## cultural communication differences

cultural communication differences play a crucial role in shaping interpersonal interactions and business relationships across the globe. Understanding these differences is essential for effective communication in multicultural environments. These variations arise from diverse cultural norms, values, languages, and social behaviors that influence verbal and nonverbal communication styles. This article explores the various dimensions of cultural communication differences, including language barriers, nonverbal cues, contextual communication styles, and cultural attitudes toward time and hierarchy. By examining these factors, individuals and organizations can enhance cross-cultural understanding and minimize misunderstandings. The discussion also highlights practical strategies for navigating cultural communication challenges in international settings, promoting clearer and more respectful exchanges. The following sections provide a detailed overview of key aspects related to cultural communication differences, offering valuable insights for global communication competence.

- Language and Communication Styles
- Nonverbal Communication Variations
- Contextual Communication: High-Context vs. Low-Context Cultures
- Cultural Attitudes Toward Time and Communication
- Power Distance and Hierarchy in Communication
- Strategies for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication

### Language and Communication Styles

One of the most apparent cultural communication differences involves language use and communication styles. Language is not only a means of conveying information but also a carrier of cultural values and social norms. Different cultures have unique linguistic structures, idiomatic expressions, and conversational conventions that may affect understanding.

### **Verbal Communication and Language Barriers**

Verbal communication differences stem from variations in language proficiency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical rules. Language

barriers can lead to misinterpretations, frustration, and communication breakdowns. For example, some cultures emphasize directness and clarity, while others prioritize politeness and indirectness, influencing how messages are conveyed and received.

### Communication Styles: Direct vs. Indirect

Communication styles range from direct to indirect approaches depending on cultural context. Direct communicators tend to be straightforward and explicit, valuing transparency and efficiency. Indirect communicators, on the other hand, rely on implication, nuance, and context to convey meaning, often to preserve harmony and avoid confrontation. Recognizing these differences is vital for effective intercultural dialogue.

#### Nonverbal Communication Variations

Nonverbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and proxemics (use of personal space). These nonverbal cues can differ considerably across cultures, sometimes resulting in unintended offense or misunderstanding.

#### Gestures and Body Language

Gestures that are acceptable in one culture may be offensive or meaningless in another. For instance, a thumbs-up sign is positive in many Western cultures but can be considered rude in parts of the Middle East. Similarly, the meaning of nodding or shaking the head can vary, influencing agreement or disagreement perception.

#### Eye Contact and Facial Expressions

Eye contact norms differ widely; in some cultures, sustained eye contact signifies confidence and honesty, while in others, it can be seen as disrespectful or confrontational. Facial expressions also carry culturally specific connotations, affecting how emotions are interpreted during communication.

## Contextual Communication: High-Context vs. Low-

#### **Context Cultures**

Cultural communication differences are also evident in the degree to which context influences message interpretation. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall introduced the concepts of high-context and low-context cultures to describe these variations.

#### **High-Context Cultures**

In high-context cultures, much of the communication is implicit, relying heavily on shared experiences, nonverbal cues, and the surrounding context. Such cultures emphasize relationships, social hierarchy, and subtlety. Examples include Japan, China, and many Arab countries.

#### Low-Context Cultures

Low-context cultures prefer explicit, clear, and direct communication where the message is contained primarily in the words spoken or written. These cultures value transparency and detailed information. The United States, Germany, and Scandinavian countries are typical examples.

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Time and Communication

Time perception and its integration into communication differ significantly among cultures and impact scheduling, punctuality, and conversational pacing.

#### Monochronic vs. Polychronic Time Orientations

Monochronic cultures view time linearly, emphasizing punctuality, schedules, and completing one task at a time. Communication in these cultures tends to be task-focused and time-sensitive. Polychronic cultures have a more flexible approach to time, prioritizing relationships and multitasking over strict adherence to schedules.

## Impact on Communication and Meetings

In monochronic cultures, meetings are expected to start and end on time with a clear agenda, whereas in polychronic cultures, meetings may be more fluid, with interruptions and flexible timing. Understanding these differences can prevent frustration and promote smoother interactions.

## Power Distance and Hierarchy in Communication

Cultural attitudes toward authority and hierarchy significantly influence communication patterns within organizations and social settings.

#### **High Power Distance Cultures**

In cultures with high power distance, there is a clear hierarchy and respect for authority. Communication tends to be top-down, and subordinates may avoid openly challenging or contradicting superiors. Countries such as India, Mexico, and Malaysia often exhibit high power distance.

#### Low Power Distance Cultures

Low power distance cultures promote egalitarianism and encourage open communication between different levels of hierarchy. Employees and managers often engage in informal dialogue, with an emphasis on collaboration. Examples include the United States, Australia, and Sweden.

# Strategies for Effective Cross-Cultural Communication

Given the complexity of cultural communication differences, adopting specific strategies can facilitate more effective intercultural interactions.

- **Develop Cultural Awareness:** Study and understand the cultural backgrounds, values, and communication styles of others.
- **Practice Active Listening:** Pay close attention to verbal and nonverbal messages and seek clarification when needed.
- Adapt Communication Style: Adjust directness, tone, and formality based on the cultural context.

- Be Patient and Open-Minded: Allow time for understanding and avoid making assumptions based on one's own cultural norms.
- **Use Clear and Simple Language:** Minimize idioms and slang to reduce misunderstandings.
- **Recognize Nonverbal Cues:** Observe body language and gestures carefully, considering cultural meanings.
- **Encourage Feedback:** Foster an environment where questions and feedback are welcomed to confirm mutual understanding.

## Frequently Asked Questions

#### What are cultural communication differences?

Cultural communication differences refer to the variations in how people from different cultural backgrounds express themselves, interpret messages, and interact with others. These differences can include language, non-verbal cues, context, and communication styles.

# How do high-context and low-context cultures affect communication?

High-context cultures rely heavily on implicit messages, body language, and the surrounding context to convey meaning, while low-context cultures depend on explicit, clear, and direct verbal communication. Understanding this helps prevent misunderstandings in cross-cultural interactions.

# Why is understanding cultural communication differences important in the workplace?

Understanding cultural communication differences in the workplace promotes effective collaboration, reduces conflicts, enhances mutual respect, and improves overall productivity by ensuring that messages are correctly interpreted across diverse teams.

## What role does non-verbal communication play in cultural differences?

Non-verbal communication, such as gestures, eye contact, personal space, and facial expressions, varies widely across cultures and can lead to misunderstandings if not properly understood, as the same gesture can have different meanings in different cultures.

## How can individuals improve cross-cultural communication skills?

Individuals can improve cross-cultural communication skills by educating themselves about other cultures, practicing active listening, being open-minded, avoiding assumptions, and seeking feedback to ensure their messages are understood as intended.

## What are common challenges faced due to cultural communication differences?

Common challenges include misinterpretation of messages, unintended offense, stereotyping, difficulty in building trust, and barriers in negotiation and teamwork, all of which can hinder effective communication and collaboration.

#### **Additional Resources**

1. "The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business" by Erin Meyer

This book explores how cultural differences impact communication and business practices worldwide. Meyer offers a framework for understanding varying cultural norms related to communication styles, decision-making, trust, and leadership. It provides practical advice for navigating multicultural workplaces and improving cross-cultural collaboration.

- 2. "Beyond Culture" by Edward T. Hall
- Edward T. Hall, a pioneer in intercultural communication, examines the deep-rooted cultural factors that influence behavior and communication. The book introduces key concepts such as high-context and low-context cultures and explores how culture shapes perception and interaction. It is essential for understanding the subtle nuances that affect cross-cultural communication.
- 3. "Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach" by James W. Neuliep Neuliep's textbook offers a comprehensive overview of intercultural communication theories and practices. It emphasizes the importance of context in understanding cultural differences and includes case studies and real-world examples. The book is designed to help readers develop skills to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries.
- 4. "Kiss, Bow, Or Shake Hands: The Bestselling Guide to Doing Business in More Than 60 Countries" by Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway
  This practical guide provides insights into cultural etiquette and communication styles around the world. It covers topics such as greetings, negotiation tactics, and business protocols. The book is an invaluable resource for professionals engaged in international business who want to avoid cultural misunderstandings.
- 5. "Silent Messages: Implicit Communication of Emotions and Attitudes" by

#### Albert Mehrabian

Mehrabian delves into nonverbal communication and how cultural differences influence the interpretation of body language, facial expressions, and tone. The book highlights the importance of implicit messages that often transcend spoken language. It is particularly useful for understanding the unspoken elements of intercultural communication.

- 6. "Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind" by Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, and Michael Minkov
- This influential work presents Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, which identifies key factors that differentiate national cultures. The authors explain how these dimensions affect communication, workplace behavior, and management styles. The book is widely used in business and academic settings to foster cultural awareness.
- 7. "Communicating Across Cultures" by Stella Ting-Toomey
  Stella Ting-Toomey provides a thorough analysis of intercultural
  communication competence and face negotiation theory. The book explores how
  culture influences communication patterns, conflict styles, and identity
  management. It offers practical strategies for improving intercultural
  interactions in both personal and professional contexts.
- 8. "When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures" by Richard D. Lewis
  This book examines the challenges and opportunities of working in
  multicultural environments. Lewis categorizes cultures into distinct
  communication and leadership styles, helping readers understand and adapt to
  diverse cultural behaviors. The book is a valuable tool for leaders and
  managers in globalized organizations.
- 9. "The Silent Language" by Edward T. Hall
  Another seminal work by Hall, this book investigates how culture influences
  communication beyond words, including time, space, and context. Hall
  introduces the concept that culture is a silent language that governs
  interactions and social norms. It remains a foundational text for anyone
  studying cultural communication differences.

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different countries, and cultural differences or similarities as well. Then, it also develops confidence in communicating and interacting with the native speakers of English and the people of English speaking countries and other people from different cultures as well. ——— In today's world, cross-cultural communication is still imperative regardless of the technological communication advancement. No technology can replace cross-cultural communication in its basic and natural form involving face-to-face communication. This book vol. 2 offers a broader and comprehensive contents and excellent knowledge on this subject as well. It is a must read. — Prof. Deddy Mulyana, M.A., Ph.D. Faculty of Communication Sciences Padjadjaran University Building up the theory on the interconnection among languages, cultures, and societies, this book explores the potential benefits as well as potential problems from (not) understanding the connections. Broad definitions of culture and hence cross-cultural communication are presented although some micro-culture settings are only discussed briefly. Interestingly, it argues that sufficient understanding of different cultures will mostly guarantee language users to have successful cross-cultural communication. This book provides good coverage of forms of cross-cultural communication, enriched with examples from different settings of communication events in different cultures. Not only is it a good start for readers with no prior knowledge of cross-cultural concepts, but it is also relevant to be used by readers with advanced knowledge in the area. — E. Aminudin Aziz Professor of Linguistics, Indonesia University of Education and Head, Agency of Language Development and Cultivation, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Rep. of Indonesia In times of globalization and rapid and massive development of internet, the world now becomes smaller and borderless. People from diverse countries and cultures meet, interact and communicate intensively and extensively due to many reasons, purposes, and agendas. This book offers abandon of knowledge, understandings, and insights regarding to cross-cultural communication and interaction. This book is more complex, comprehensive, in terms of contents, volume. elaboration and explanation, and illustration and detail as well. — Amrin Sargih, M.A., Ph.D. Professor of Linguistics, Faculty of Languages and Arts of State University of Medan Buku persembahan penerbit PrenadaMediaGroup #Kencana

cultural communication differences: 52 Activities for Improving Cross-Cultural Communication Donna M. Stringer, Patricia A. Cassiday, 2009-06-16 Exercises to facilitate effective communication across a wide range of cultural differences Communication styles and patterns differ vastly among people from different cultures. Every culture has a communication style norm and when that style mixes with another, stereotypes and misperceptions arise. 52 Activities for Improving Cross-Cultural Communication explores cross-cultural communication issues with an eye toward increasing understanding and effectiveness. 52 Activities for Improving Cross-Cultural Communication is a practical trainer's manual that includes applications from many sectors, such as business, diversity, cross-cultural fields, and from many trainers in the U.S., Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. Exercises are organized according to audience, time required to perform and the risk level for participants, a unique feature created by the authors, and are easily adaptable to the user's particular need and situation. Many of the exercises are written with instructions that address requirements for a specific audience (e.g., gender or generation). There is something for everyone: those who like hands-on, practical activities; those who prefer experiential exercises; and those who learn best through reflection.

cultural communication differences: Cross Cultural Communication. The Lewis Model and the Differences between Cultures, 2019-12-30 Seminar paper from the year 2018 in the subject Communications - Intercultural Communication, grade: 1,7, University of Applied Sciences Bielefeld, language: English, abstract: The aim of this work is to explain the construct of cross-cultural communication using the Richard D. Lewis model and to analyze the differences between cultures. Intercultural communication is often associated with problems, misunderstandings and prejudices. In order to smooth communication and to understand the cultures of other countries there are countless models that try to condense cultural behaviour. While some researchers have looked at geographical divisions like north, south, east and west, others classified people by religion (Muslim,

Christian, Hindu) or even by race (African, Indian, Arab). But how do you define the east? How do you classify a person that is African-Arab? Lewis seems to have found a solution to the problem by developing the culture type model in 1996. There are three types of cultures and each nation is analyzed and assigned in detail. Since it is represented as a triangle, hybrid types are also possible. The present work focuses on this model. A German who is constantly punctual, a Mexican who always interrupts one, or a Japanese who doesn't keep eye contact during the conversation. All these are examples of cultural behavior. While the Mexican can't understand why a German has to leave the meeting at four o'clock on the dot, the Japanese finds it impolite that the Mexican won't let anyone finish the sentence. One often only becomes aware of cultural characteristics and specialties when you move within another culture. These kinds of cross-cultural relations only exist as a result of globalization, the internationalization of markets and new communication technologies. Today, almost everyone is able to communicate and collaborate with people from all over the world. These developments show that intercultural communication and competence is becoming an increasingly important topic. Hardly any large company operates only in its own country. If one wants to make profit, one has to offer one's products not only in one's home country, but all over the world. It is essential to know the cultural values and behaviors of other nations to be successful in other markets. Also, political and economic associations like the EU or NAFTA support international collaboration and it is seen as essential and desirable.

cultural communication differences: Communicating Across Cultures Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), Don W. Prince, Michael H. Hoppe, 2011-07-28 If you are a manager anywhere in the world, you are almost certainly dealing with people of nationalities and cultures different from your own. In multinational business environments, communicating effectively with people who have languages, customs, and expectations different from yours is a necessary skill. If you are a manager anywhere in the world, you are almost certainly facing this kind of multicultural situation. This guidebook explains how to become aware of cultural differences, how to recognize when cultural differences pose a leadership challenge, and how to adapt your communication style to enhance your effectiveness as a manager.

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crucial dimension and educates students about the cultures around the world so they will be better prepared to work successfully for a multinational corporation or in a global context.

cultural communication differences: Fundamentals of Cross Cultural Communication Sorin Dumitrascu, 2017-04-09 With so much business happening on a global scale, cross-cultural communication is more important than ever before. Communication is always a challenge, and when diverse cultures interact, good communication can be even more challenging. For example, after a major U.S. corporation introduced a new breakfast cereal in Sweden, the company was horrified to discover that the cereal's name translates roughly as burned peasant in Swedish. Imagine the embarrassment, not to mention the loss of revenues that probably ensued. And while this example seems amusing after the fact, cross-cultural miscommunications aren't always benign. For instance, a large airline manufacturer developed its newest plane model to be flown by two pilots, with both pilots helping and correcting each other. But what do you suppose happens when the pilots are from a culture in which a subordinate is inhibited by custom from correcting a superior? At least one airline company has had several close calls as a direct result of this design flaw - which is ultimately a communication lapse. Now, you may not be involved in public safety or an industry in which communication errors can cause horrendous mishaps. But you'll likely soon be working with people from different cultures, if you aren't already. You need to learn how to handle cultural differences and maximize your communication opportunities. And this book will help you do just that. You'll learn about important cultural differences that will help you adapt your communication style to be more effective. In the first topic, you'll learn about the importance of achieving a proper mind-set for cross-cultural communication. In the second topic, you'll study aspects of cultures that affect how people communicate across cultural boundaries. In the third topic, you'll learn about a model of cultural dimensions that will help you enhance your communication abilities. First topic - In this topic, you'll learn about why cross-cultural communication is so important. You'll also learn why it's beneficial for you to learn how to improve your ability to communicate across cultural boundaries. Then you'll learn about some guidelines for achieving the mind-set that's essential for effective communication. Second topic - In the second topic, you'll learn about a pioneer who studied and classified important cultural differences. Edward T. Hall was an anthropologist who made early discoveries of factors that differ among cultures. He is known for having identified what he called low-context and high-context factors. Hall determined that people from low-context cultures communicate explicitly, with words. People from high-context cultures use contextual elements such as shared assumptions, knowledge, and body language to understand each other and communicate. Third topic - In the third topic, you'll learn about some dimensions common to every culture that affect how people communicate. The cultural model created by Geert Hofstede identifies dimensions of culture - power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. These dimensions influence how groups, societies, and cultures think about the world and respond to events. At its conclusion, this topic also presents some important guidelines for communicating effectively based on Hofstede's dimensions. After you've finished this book, you'll be much more aware of the differences among cultures. And you'll have a good sense of how you need to approach others from different cultures in order to maximize your communication opportunities with them. But before you begin the book, there is one important disclaimer you should be aware of. The factors and dimensions that Hall and Hofstede identified are often applied to groups and cultures, but not every member of a group behaves the same way. Indeed, groups that operate within societies and cultures often behave differently than the culture itself.

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Cultural Differences\*\* is an indispensable guide for navigating the complexities of global business in an increasingly interconnected world. This comprehensive book provides a roadmap for understanding and embracing cultural differences, empowering readers to succeed in international markets and build strong cross-cultural relationships. Through a comparative approach, De-Mystifying Global Business: Navigating Cultural Differences examines the cultural nuances and business practices of different regions, highlighting the key differences and similarities that impact global business operations. Readers will gain insights into the cultural values, communication styles, negotiation tactics, and leadership approaches of various cultures, enabling them to adapt their strategies and behaviors accordingly. Cultural intelligence is a crucial element in global business success. De-Mystifying Global Business: Navigating Cultural Differences provides practical strategies for developing cultural intelligence, enabling readers to adapt their behavior, communication, and decision-making to different cultural contexts. By understanding the cultural factors that influence business practices, readers can build strong relationships with international partners, clients, and colleagues, fostering collaboration and mutual understanding. Effective communication is the foundation of successful cross-cultural interactions. De-Mystifying Global Business: Navigating Cultural Differences explores the challenges and opportunities of communicating across cultures, providing guidance on how to bridge language barriers, interpret nonverbal cues, and convey messages effectively. Readers will learn how to adapt their communication style, tone, and body language to different cultural norms, ensuring their message is understood and respected. De-Mystifying Global Business: Navigating Cultural Differences emphasizes the importance of creating an inclusive workplace that values and leverages diversity. Readers will learn how to foster a culture of respect, equality, and belonging, enabling all employees to contribute their unique perspectives and talents to the organization. By embracing diversity, organizations can enhance creativity, innovation, and problem-solving capabilities, gaining a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. In today's interconnected world, cultural understanding is not a luxury but a necessity. De-Mystifying Global Business: Navigating Cultural Differences is an invaluable resource for business professionals, entrepreneurs, and anyone seeking to navigate the complexities of global business. Its practical insights, real-world examples, and actionable strategies will empower readers to build cross-cultural bridges, achieve success in international markets, and contribute to a more inclusive and globally connected business environment. If you like this book, write a review on google books!

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cultural communication differences: Cross-Cultural Differences Veronica Wellein, 2008-10-24 Inhaltsangabe:Introduction: We are living in an internationalized world; global trade keeps increasing and more companies from many countries around the world are going national at an astounding rate. This is a reflection of strong economic growth around the world and the globalization of the economy and corporations. Offices are spread from one continent to another and travel is essential to business. This is the reason why business travel is increasing, states Hubert Joly, president and chief executive officer of CWT. In today s business world, you might well find yourself as an international manager in a foreign subsidiary of an American firm, facing on a daily basis all aspects of international management. Or you could end up at the home office in Germany coordinating operations with foreign affiliates. Or you could travel to countries like Japan or China, negotiating export sales or dealing with suppliers, customers, or franchise parties. Many different kinds of positions are available in the global arena, and training in international and cross-cultural management and negotiation styles is becoming a critical ingredient in moving up to high-level positions in global organizations. In 2006, a record 30.1 million U.S. travelers visited overseas markets, an increase of five percent from 2005. One of the top five overseas markets visited by U.S. travelers in 2006 was Germany. China (if combining travel the PRC and Hong Kong) would have tied as second. Contributing to the new record for outbound travel, seven of the top 20 U.S. outbound destination markets posted records in 2006, including Japan and China. Hundreds of thousands of jobs in the Germany owe their existence and sustainment to business travel. In Germany, the effects of a growing European Union and worldwide business travel create a stable demand for modern transport infrastructures and services. The USA is one of the two most important business travel destinations for the German economy, closely followed by China. Two markets will dominate travel interests in the future: the USA and China. No other countries will be as important for business trips as these two different giants. China's economy still enjoys a huge growing potential although its gross domestic product (GDP) has maintained a double-digit growth for four straight years and hit a new high of 10.7 in the first three quarters of 2006. The growth rate of China's labor productivity stood at 9.5 percent last year, [...]

**cultural communication differences: The Health Care Professional's Guide to Cultural Competence - E-Book** Rani Hajela Srivastava, 2022-05-10 - UNIQUE approach looks at populations the way health care workers encounter them, not by ethno-cultural/religious labels. - Accessible writing style relays information in a balanced and concise manner for undergraduate and graduate students as well as health care professionals. - Multidisciplinary perspective is provided by authors who represent a variety of health disciplines and cultural identities, who may be educators or practitioners, each presenting complex ideas in understandable ways and controversial ideas in a

transparent way. - Cultural Considerations in Care and Cultural Competence in Action boxes integrate theory into practice and invite critical self-reflection. - Teaching and learning tools include learning objectives and key terms at the beginning of each chapter, plus end-of-chapter group activities, review questions, and more. - NEW! New chapters on Indigenous health, sexual and gender diversity, immigrant and refugee health, and community health are added to this edition, and new topics include cultural safety, cultural humility, the impacts of racism, working with interpreters and the use of technology, palliative care, and more. - NEW! UNIQUE! Cultural competence and safety perspectives throughout the text help you to be more responsive in delivering culturally safe care, and in reaching the goal of equity and culturally competent care. - NEW! Discussion of cultural issues addresses power, privilege, intersectionality, equity, advocacy, and being an ally. - NEW! Up-to-date content includes the latest statistics, guidelines, research, references, and resources. - NEW! Evolve website enhances your understanding with review questions, unfolding case studies, and more.

**cultural communication differences:** Cross cultural differences and their implications for managing intercultural differences in business contexts Marie Hildebrand, 2018-09-20 Seminar paper from the year 2018 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, grade: 1,0, Fresenius University of Applied Sciences Hamburg, language: English, abstract: As a result of globalization, many firms have started to compete and work on a worldwide basis. This situation has required organizations to manage their workforces effectively in order to expand into global markets and target different consumer groups. Moreover, the process of globalization causes more exposure to diversity, not only in daily but also in business life. Managing diversity has therefore become a strategic focus of management in organizations which enables companies to gain competitive advantages on the global market. With increasing relevance of the outlined issue several frameworks for categorizing, analyzing and comparing cultures can be found in literature. Two frameworks that have received a great deal of research attention are Hofstede's study of work values and Trompenaars' broad-based studies of value orientations. This paper provides an insight into the existing conventional culture paradigms by giving a brief introduction to the term culture and exposing the two mentioned models. Subsequently, the last chapter outlines possible implications for managing intercultural differences in business contexts.

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