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Cross-cultural communication in international Business Communication:

Importance, Challenges and coping strategies

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Executive Summary

According to Vanessa (2020), studies say that cross-cultural communication plays a vital role in the business of companies engaged in international trade, which is mainly reflected in that effective cross-cultural communication can help both parties avoid unnecessary risks to the greatest extent. To build a long-term and stable relationship (Vanessa,2020). In addition, the key to relationship building lies in trust, which can be achieved through training and education to improve personnel literacy and establish cross-cultural communication mechanisms. However, according to Vanessa (2020), studies say there is a potential risk of failure in IBC relationship establishment, and exploring the causes of failure is helpful for international business practitioners to prevent risks in advance, to optimize the process of international business communication and improve the success rate of international business activities(Vanessa, 2020).

Therefore, from the perspective of the general manager of a large clothing retail group, this paper provides effective suggestions and guidance for the company's cooperation business on a global scale from the aspects of possible challenges and the significance of establishing a national cooperation relationship and then provides a certain range of technical support for the company. Thereby helping enterprises to establish stable cooperative relations with other international companies.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Main Findings.....	5
2.1 International business exchange	5
2.2 Skill requirement.....	6
2.3 Communication method.....	7
2.3.1 High context and low context cultures	8
2.3.2 Trompenaars' Cultural Dimensions.....	9
2.3.3 Gift Giving.....	10
2.4 Effective communication.....	11
2.4.1 Training and education	11
2.4.2 Establish a cross-cultural communication mechanism	12
2.5 International culture	14
2.5.1 Trompenaars training in 7 dimensions.....	14
2.5.2 high context and low context cultures.....	14
2.6 The importance of building relationships	15
2.7 Reasons for potential failure of IBC relationship establishment.....	17
2.8 Recommendations on confidence-building	19
3.0 Conclusion	21
Reference	22

1.0 Introduction

According to Pervez et al (2021), studies say that in today's increasingly accelerated process of globalization, due to the progress of science and technology and political turmoil, the communication and cooperation between countries have become easier and easier than before, which has led to the frequent international business cooperation. The mutual integration and exchange of different cultures (Pervez et al., 2021). Therefore, this paper focuses on the context of developing partners of large clothing retail groups to Asia, and discusses issues related to cross-cultural communication.

2.0 Main Findings

This part mainly focuses on international business communication in detail. The Main Findings on the entry of large apparel retail groups into the Asian market are elaborated from the aspects of skill requirements, various communication methods, the importance of relationship building, and the reasons for potential failure of international business communication relationship building

2.1 International business exchange

According to Betina (2020), studies say that international business communication is the core of international business operations for most enterprises. Communication plays an important role in the exchange of knowledge, the development and maintenance of relationships, the negotiation of deals, and the establishment and maintenance of partnerships, and it is through communication that organizational managers create, manage, lead, and dissolve (organizations) (Betina ,2020).

According to Van (2022), studies say that in terms of culture, there are rich and diverse cultures in Asia, so a high-context culture has been created in this environment, which mainly focuses on the hidden meaning in communication,

such as Japan and South Korea, which is very different from the low-context culture in the West (Van,2022).Aspects such as universalism and particularism in Trompenaars cultural dimensions also affect companies engaged in cross-cultural international business communication. According to Claes (2022), studies say that in business negotiations, some Asian regions are more inclined to be relationship-oriented, establishing relationships first and then discussing business (Claes,2022).

According to Dorobat (2022), studies say that in terms of communication methods, enterprises need to understand the language habits and non-verbal signals of different Asian countries. Through the training and education of local employees, let them understand the group culture, and establish a cross-cultural communication mechanism to avoid the failure of relationship establishment caused by cultural misunderstandings (Dorobat,2022).

2.2 Skill requirement

Language ability

According to Stavros (2020), studies say that communication is regarded as an important tool to enhance organizational performance and growth and promote the success of international business cooperation. Therefore, most businesses

rely on effective communication with customers and employees to increase sales and promote business growth. According to Nguyen (2021), studies say that direct communication contributes to a deeper understanding of the needs and customer feedback in the Asian market. Good language skills help to develop customized cooperation strategies that meet the specific requirements and feedback of the local Asian market (Nguyen, 2021).

culture sensitivity

According to Sofi (2023), studies say that a deep understanding of Asian culture, including its customs, values and history, is the key for Western companies to be able to quickly achieve communication under the message of effective cross-cultural communication (Sofi, 2023). According to Stavros (2023), studies say that the company's cultural sensitivity training for different countries can improve employees' understanding of and ability to deal with cultural differences, which will help companies avoid business conflicts caused by cultural misunderstandings in international cooperation (Stavros, 2020).

2.3 Communication method

2.3.1 High context and low context cultures

According to Donghoon (1998), studies say a high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite (Donghoon,1998).

1. high context: Chinese culture

According to Erdener (2022), studies say this is mainly because the communication mode of Chinese enterprises in business cooperation is not limited to direct language communication, but more complex integration of non-linguistic factors, situational factors and interpersonal relationship background (Erdener,2022). In addition, in business negotiations, Chinese people tend to express their refusal through subtle hints or silence, rather than directly.

2. low context: American culture

According to timothy (2014), studies say in American business communication, whether it's a business email or a meeting, American companies are usually directly explaining their views, asking for or giving conclusions after a simple presentation (timothy, 2014). This kind of direct communication may cause cultural conflict in the process of international business communication with

Chinese business partners, which is a huge challenge for enterprises' international business cooperation.

2.3.2 Trompenaars' Cultural Dimensions

According to Pirlog (2021), studies say that the seven dimensions of Trompenaars are of great significance in the expansion of large clothing retail groups into Asia, which is embodied in the following aspects.

1. Universalism vs. Particularism

In Universalism, rules and standards take precedence over personal relationships, which is more common in North America and Europe. For apparel retail groups, this means that in these regions, business decisions should be based on uniform standards and rules.

Particularism, such as some parts of Asia, place more emphasis on personal relationships and specific situations. In these markets, building strong personal relationships is critical to business success and may require more flexibility and emphasis on relationships.

2. Individualism vs. Communitarianism

Individualism emphasizes individual achievement and freedom, while

Communitarianism emphasizes collective harmony and social connection. Understanding and respecting collectivist values, such as teamwork and social responsibility, is essential to building partnerships with Asian companies as they expand in Asia.

3. Neutral vs. Affective

In Neutral situations, such as Japan and the UK, public displays of emotion are seen as inappropriate. And in cultures that are Affective, such as Spain and Mexico, public expressions of emotion are accepted. Therefore, when establishing partnerships with Asian companies, clothing retail groups may need to adapt to different emotional expressions to build trust and personal connections.

4. Specific vs. Diffuse

Whereas Specific work and private life are separate, in Diffuse work and personal relationships are intertwined. In the Asian market, companies may need to humanize business relationships more, which may mean incorporating more social and personal communication into business activities.

2.3.3 Gift Giving

In the process of international business communication for a large clothing retail group to expand its international business in Asia, gift giving has unique significance and faces challenges. According to Nguye (2021), studies say that gift giving is an important part of relationship building in many Asian national cultures. In Japan, for example, the right gift can express respect and friendship and help to close the distance with partners (Nguye, 2021). For example, in China, overly expensive gifts may be considered bribes. According to Nguye (2021), studies say the company must deeply study the gift giving culture of Asian countries in cross-cultural communication to ensure appropriate gift giving behavior, which is an important link to overcome the challenge of relationship building and promote successful international business communication (Nguye, 2021).

2.4 Effective communication

2.4.1 Training and education

1. Internal training courses

According to Muhamma (2024), studies say that enterprises should provide regular and customized cross-cultural communication training courses for employees who participate in international business exchanges. These courses should cover the core elements of national cultures around the world, including

but not limited to local values, religious beliefs and social structures (Muhamma,2024). In addition, for the Asian market, enterprises can develop special language training modules, focusing on teaching employees about the use of major Asian business languages (such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.) in formal business occasions and daily communication.

2. Utilization of external training resources

According to Yipeng (2020), studies say that enterprises should encourage employees to regularly participate in external training seminars led by experts in the field of cross-cultural communication. The main reason is that these seminars can provide a relatively deep and up-to-date cross-cultural communication knowledge and practical experience for employees engaged in international business exchanges (Yipeng,2020). Through these seminars, employees can learn the successful cases and failure lessons from different industries and companies in cross-cultural communication in the Asian market, to better apply these strategies in practical work.

2.4.2 Establish a cross-cultural communication mechanism

1. Special department or post setting

According to Stavros (2020), studies say that enterprises engaged in

international business can set up a special cross-cultural communication department or designate full-time positions to deal with all matters related to cross-cultural communication. Members of these departments or positions should have deep cross-cultural knowledge and practical experience. They can develop and implement strategies and standards for cross-cultural communication to achieve successful international business cooperation (Stavros, 2020).

2. Communication process and specification development

According to Yipeng (2020), studies say that enterprises should encourage employees to regularly participate in external training seminars led by experts in the field of cross-cultural communication. The main reason is that these seminars can provide a relatively deep and up-to-date cross-cultural communication knowledge and practical experience for employees engaged in international business exchanges (Yipeng,2020). Through these seminars, employees can learn the successful cases and failure lessons from different industries and companies in cross-cultural communication in the Asian market, to better apply these strategies in practical work.

2.5 International culture

2.5.1 Trompenaars training in 7 dimensions

In the process of a large clothing retail group expanding its business to Asia, it is suitable to use "particularism" in Trompenaars' Cultural Dimensions.

According to Jumaev (2020), studies say Asia covers a vast area, and different countries and regions have their own unique cultural customs, consumption habits and business rules (Jumaev, 2020). In the process of international business cooperation, large clothing retail groups need to emphasize respect for special cultural needs in specific situations. In terms of clothing retail, particularism requires that the group needs to in-depth and understand the differences between different regions in Asia in advance, and carry out targeted products.

2.5.2 high context and low context cultures

When the Group enters the Asian market of high context cultures, it can gain a deep understanding of the local culture, as well as conduct local recruitment and management training of employees, which can greatly increase the number

of the Group's products sold in the local market.

According to Jayes (2020), studies say that enterprises have a deep understanding of the cultures of different countries and regions in Asia before conducting international cooperation. Such as religious beliefs, social values, etc. In this way, we can better design products that cater to the local market and increase profits. According to Jayes (2020), studies say that understanding and learning Asian customs and dress taboos can largely avoid local cultural taboos and increase corporate profits (Jayes,2020). For example, in Japan, Shinto and Buddhism have a profound influence on people's lifestyle and consumption concept. Respecting these religious and cultural elements, integrating relevant local culture into product design, marketing and other links can accelerate the sale of their own products in the local market.

According to Jiale (2023), studies say Group can recruit local employees and conduct cross-cultural training for the company's expatriate employees. These employees can act as a bridge between the company and the local market, helping the company better adapt to the high-context environment (Jiale,2023).

2.6 The importance of building relationships

(1) Language ability

Excellent language skills help companies to quickly acquire and accurately target market information. At the same time, in face-to-face negotiations with suppliers, accurate language use and expression can help both parties in international communication to avoid many misunderstandings caused by translation errors and reduce errors caused by language communication errors (Wirba, 2023).

(2) Cultural understanding ability

Asian cultures have unique values, beliefs and social norms compared to Western cultures. According to Wirba (2023), studies say that in the decision-making process of international business, companies need to have a deep understanding of these cultural factors and combine the opinions of the team and local partners to formulate business strategies suitable for the local market (Wirba, 2023).

(3) Interpersonal skills

In the interaction with Asian partners, good interpersonal relations can effectively help their enterprises to better deal with the relationship between international business partners, and then establish a stable cooperative relationship, to lay a solid foundation for the future international market. According to Wirba (2023), studies say that excellent interpersonal skills can

also help foreign companies expand their business scope locally and attract more potential partners (Wirba, 2023).

2.7 Reasons for potential failure of IBC relationship establishment

(1) Neglect of cultural differences

Neglect of differences in values

There is a fundamental difference in values between the Eastern and Western cultures. Therefore, when a clothing retail group establishes IBC in Asia, if it understands and is familiar with the culture of the Asian countries for international business cooperation in advance, it will greatly reduce the huge obstacles caused by cultural differences in business communication between the two sides, to improve the successful establishment of international business between the two sides.

Ignoring differences in business etiquette

According to Rishabh (2024), studies say that Asian countries have strict norms on business etiquette, and these norms are very important for business communication in the minds of local executives and diplomatic staff (Rishabh, 2024). If the seating arrangement and gift giving of apparel retail groups in business banquets in Asia are different from those in western regions, it may

also cause dissatisfaction of partners if they are ignored.

(2) Lack of effective communication strategies

Language communication disorder

According to Ocheaga (2020), studies say that because of the diversity of languages in Asia, it poses a great challenge for the clothing retail group to carry out normal international business communication (Ocheaga,2020). If a clothing retail group fails to develop an effective and appropriate language communication strategy when conducting international business communication with the other company, for example, it fails to equip professional translators or train specialized translators in the local language, it is likely to lead to the misunderstanding of key contents of the contract terms. This led to many disputes in the later period.

Non-verbal communication disorders

According to Ocheaga (2020), studies say that non-verbal communication has different meanings in different cultures. For example, in Asian cultures, non-verbal signals such as eye contact and body movements may be significantly different from those in Western cultures (Ocheaga,2020). If a clothing retail group fails to provide specialized cross-cultural non-verbal communication training for its employees in international business communication, its employees are likely to misinterpret the non-verbal signals of partners in formal international

business communication, which will have a huge negative impact on the smooth progress of international cooperation.

2.8 Recommendations on confidence-building

1. Corporate social responsibility

According to Fath (2021), studies say that enterprises can actively participate in social welfare activities in Asia, such as environmental protection projects and community development plans, which will not only contribute to the development of local society, but also show their Asian partners that they actively fulfill their social responsibilities. Thus enhance the goodwill and trust of the company (Fath, 2021).

2. Brand building and word-of-mouth management

According to Hamid (2021), studies say that enterprises can establish a good brand image in the Asian market through effective marketing and brand promotion strategies, because behind a strong brand often means stable product quality, innovation ability and market influence (Hamid, 2021). For example, British high-end fashion brands can enhance brand awareness and reputation in the Japanese market by holding fashion shows and cooperating with well-known local artists, so that Japanese partners are more willing to

cooperate with them.

3. Cultural understanding and respect

According to Hamid (2021), studies say that employees of British enterprises should deeply learn the culture, customs and values of the countries or regions where their Asian partners are located before conducting formal business cooperation and communication. This respect for culture can bridge the psychological distance between the two sides and build the foundation of trust (Hamid, 2021).

3.0 Conclusion

Cross-cultural communication is crucial for large apparel retail groups to expand their business in Asia and build global partnerships. When it comes to facilitating successful international business communication, companies need to consider numerous aspects such as language proficiency, cultural understanding, and interpersonal skills. When expanding the international market, enterprises should pay full attention to the cultivation and reasonable use of these three abilities, to overcome the challenges in cross-cultural communication and establish a good partnership. At the same time, enterprises should continue to pay attention to the dynamic changes of international culture and constantly adjust and improve their cross-cultural communication capabilities to adapt to the ever-changing international business environment.

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