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KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth

Aim of the Module *"Intercultural Management Skills"*

This module will focus on enhancing intercultural management skills, directly addressing challenges identified in the research activity such as stereotyping, bias, and discrimination.

Participants will learn to navigate diverse business environments, promoting inclusivity and understanding different communication styles.

The goal is to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to effectively manage and thrive in culturally diverse settings.

Learning Outcomes

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Understand different communication styles used in culturally diverse contexts

Recognise the importance of diversity and inclusion in entrepreneurial activities

Identify and overcome cultural biases that may influence entrepreneurial decisions

Apply strategies to effectively manage intercultural challenges in a business environment
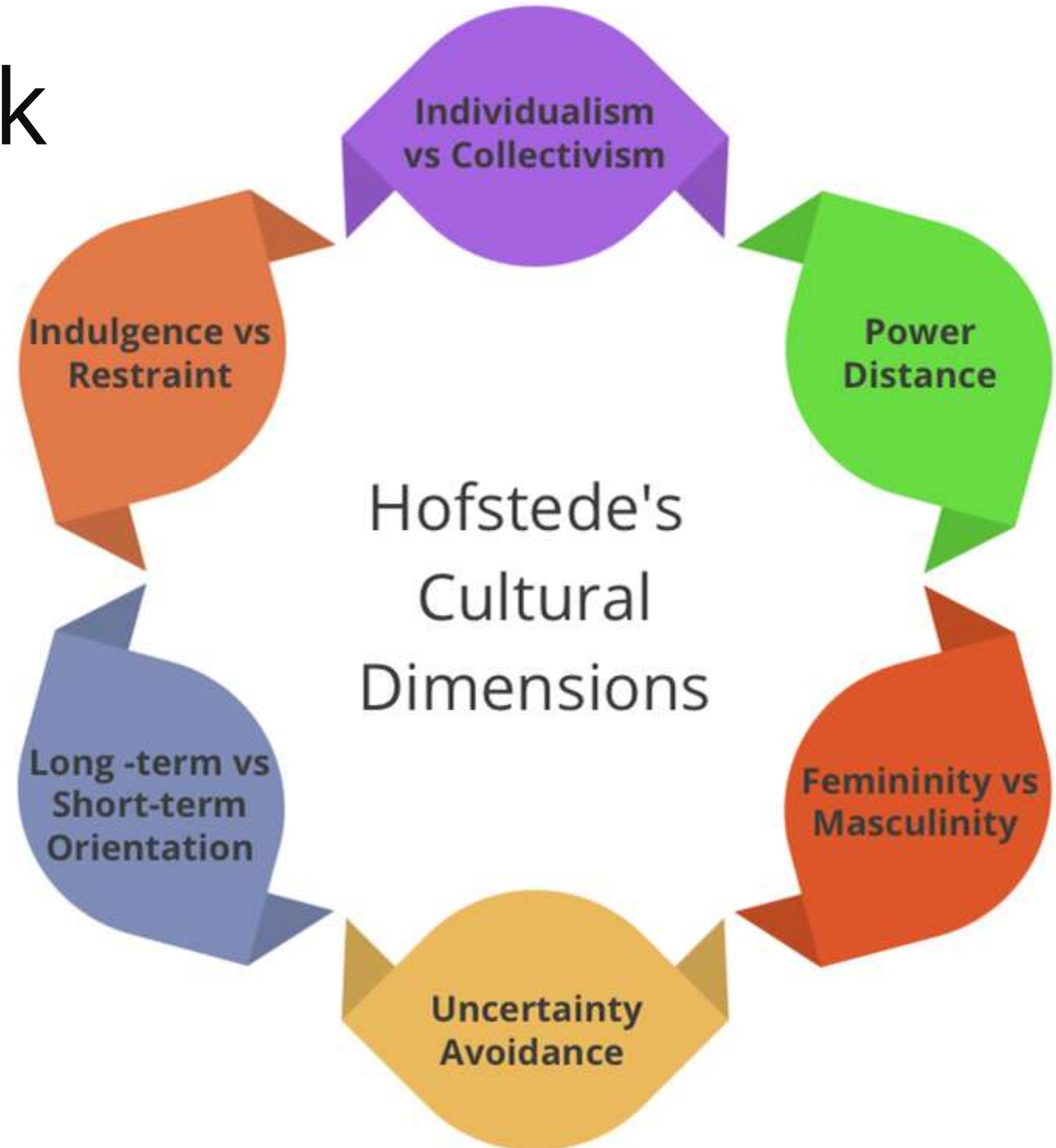
Co-funded by the European Union

Key Learning Elements

Theoretical framework

1. Cultural Dimensions theory

- Developed by Prof. Geert Hofstede (Dutch social psychologist) in his work *Cultural Dimensions Theory* (1970s)

- Based on Hofstede's study of over 100,000 employees in a multinational corporation

- Describes how a society's culture affects the values of its members and how these values are manifested in behavior

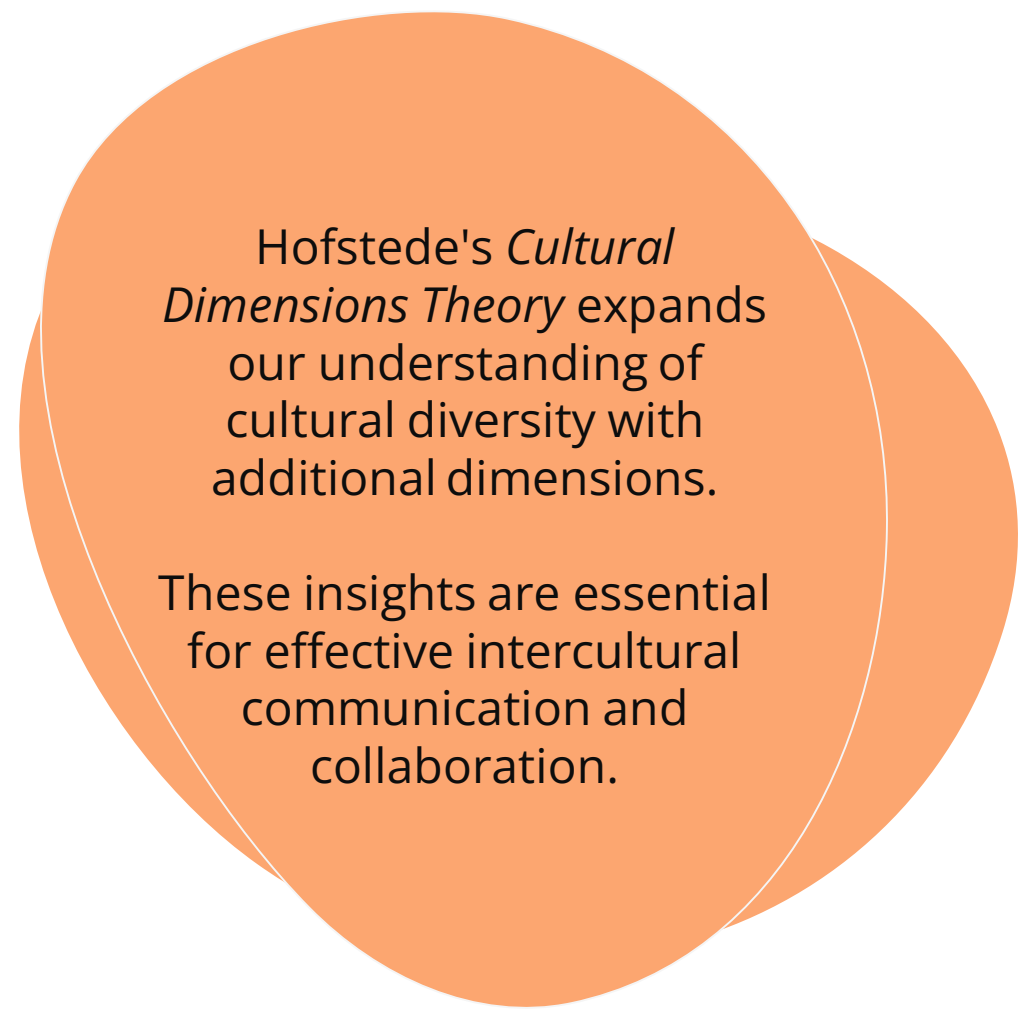- Six key dimensions that help to explain differences between cultures

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

- Individualism vs Collectivism
- Power Distance
- Femininity vs Masculinity
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Long-term vs Short-term Orientation
- Indulgence vs Restraint

Power distance: Measures the degree of acceptance of power inequalities in a society.

Individualism vs. collectivism: Refers to the degree to which people consider themselves autonomous or part of groups.

Masculinity vs. femininity: The distribution of emotional roles between the genders.

Uncertainty avoidance: A society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity.

Long-term orientation vs. short-term normative orientation: Reflects the importance given to long-term values such as perseverance and thrift compared to short-term values such as respect for traditions and achieving immediate results.

Hofstede's *Cultural Dimensions Theory* expands our understanding of cultural diversity with additional dimensions.

These insights are essential for effective intercultural communication and collaboration.

2. Understanding cultural depth

Culture is like an **iceberg**, with visible aspects representing only a fraction of its entirety.

Edward T. Hall's *Cultural Iceberg Model* sheds light on the hidden dimensions of culture that profoundly shape human behavior and interactions.

- **Surface culture:**
Observable aspects like language and food.

- **Deep culture:**
Less visible aspects such as beliefs and values.

The Cultural Iceberg

www.janinesmusicroom.com
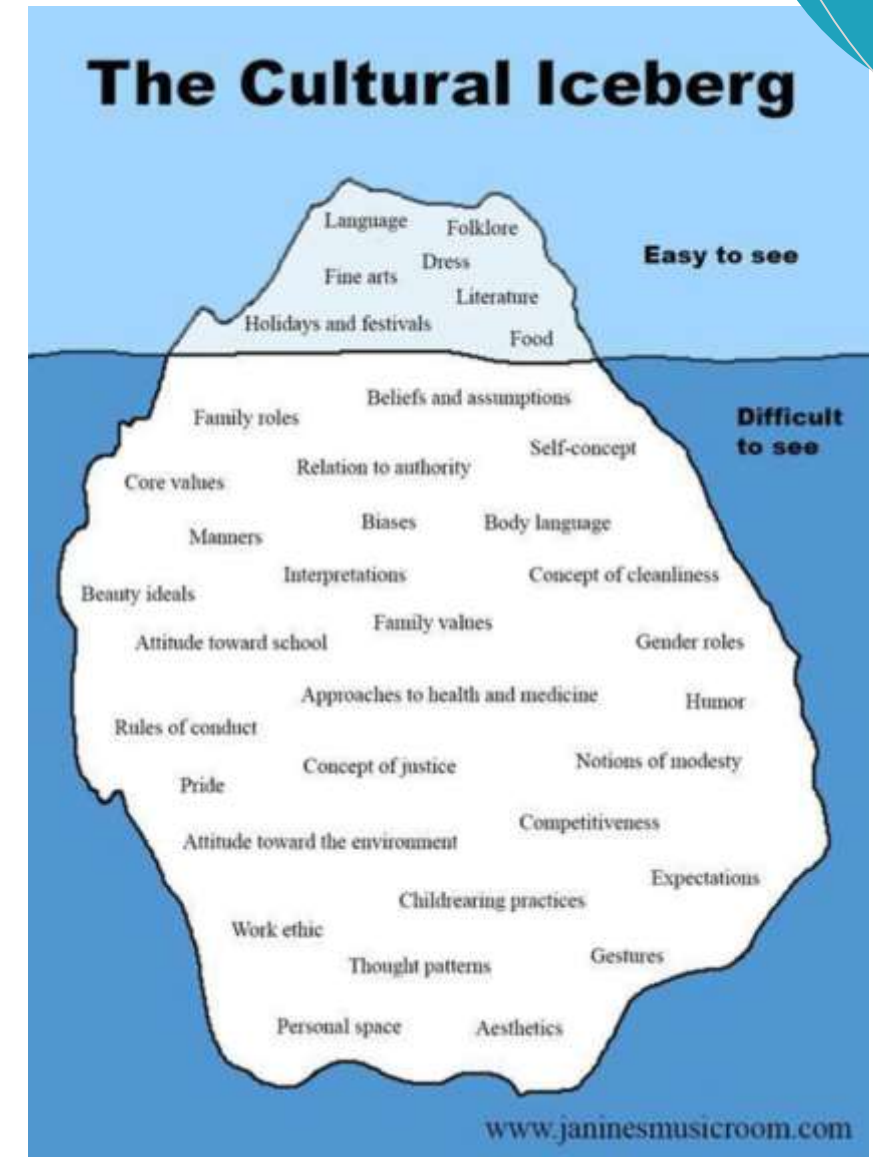
3. Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)

ICC is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations.

Key Components of ICC:

1. Skills: Practical communication abilities that facilitate smooth interaction with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. These skills enable individuals to navigate cultural differences effectively and build meaningful connections.

2. Knowledge: Understanding cultural differences and similarities is crucial for avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts. By acquiring cultural knowledge, individuals can adapt their communication style and behavior to suit diverse cultural contexts.

3. Attitudes: Open-mindedness, curiosity, and a willingness to learn and adapt are indispensable for fostering positive relationships and leveraging cultural diversity as a strength in entrepreneurial endeavors.

ICC serves as a valuable asset for young entrepreneurs, facilitating successful negotiations, partnership building, and business expansion in the global market.

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Decoding communication patterns

It is clear now that how we convey and interpret messages varies significantly across cultures.

In the realm of entrepreneurship, effective communication is paramount.

By unraveling the dichotomy between **high-context and low-context communication**, as well as **direct and indirect communication**, participants can gain invaluable insights into tailoring their messages for diverse audiences.

High-context vs. Low-context Communication (Edward Hall):

High-context Communication:

- Relies on implicit cues and non-verbal communication.

- Messages embedded in shared context and cultural understanding.

Low-context Communication:

- Depends on explicit verbal expression.

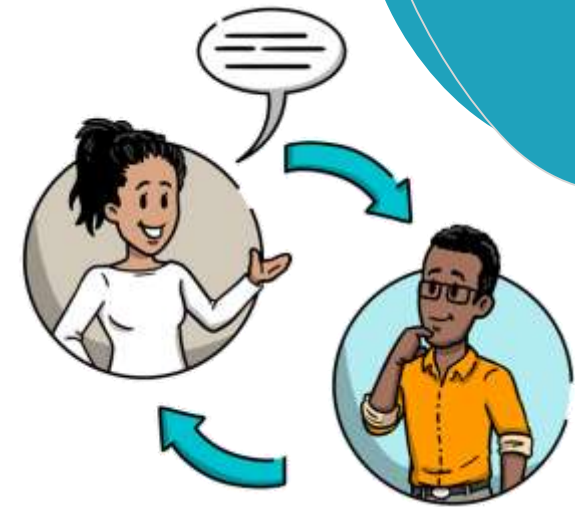- Messages conveyed directly with minimal reliance on non-verbal cues.

Direct vs. Indirect Communication:

Direct Communication:

- Clear and straightforward expression.

- Messages are conveyed explicitly without ambiguity.

Indirect Communication:

- Subtle and nuanced conveyance.

- Messages inferred through implications and contextual cues.

Tips for effective communication:

• **Adapt your style:** Be aware of your audience's cultural background and adjust your communication style accordingly (also written communication);

• **Be clear and respectful:** Ensure your message is clear, but also be mindful of cultural sensitivities;

• **Observe and learn:** Pay attention to non-verbal cues and contextual hints, especially in high-context and indirect communication cultures;

• **Ask for feedback:** Encourage open dialogue to ensure your message is understood as intended.

In general, cultural misunderstandings can arise in various settings of the business sphere, and if not addressed properly, they can lead to conflicts and miscommunications.

Watch the video to learn practical tips and operational strategies to avoid cultural misunderstandings, for example, during a business trip.

By understanding and respecting cultural differences, you can foster stronger relationships, improve communication, and achieve more harmonious and productive interactions in both business and also personal contexts.

How to Avoid Cultural Misunderstandings

Focusing on diversity, inclusion, and overcoming biases is key to fostering a productive and harmonious business environment.

Benefits of diversity and inclusion:

- Creativity and innovation: diverse teams generate innovative solutions;

- Better decision-making: leveraging diverse viewpoints improves decisions;

- Attracting talent: inclusive workplaces attract and retain top talent;

- Employee satisfaction: valued employees are more satisfied and productive.

To create a productive and inclusive work environment, **it's crucial to overcome biases**, such as:

- Stereotyping: generalized beliefs about a group of people;

- Prejudice: preconceived opinions not based on reason or actual experience;

- Discrimination: unjust treatment of different categories of people.

Strategies to overcome biases:

1) Self-awareness: recognize and acknowledge your own biases;

2) Training: engage in diversity and inclusion education;

3) Policies: implement and advocate for inclusive policies;

4) Encourage diverse perspectives: value and seek out different viewpoints;

5) Accountability: seek feedback and ensure accountability for biased behaviors.

Case Studies

Case Study 1

Scenario: You are leading a multicultural team in a tech startup based in a major city.

Recently, there have been tensions among team members from different cultural backgrounds. Some members feel their ideas are not given enough consideration during team meetings, while others perceive certain team members as dominating discussions.

Reflection questions:

1. **Identify cultural dimensions:** How might concepts like power distance and individualism vs. collectivism manifest in this team dynamic?

2. **Communication styles:** Considering high-context vs. low-context communication, how might misinterpretations occur during team interactions?

3. **Bias and stereotypes:** What biases or stereotypes could potentially affect team dynamics? How might these biases be addressed to foster a more inclusive environment?

Case Study 2

Google Inc. is renowned for its robust commitment to diversity and inclusion, which plays a pivotal role in driving innovation and fostering a vibrant workplace culture. The company's approach serves as a prime example of how embracing intercultural diversity can yield significant benefits across various facets of business operations.

As of 2021, we've reached our goal of **improving leadership representation of Black+, Latino+, and Native American+ Googlers by 30%**, and we're on track to double Black+ representation throughout our U.S. offices by 2025. As we work towards our representation goals, we're focusing on more than just hiring.

About Google
https://about.google › belonging

Building a Sense of Belonging at Google and Beyond

52 countries represented

30% increase in leadership representation of Black+, Latinx+, and Native American+ Googlers by 2025

Learn about our hiring goals

Reflection questions:

1. How do you think Google's approach to intercultural diversity contributes to its reputation as an innovative leader in the technology industry?

2. What specific benefits do you think Google derives from having a diverse workforce in terms of creativity and product development?

3. Do you believe Google's inclusive culture helps attract and retain top talent globally?

4. Why do you think it is important for companies in general to actively promote intercultural diversity and inclusion in today's globalized business environment?

5. How can other organizations learn from Google's example to enhance their own diversity and inclusion initiatives?

Activity – Enhancing intercultural communication

Objective: To reflect on a real-life scenario involving cultural misalignment in business communication and brainstorm alternative approaches for improved intercultural understanding.

Scenario: *Sarah, CEO of SolarTech Solutions, traveled to Seoul, South Korea for a critical meeting with EcoSolar Korea, a potential manufacturing partner. The goal was to discuss a collaboration to expand into the Asian market. However, Sarah's direct communication style clashed with Korean executives' preference for consensus-building and relationship-building.*

During the meeting, Sarah presented detailed plans without much discussion, aiming for efficiency. This approach, effective in American culture, made Korean executives feel their input was overlooked. They valued consensus and felt Sarah's directness was assertive and disrespectful of their customs, causing tension.

2 groups: One group will discuss from Sarah's perspective, while the other will discuss from the Korean executives' perspective (20 min)

Guidelines:

Sarah's perspective group:

- Reflect on Sarah's approach during the meeting. Why might her direct communication style have caused misunderstandings with the Korean executives?
- Brainstorm alternative communication strategies Sarah could have employed to better align with Korean cultural norms.
- Discuss how adapting communication style could enhance mutual understanding and collaboration in future interactions.

Korean Executives' Perspective Group:

- Discuss how Sarah's approach impacted the meeting from your perspective.
- Reflect on the cultural values (consensus-building, relationship-building) that Sarah's approach may have overlooked.
- Brainstorm ways the Korean executives could have bridged the communication gap or provided feedback to Sarah during the meeting.

Group sharing and reflection (10 min)

- Share insights and alternative strategies.
- Discuss cultural sensitivity's role in international business.
- Apply insights to enhance intercultural competence in professional settings.

Key Discussion Points:

- Understanding cultural differences in business communication.
- Developing alternative strategies for inclusive cross-cultural interactions.
- Applying lessons from scenarios to improve global business relationships.

Additional Resources

Additional Resources

Managing Intercultural Teams

https://www.modul.ac.at/uploads/files/Theses/Bachelor/Undergrad_2020/BSC_2020/1721007_CHAPLIK_Kristina_Thesis_BSc.pdf

Managing Intercultural Teams

https://hbr.org/2006/11/managing-multicultural-teams

The surprising paradox of intercultural communication | TEDxNelson

https://youtu.be/JzJNA-3b6NA?feature=shared

How Cultural Differences Affect Business

https://youtu.be/zQvqDv4vbEg?feature=shared

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Additional Tips

Educate yourself about different cultures, their values, communication styles, and business etiquette.

Reflect on your own cultural interactions and seek opportunities for improvement and growth.

Encourage open dialogue and feedback to ensure mutual understanding in cross-cultural interactions.

Invest time in building relationships across cultures based on trust, respect, and understanding.

References

References

https://www.modul.ac.at/uploads/files/Theses/Bachelor/Undergrad_2020/BSC_2020/1721007_CHAPLIK_Kristina_Thesis_BSc.pdf

https://hbr.org/2006/11/managing-multicultural-teams

https://youtu.be/JzJNA-3b6NA?feature=shared

https://youtu.be/zQvqDv4vbEg?feature=shared

https://www.mindtools.com/a1ecvyx/hofstedes-cultural-dimensions

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347909410_A_Case_Study_on_Increasing_Intercultural_Communicative_Competence_Exploring_Skills_Attitudes_and_Knowledge

https://open.lib.umn.edu/communication/chapter/8-4-intercultural-communication-competence/

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280948728_Nam_K_A_2015_High-context_and_low-context_communication_In_J_M_Bennett_ed_The_SAGE_Encyclopedia_of_Intercultural_Competence_Thousand_Oaks_CA_Sage_Publication_Inc

https://youtu.be/k3dq9pl0MPo?feature=shared

Thank You!