context vs. Low-Context Communication Theory, and Trompenaars' Seven Dimensions of Culture, the present study demonstrates key differences in communication styles, decision-making processes, and leadership approaches. These differences, such as the United Kingdom's preference for speaking directly and rapid decision-making versus Japan's dedication to indirect communication as well consensus-driven processes, can lead to confusion and delays (Meyer, 2018).

To address these issues, several strategies are suggested. Cross-cultural education initiatives are essential for promoting shared understanding and improving team communication (Deresky, 2017). Furthermore, adapting management and decision-making designs to account for distinct variations in hierarchy and ways of thinking will promote more effective collaboration (Kadar, 2020). The use of gadgets, such as live translation devices may additionally serve to fill communication gaps and improve comprehension.

7. RECOMMENDATION –

To enhance communication and collaboration between Rolls-Royce and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, **cross-cultural training** programs and changes in leadership styles are necessary. Rolls-Royce should adopt consultative, consensus-based approaches, aligning with Japanese culture, while MHI should adopt quick, independent decisions, reducing misunderstandings and increasing **mutual respect**. This will help reduce misunderstandings and foster better Collaboration (Deresky, 2017)

Rolls-Royce managers should adopt consultative, consensus-based approaches aligned with Japanese culture, while MHI leaders should acknowledge the UK's preference for quick, independent decisions. **Clear communication** protocols should be established for transparency and feedback (Meyer, 2018).

8. References-

- Thomas, D.C. and Peterson, M.F. (2017) *Cross-cultural management: Essential concepts*. 4th edn. London: SAGE Publications.
- Saha, P. (2018) 'Cross-cultural communication in international business: A case study of Rolls-Royce and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries', *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45(2), pp. 215-234.
- Bailey, J., 2013. *Cultural intelligence in global teams: A leadership perspective*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Deresky, H., 2017. *International management: managing across borders and cultures*. 9th ed. London: Pearson.
- Gannon, M.J. and Pillai, R., 2015. *Understanding global cultures: metaphorical journeys through 34 nations, clusters of nations, continents, and diversity*. 5th ed. London: SAGE Publications.
- Hall, E.T., 1976. *Beyond culture*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Hofstede, G., 2001. *Culture's consequences: comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Hofstede, G. and Minkov, M., 2010. *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lewis, R.D., 2006. *When cultures collide: leading across cultures*. 3rd ed. Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Meyer, E., 2018. *The culture map: decoding how people think, lead, and get things done across cultures*. London: PublicAffairs.
- Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, 2021. *Hydrogen-powered gas turbines: a step towards carbon neutrality*. [online] Available at: <https://www.mhi.com> [Accessed 18 March 2025].
- Rolls-Royce, 2020. *Trent 1000: leading the way in aviation technology*. [online] Available at: <https://www.rolls-royce.com> [Accessed 18 March 2025].
- Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C., 2012. *Riding the waves of culture: understanding diversity in global business*. 3rd ed. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.