

## CROSS CULTURAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION – SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstract

In the last decades, global economy set some new standards and became so significant that corporate interdependence became more important for successful business. Organizations are expanding around the world, which leads to increased sensitivity towards cultural differences. In order to gain success in the global marketplace, companies need to be culturally tolerant. Corporate analysts argue that the key to global business success depends on effective cross-cultural etiquette and global workforce diversity management [1]. This paper analyses the impact of sociological and psychological factors on cross cultural business communication.

**Keywords:** *marketing, cross cultural, business, communication*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Today's business environment is rapidly changing and includes different and various geographic locations and cultures. The question that clearly indicates is how to communicate effectively with individuals who speak another language or who rely on different approaches to reach a common goal. In these terms, cross-cultural communication is very important. Culture has been defined as the main backstage where consumption behaviors are assumed and where certain products have acquired a particular symbolism [2, 3]. The term of ethnomarketing also appears and it can be defined as recognizing culture as the frame and the essence that drives contemporary businesses [3]. The main purpose of this study is to explore the cross-cultural nature of business communications from sociological and psychological aspects. The methodology of this study is based on theoretical analysis of the researches that are done in this field.

### 2. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

*Cross-cultural psychology* can be defined as "the scientific study of human behavior and its transmission, taking into account the ways in which behaviors are shaped and influenced by social and cultural forces" [4]. That way, culture may be defined as "the

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shared way of life of a group of people." [4]. Berry [5] proposes that the goals of cross-cultural psychology are "to transport current hypotheses and conclusions about human behaviour to other cultural contexts in order to test their validity", "to explore new cultural systems to discover psychological phenomena not available in the first culture", and "to integrate psychological knowledge gained from these two activities, and to generate a more pan-human psychology that would be valid for all people". The most used model in cross-cultural psychology is The Berry model of acculturation by John Widdup Berry, which is a bidimensional model constructed in a 2x2 matrix and is based on yes-no questions. This model categorizes attitudes of individuals toward contact with new cultures. Also, Berry [6] proposed two domains in the field of group relations – acculturation and ethnic relations (Figure 1). These factors, eventually, lead to outcomes that can range from conflict and stress to harmony and effectiveness [6].

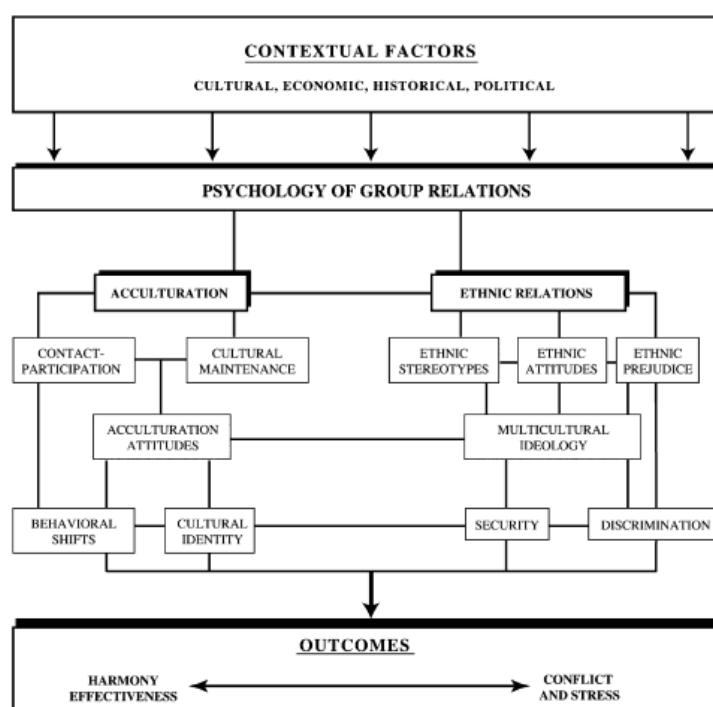


Figure 1. Psychology of group relations: contexts, processes and outcomes (Berry, 2005)

### 3. SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Now a days it is considered that marketing is a cultural framework. It is suggested that societies are subculturally determined and almost all countries consist of distinct subcultures [7]. That said, the interest in cross-cultural differences between countries and their ethnicities has become bigger. Culture is, here, assumed to guide the company's success. Faced with the necessity mainly experienced by small and mediumsize organizations to incorporate culture in their process of conception, implementation and control of marketing activities, *ethnomarketing* has emerged as an alternative approach [3]. Ethnomarketing consists of four dimensions: ethnicity, ethnoconsumerism, cultural dimensions of markets and marketing-oriented organizational culture, and also has three main functions: to comprehend consumers, co conquer customers and conserve clients [3]. When discussed about cross-cultural communication, there's a term that is often used for

describing interpersonal relationships between culturally diverse people. *Intercultural sensitivity* is defined as a sensitivity to the importance of cultural differences and to the points of view of people in other cultures [8]. Intercultural sensitivity is important because, in order to achieve success, companies need to choose people who can adapt in a cross-cultural way [9]. Kealey and Ruben [10], found six main factors that determine intercultural competence and that most of the researchers agreed on: empathy, respect, interest in local culture, flexibility, tolerance, and technical skill. Also, there were four factors that were found among people who are successful in an intercultural world: open-mindedness, sociability, positive self-image, and initiative. Most importantly, to be effective in another culture, people must be interested in other cultures, sensitive and willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures [8]. DiMaggio [11], developed „cultural schemes“ that focus on the interaction of shared cognitive structures and factors such as material culture, mediamessages and conversation that activate shared structures – „cultural schemes“. One of the techniques for measurement of shared cultural schemes is Relational Class Analysis (RCA) that uses „relationality“ to quantify the extent in which two respondents follow a shared scheme. Relationality is defined as the „extent to which two individuals exhibit a similar pattern of association between measures of opinion on issues that constitute a particular social domain; it is interpreted as a measure of their shared understanding of the structure of that domain“ [12].

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The major reasons for business failure that are identified in this field are the lack of intercultural competences, problems regarding cultural sensitivity and assets to building trust. Intercultural competences and communications are very valued in international business. This paper has shown that sociological and psychological factors in cross-cultural communication are interrelated. An examination of the literature shows that recent studies do not address the relationship between these factors, but most of them focus on comparative studies between different countries or issues of communication in companies. Integration of communication, cross-cultural psychology and sociology will give us insight into the important relations between communication, psychology, sociology and the contribution of culture to all of them. Psychology and sociology can help people to have better skills to work within different cultures, to explore and understand how and why differences exist and to promote understanding, because it is „the first step to developing harmonious intercultural relations“ [13]. Based on this, we can set some parameters that can provide business success: tolerance, understanding, empathy, respect, interest in other cultures, flexibility, open-mindedness, sociability and cross-culture adaptation or intercultural sensitivity.

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