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Intercultural business communication involves understanding and navigating cultural differences to communicate effectively, build relationships, and collaborate successfully in professional settings (International Business Communication, n.d.).



Intercultural Communication in Starbucks: UK vs India

MODULE: INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS
(LCBB6023)



Introduction and Objectives



Global presence of Starbucks (operating in 80+ countries) (Starbucks, 2022).

Purpose: To analyse the impact of cultural differences on communication in UK and India (Starbucks, 2022).

Objectives:

- Apply Hofstede's cultural dimensions.
- Analyze Starbucks' communication strategies.
- Recommend intercultural management improvements.

Starbucks' Global Strategy

“Think globally, act locally” philosophy.

Adaptation through localization and brand consistency (Roll, 2021)

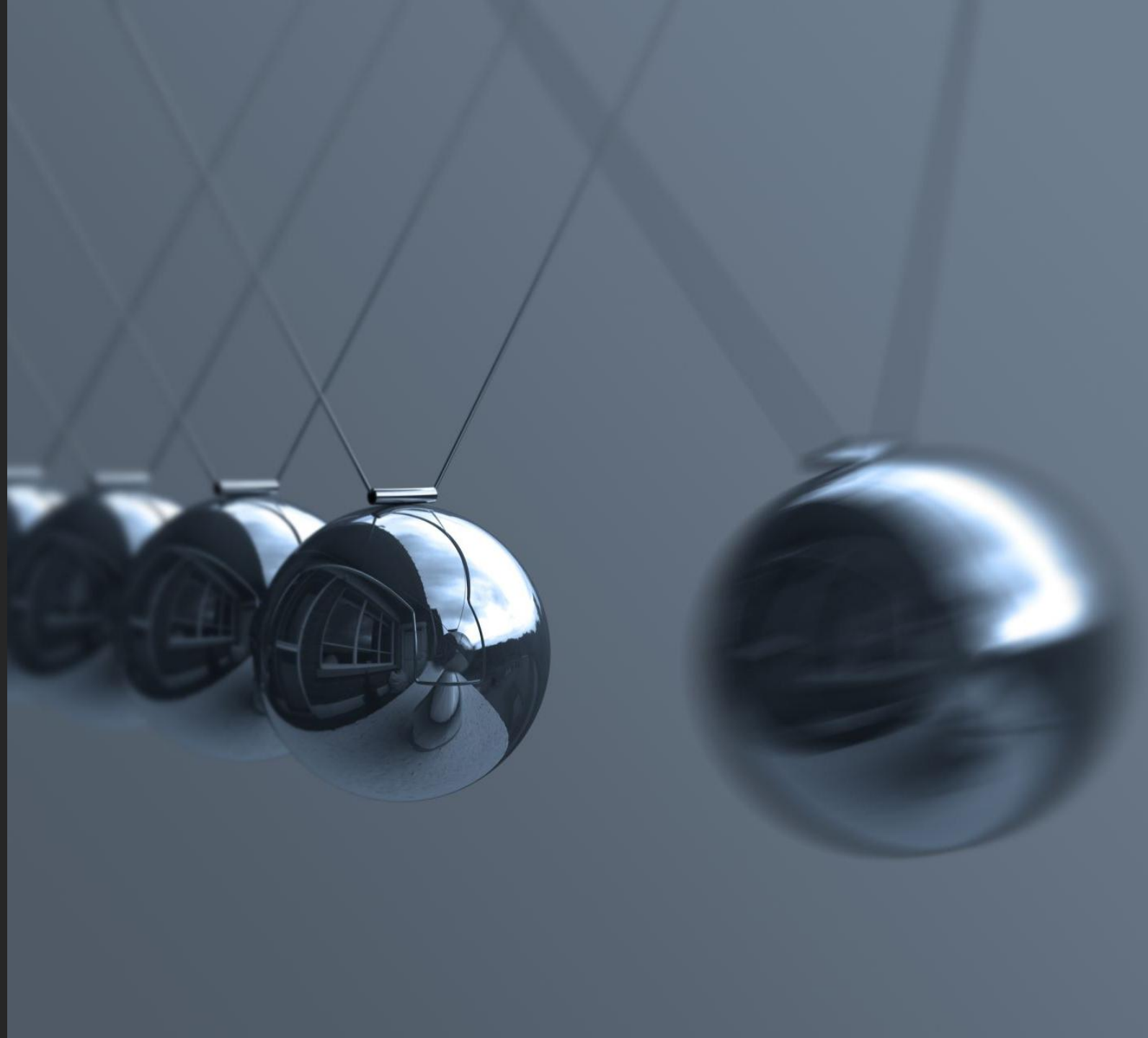
Example: Menu customization and cultural alignment.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions: Framework

Six key dimensions:

- Power Distance
- Individualism
- Masculinity
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Long-term Orientation
- Indulgence

Tool for comparing national cultures (Hofstede Insights model) (Zheng et al., 2025).



Power Distance and Hierarchy



India: High power distance; respect for authority.



UK: Low power distance; equality and open dialogue.



Starbucks India = formal hierarchy;
Starbucks UK = participative culture (Turits, 2023)

Individualism vs Collectivism

UK: Strongly individualistic; focus on self-expression.

India: Collectivist; emphasis on community and relationships(Jain, Sanghi and Jain, 2019)

Starbucks branding and teamwork vary accordingly.



Uncertainty Avoidance and Communication Style

1

India: Moderate uncertainty avoidance; structured processes preferred.

2

UK: Low uncertainty avoidance; comfort with ambiguity (Accelingo, 2024)

3

Communication:
India = formal; UK = flexible.

Long-Term Orientation and Brand Adaptation

India: Long-term orientation; relational focus.



UK: Shorter-term goals; efficiency focus.



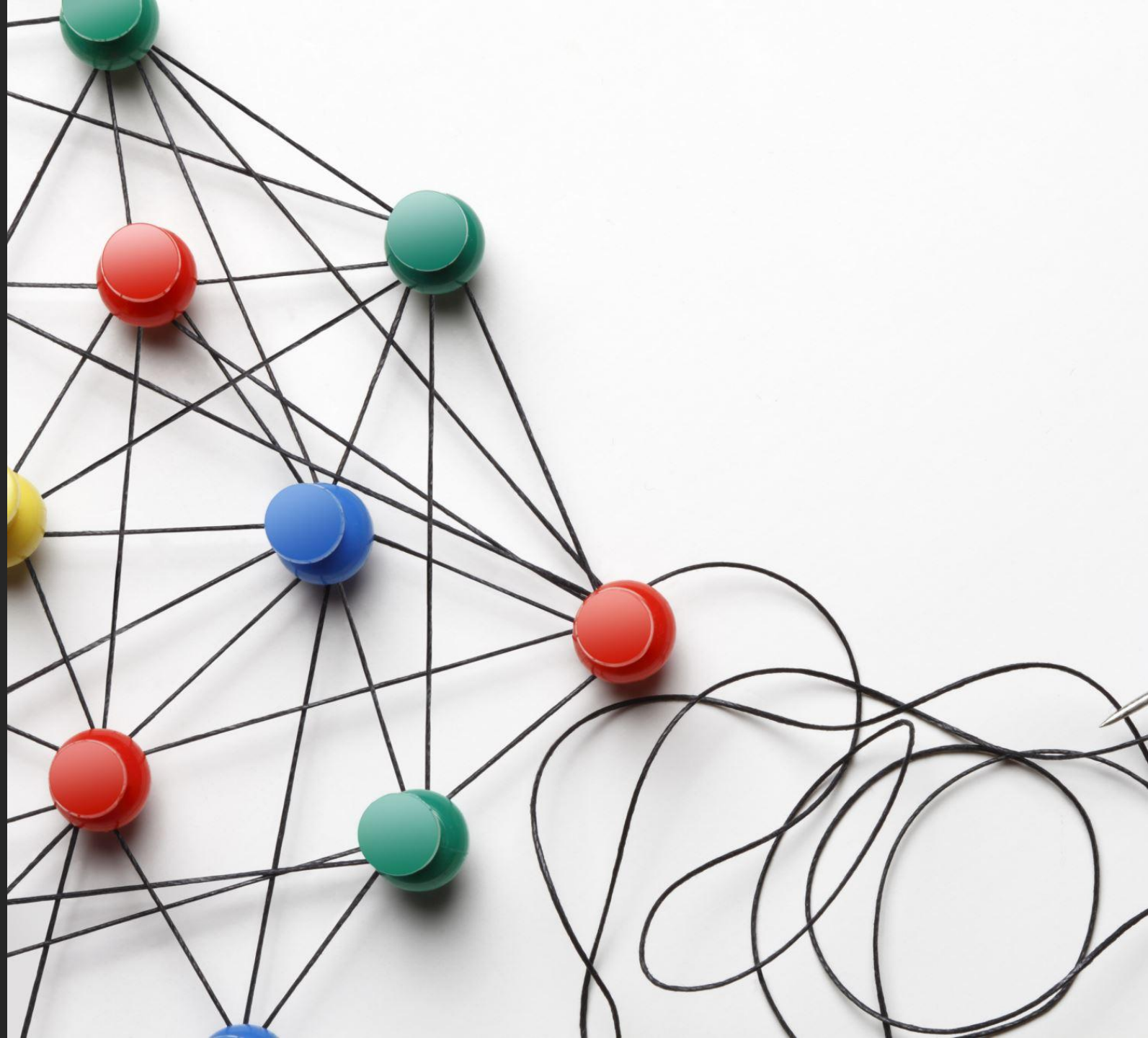
Starbucks India invests in sustainability and local sourcing (The Strategy Institute, 2024).

Communication Challenges

Misinterpretation of tone and hierarchy.

Balancing global brand voice with local cultural identity (EURAC, 2019).

Employee expectations differ across regions.



Practical Recommendations

Implement cross-cultural communication training (Scip, 2025)

Encourage adaptive leadership.

Create feedback loops for intercultural learning.

Promote diversity in management roles.



Conclusion



Starbucks' success = Global vision + local adaptation.



Hofstede's model aids cultural understanding.



Effective intercultural communication drives global growth.

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