



THE IMPACT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN MAA-SAI MARA UNIVERSITY AMONG THE INSTITUTION STAFF.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Background of the study

Culture refers to the arts, customs, lifestyles, background and habits that characterize a society while communication is the sharing and interpreting meaning and information using symbols and behavior. Intercultural communication therefore involves understanding symbols, values and behaviors since they vary across cultures and how they impact communication and interactions among individuals. There is need for intercultural understanding in organizations especially with the increased globalization as it makes intercultural communication an imperative for many individuals and the organization itself. This understanding is to enable an individual to become competent communicator in cross-cultural communication situation as communication is the backbone of every organization.

This thesis reports the findings through the study to establish the impact of intercultural communication in Maasai Mara University, how it has affected the functioning of the organization and how its success can be employed by other organizations.

As a result of academics and employment in Maasai Mara University, there is increased number of staff comprising of people from different cultures. Due to the increasing globalization and cross-cultural interaction increases the importance of the realization of the successful intercultural cooperation and interactions among the university staff members. In this context, the identification of friction points and the improvement of the potentials of intercultural communication in Maasai Mara University is an important project that will enable to establish the positive and negative impacts of intercultural communication. On the basis of the research study the author shows that the formation of a culture that allows compromise can be considered as a possible success factor. The recognition and acknowledgment of cultural differences is an important prerequisite for the academic and cooperation success of Maasai Mara University. The author believes that establishing the impact of the intercultural (or the cultural society) communication influences the understanding of the management systems and communications in the university and has a significant impact on the university's success through the intercultural communication of the staffs.

1.2 Statement of problem

Since Maasai Mara university staff has different culture of which each culture has its distinct aspects, intercultural communication can be the cause of conflict and disorder. There are three main issues which are at the root of the problem of intercultural miscommunication: language barrier, cultural diversity and ethnocentrism.

The problems in intercultural communication usually come from problems in message transmission and in reception. In communication between people of the same culture, the person who receives the message interprets it based on values, beliefs, and expectations for behavior similar to those of the person who sent the message. When this happens, the way the message is interpreted by the receiver is likely to be fairly similar to what the speaker intended. However, when the receiver of the message is a person from a different culture, the receiver uses information from his or her culture to interpret the message. The message that the receiver interprets may be very different in meaning as from what the speaker intended.

Non-verbal communication has been shown to account for between 65% and 93% of interpreted communication. Minor variations in body language, speech rhythms, and punctuality often cause mistrust and misperception of the situation among cross-cultural parties. This is where nonverbal communication can cause problems with intercultural communication. Misunderstandings with nonverbal communication can lead to miscommunication and insults with cultural differences. For example, a handshake in one culture may be recognized as appropriate, whereas another culture may recognize it as rude or inappropriate.

Effective communication depends on the informal understandings among the parties involved that are based on the trust developed between them. When trust exists, there is implicit understanding within communication, cultural differences may be overlooked, and problems can be dealt with more easily. The meaning of trust and how it is developed and communicated vary across societies. Similarly, some cultures have a greater propensity to be trusting than others.

1.3 Study objectives

1.3.1 General objectives

1. To evaluate the impact of intercultural communication in Maasai Mara university among the institution staff.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

1. To find out how staff personnel communicate and relate with each other
2. To explore if there is any challenge in communicating with individuals from various cultures or social groups
3. To explain how improving intercultural communications will help in bettering the institution

1.4 Significance of the study

Study impacts of helps in;

1. Future researches: The findings of this study may help future scholars in carrying out their researches, because it may open up or reveal certain vital areas that may never have been tackled before, involving cases of murder in Kenya.
2. Legal practitioners: The study may provide insights to various legal practitioners such as lawyers and judges, by providing them with vital research findings that add to their knowledge about criminal law. This will provide them with a platform to establish measures and ensure that minimal or no negative effects occur on the innocent public.
3. Identification of intercultural miscommunication such as language as a barrier, cultural diversity and ethnocentrism, which helps to explore other cultures non-verbal communication signs while interacting with them.

1.5 Scope

This study focused on the impacts of intercultural communication in Kenya among Maasai Mara University staff members. The study is limited to this particular public institution that is Maasai Mara University, and specifically focuses on university staff rather than the entire university student fraternity.

The study is almost limited to the staff members in Maasai Mara University who are from different cultures. The staff members should also be interacting, coordinating and also socialize in the area of work.

1.6 Limitations and delimitations of the study

1. Some respondents did not return their questionnaires within the appropriate time scope, or even return them at all, and this greatly interfered with the feedback process. Despite this, the researcher did a physical follow up on the filled questionnaires to ensure they were returned, and printed an additional number of questionnaires to ensure a high return rate the respondents are unwilling to give information and think that the researcher is biased about their culture.
2. Some respondents gave untruthful responses and a very small number was uncomfortable to share information on how they had been personally impacted intercultural communication. Nevertheless, the researcher assured them of confidentiality, and no follow up whatsoever, since this study was purely done for academic purposes, rather than personal interests.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the needs as well as the problems and challenges of intercultural communication. The outcome of the extensive literature review on intercultural communication is a critical review of the basic definitions, identified needs and problems and degree of realization. At the end, the reader will be provided with a derivation of further questions which arose and should be discussed during future research in this field of study. This chapter is also aimed at reviewing literature that is of importance to the study. The study sought to gather and assess the views of famous scholars and legal practitioners on these intercultural communication. The study also aimed at reviewing the different views and opinions of various researchers who had done similar studies before, and focused on specific main theories that guided the study

2.1.1 Basic definitions

Communication can be described as a process of intentionally stimulating meaning in other humans through the use of symbols.

Culture refers to all the characteristics common to a particular group of people that are learned and not given by nature (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952).

Intercultural communication refers to communication among people of diverse cultures. But there is not only one way of defining intercultural communication. Some authors describe intercultural communication as communication across cultures (Asante, Newmark and Blake, 1979, p.11 in Pinto 2000)

2.2 Theoretical review

2.2.1 Intercultural Communication Model

In their Intercultural Communication Model, Samovar and Porter (1997) point out that as cultures differ from one another, the communication practices and behaviors of people will inevitably vary as a result of their different perceptions of the world. Intercultural communication can therefore be defined as the study of communication between people whose cultural awareness and symbol systems are sufficiently distinguished to modify their communication. They exemplify the process of how the meaning of a message changes when it is encoded by a person from one culture and decoded by a person from another culture. Possibly, this message will then be interpreted differently than it was intended. Their model indicates the possibility of misunderstandings which always exist in intercultural communication, especially if a huge difference within each culture can be identified.

2.2.2 Rainbow Model

The goal of achieving a high degree of communication competence in intercultural contact situations is a very challenging task, because the exposed risks of misinterpretations due to different cultural and contextual relevant behaviors are often factors that foster failures in these tasks. Major driving factors for the increased misunderstandings in intercultural communications are increased levels of uncertainty, ambiguity, anxiety, and excessive demands on knowledge or rather over motivated skills and performance application (Gudykunst and Kim 2003). These changes require further development and adaptation of an appropriate and effective framework to succeed in intercultural contexts. The constantly growing complexity and globalization of the world requires a steady evolution of interactive perspectives and approaches to life. The modern understanding of intercultural communication is no exception to this necessity, especially in regard to the question, what makes a person a capable communicator across cultural boundaries and how is it possible to improve, evaluate and further develop this key competence.

2.3 Reviews of related research

2.3.1 Communication across cultures

Latest book of White hall, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and, importance for Survival*, Hofstede describes the common characteristics of an Individualist culture. Hofstede argues that the ties between people in Individualist cultures are loose and that “everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family only” (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 92). Conversely, Hofstede argues that in a Collectivist culture, “people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty” (92). Hofstede explains that the main difference between Individualist and Collectivist cultures is evidenced by identity, and whether this identity is more closely linked with the pronoun “I” or with the pronoun “we.” In a highly Individualist culture, an “I” consciousness is standard; emphasis is placed on self-orientation, identity is based on the individual, and individual initiative and achievement is valued (*Culture’s Consequences* 171). In a Collectivist culture, “we” consciousness is the standard, emphasis is placed on group orientation, and identity is based on belonging and membership (*Culture’s Consequences* 172)

2.3.2 Intercultural Technical Communication

The work of anthropologist Edward T. Hall and cultural sociologist Geert Hofstede is referenced in most intercultural technical communication studies. Hall offers technical communicators a way to explore cultural similarities and differences in communication by examining cultures based on indicators of high and low context. “Context” is defined as the “information that surrounds an event” and “contesting” is defined as the “process of filling in background data” (Hall and Hall 6-7). High-context messages are placed at one end of the communications continuum and low-context messages are placed at the other end. A high context communication or message is one in which much of the information is contained in the context (background information) and nonverbal cues, rather than expressed explicitly in words. A low-context communication is the mirror opposite, with much of the information contained in the specific message and words used.

2.4 Conclusion.

The chapter has elaborated on some definitions of terms, theoretical review and mentioned major theories; rainbow model and intercommunication theory. This will help in the next chapter. The chapter has also analyzed on the related research done by other researchers on the interpersonal communication. From the review of relevant theories and literature related to the study, the researcher found out that the Maasai Mara University staffs were impacted both negatively and positively by these intercultural communication.

Chapter three

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the procedures used to conduct the study, obtain data and test the research questions. It discusses the research design, the target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments used, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and conclusion.

3.2 Research Design

The study being exploratory and therefore descriptive in nature will adopt the qualitative research paradigm as the main method to exhaustively and effectively explore the intercultural relationship in Maasai Mara University. Qualitative methods are participatory in nature and seek to understand the reality of the situation from the actors' point of view (Kane 1995). In addition, a qualitative study implies an in-depth study that utilizes a variety of data collection techniques, like interviews, questionnaires and focused group discussions which envisage the wholeness of data (Kane 1995). Qualitative methods were therefore utilized to analyze the impact of intercultural communication in Maasai Mara University among the staff. To supplement the qualitative data, however, simple quantitative and qualitative methods were also utilized.

3.2 Population

The study population was Maasai Mara University staff members which targeted 300 members from different cultures (male-150 and female 150). This population comprised of both gender and should come from different ethnic communities with experiences of exchanging ideas from one another.

3.3 Sampling and Sampling techniques

3.3.1 Sampling size

A sample of 300 of the population was sampled according to different cultures to represent the population that answered through the questionnaire, interviews and observations that the researcher used.

3.3.2 Sampling techniques

The researcher applied stratified random sampling which is a technique where the researcher divides the entire population into different departments, then randomly selects the final subjects from the different departments (Exportable 2009). The researcher then used simple random sampling to pick people from each department that makes a total of 300 staff members being sampled then the results were generalized to the whole staff. This was helpful because it ensured the presence of the key group within the sample.

3.4 Data Collection instruments

The data collection instruments were; questionnaires, interviews, and observation. The researcher used these data collection sources to reconcile information from the university staff. The researcher decided to employ more than one data collection instruments to strengthen and give credibility to the study and to portray a true picture of the case under study. The essence of this was to aid reveal issues that would not be raised in others.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The reason the researcher chose to apply a questionnaire is because it is one of the famous tool that researchers and respondents use when collecting data. A questionnaire is also an instrument that is administered in the presence of the research. The researcher developed a well-structured questionnaire comprising of open and closed ended questions which was simple for respondents to answer.

3.4.2 Observation

The researcher also applied observation which involves looking and noting down issues regarding people's behaviors, settings, routines and so on. The researcher also made visits to various staff departments to ascertain if some of the things that will be raised in the interviews existed.

3.4.5 Interviews

The researcher also applied interviews which some of the staff members were interviewed on the way they interact with each other. The interviews were done within the university while some were conducted online through phone calls and the interviewees gave their points of view on how the difference in diversities really affected the relationship and communication between the staff.

3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of the study. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using a technique called "open coding" through the MS excel. This technique involves a process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data (Leady, 1993). Open coding enables the researcher to classify and categorize data so that, patterns can be discovered and conclusions drawn. The researcher made up codes as she progressed through the data. In this way the researcher searches for common dominant themes that appear in the transcripts of the data

3.6 Conclusion

The confidentiality of the respondent is kept unless he or she accepted to be mentioned in the research. The names of the respondent have been used anonymously representing the person who said the information for example man or woman are used to represent the respondents' names.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

The study was aimed at evaluating the impact of intercultural communication in Maasai Mara University among the institution staff with cultural diversity. 185 questionnaires were distributed and 115 interviews carried out with key informants. Respondents were given ample time to respond to the questionnaires hence there was a 100 percent response rate. The respondents were also guaranteed anonymity hence freely responded to the interviews as well as questionnaires.

4.1. Demographic Information of Respondents

4.1.1: Distribution of the Respondents by age

To ensure a representation of all ages within the company and its publics, the research sought to find out the age distribution of the respondents. See the table 4.1 with the findings.

Table 4.1: Age distribution of respondents

AGE DISTRIBUTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
60 years and above	30	10.0
50-59	45	15.0
40-49	51	17.0
30-39	81	27.0
20-29	99	33.0

TOTAL	300	100.0
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(Source: Field data)

From the table the majority group represented in the sample was for people within the age of 20-29 by approximately 33 percent. With a representation of 10 percent the age group of 60 years and above was the minority.

4.1.2: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

To achieve gender equity in the sample representation the study sought to know the distribution of the respondents on the basis of gender. This data has been represented by Table 4.2.

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
MALE	150	50.0
FEMALE	150	50.0
TOTAL	300	100.0

(Source: Field data)

From the data above there was an equal distribution of gender with a 50 percent from the male and the female respondents.

4.1.3 Table 4.3 Marital Status of Respondents

STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MARRIED	200	67.0
SINGLE	100	33.0
DIVORCED	-	-
TOTAL	300	100.0

(Source: Field Data)

The table above indicates that out of the 200 respondents are married, representing the majority by 67percent, while 100 represented by 33 percent are single and there was no divorced respondent.

4.1.4 Table 4.4 Respondents’ Educational Qualification

LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
PHD	40	13
MASTERS	90	30
DEGREE	120	40
DIPLOMA	50	17
TOTAL	300	100

(Source: Field Data)

The table 4.4 Indicates that majority of the respondents, represented by 40 percent are Degree holders while the minority respondents being 40 with a 13 percent are PHD holders.

4.1.5 Table 4.5 Duration of working in the Organization

DURATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1-5 YEARS	81	27
6-10 YEARS	141	47
11-15 YEARS	48	16
16 AND ABOVE	30	10
TOTAL	300	100

(Source: Field Data)

The table above represents the duration of which the respondents have been employed/worked with the organization. The majority with a 47 percent have worked 6-10 years while the minority with 10 percent have worked for 16years and above.

4.2 Issues of personal interaction in intercultural context.

4.2.1 Awareness of the intercultural climate within the organization.

The study sought to find out if the respondents were aware that they are working in an intercultural organization and if they recognize other cultures apart from their individual cultures. Table 4.6 gives the details.

Table 4.6: Awareness about the University’s Intercultural Climate

Awareness about the organization being an intercultural one	Frequency	Percentage
Aware	230	77
Not aware	70	23
TOTAL	300	100

(Source: Field Data)

Majority of the respondents with a 77 percent confirmed their awareness that they are working in an intercultural organization and that they recognize the presence of other cultures. Minority of the respondents with a 23 percent were not aware that the university staff includes individual from different cultures.

4.2.2 Perception towards the existing university’s intercultural climate of the organization

The study sought to investigate individual perception on the intercultural climate. This was aimed at finding if the respondents took the intercultural aspect positively or negatively as indicated in table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Perception Towards the Existing University’s Intercultural Climate

PERCPECTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
POSITIVE	47	16
NEGATIVE	183	61
NOT SURE	70	23
TOTAL	300	100

(Source: Field Data)

4.3 Aspects of Intercultural Communication Investigated.

The study investigated the challenges/disadvantages, opportunities and advantages of intercultural communication in a multicultural organization with reference to Maasai Mara University.

4.3.1 Communication Challenges in Intercultural Communication

In order to understand the negative perception from the respondents concerning working in an intercultural organization the study sought to find the challenges involved in intercultural communication as shown below in table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Communication Challenges in Intercultural Communication

CHALLENGE	FREQUENCY	PER- CENAGE
Direct Versus Indirect Communication	135	45
Trouble with accents and fluency	30	10
Different attitudes towards hierarchy and authority	60	20
Conflict norms for decision making	75	25

TOTAL	300	100
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(Source: Field Data)

From the table above the biggest challenge affecting the respondents with a majority percentage of 45 is the issue of direct versus indirect communication. On the other hand the least affecting challenge to the respondents with a minor percentage of 10 is trouble with accents and fluency.

4.3.2 Advantages of Intercultural Communication

The study sought to find out the advantages of intercultural communication. The results are in table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: Advantages of Intercultural Communication

ADVANTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT- AGE
Broader coverage of workers	150	50
New Communication Technology	105	35
Inclusion of different perspectives	45	15
TOTAL	300	100

(Source: Field Data)

From the table above the major advantage of intercultural communication in an organization with a 50 percentage is; Broader Coverage of workers while inclusion of perspectives is the minor advantage from the respondents view.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter a summary of the key findings out of the study, conclusions as well as the recommendations are presented.

5.1 Summary

This study found out that majority of the respondents with a 33 percentage belonged to the category of 20-29 years of age while those in the category of 60 years and above were the minority representing 10 percent. In terms of gender the female and male representatives were represented equally.

From the study it is evident that majority of the respondents have attained a degree, thus had rich knowledge on the impact of the intercultural climate of the organization. Majority of these respondents have also worked within as employees and with the organization as publics in a range of 6 to 10 years hence had a proper understanding on how the PR system of the organization works.

From the study it is evident that majority of respondents at 77 percent were aware that the university is a multicultural organization. On the contrary the minority at 23 percent were not aware due to them ignoring the existence of other staff member's culture. Majority of the respondents had a negative perception towards the organization being multicultural due to the disadvantages of intercultural communication.

The disadvantages as investigated by the study include:

- Direct versus indirect communication- communication in some cultures is direct and the meanings are obvious while in other cultures they tend to be more discrete than how they

present their message. As a result communication between these kinds of two cultures brings confusion.

- Trouble with accents and fluency-this is a challenge posed by language barrier in terms of accents and fluency. Due to influence of their native language employees might take a backseat in contributing to team issues as they fear being laughed at their accents and even being discriminated, Different attitudes towards hierarchy and authority- and conflict norms for decision making.

From the study intercultural communication provides for the following advantages:

- Broader coverage of workers.
- New Communication Technology.
- Inclusion of different perspectives.

5.3 Conclusion

According to the outcomes of the study, intercultural communication, simply referred to as face-to-face communication between people with different cultural backgrounds (Jandt, 2010), should perhaps from now on be assigned a more complex definition. This is because that both positive and negative effects are expressed in relation to the phenomenon (intercultural communication), which indicates that both benefits and difficulties can occur at a multicultural work place. The indication on what different people value as positive or negative opens up for possibilities to enhance the work standards.

From the study majority of the staff have a negative perception of the university being a multicultural workplace this is due to the challenges mentioned in the study which could lead to complicated issues such as; discrimination based on culture and cultural conflicts.

5.4 Recommendations

- To create a conducive intercultural workplace climate the study recommends that the university develop a value system that guides the way people behave towards one another. These key values required in the work environment are tolerance and respect. Every individual must be seen as an equal player and must live the values.
- The study also recommends that the management provides support in ensuring there is a conducive intercultural climate through: inclusion of all team members in problem solving, treating all employees with respect regardless of ethnicity & position, senior management showing constant support for diversity programs and visibly challenging any incidents of racism, sexism or discrimination.

APPENDIX 1

RESPONDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Section One: General Information

Kindly Tick (✓) the Appropriate Answer.

Q 1. What Is Your Age?

20-29 () 30-39 () 40-49 () 50-59 () Above 60 Years ()

Q 2. What Is Your Gender?

Male () Female ()

Q 3. Marital Status:

Married () Single () Divorced ()

Q.4. Highest Education Level:

Diploma () Degree () Masters () PHD ()

Q 5. Duration of Work (Years):

1-5 () 6-10 () 11-15 () Above 16 ()

Section Two: Awareness of University's Intercultural state and Perception.

Q 5. Are you aware that Maasai Mara University is an intercultural organization? YES () No ()

Q 6. What is your perception about the university's intercultural state? POSITIVE () NEGATIVE ()

Ex-

plain.....
.....
.....

Section Three: Challenges/ Difficulties and Advantages of Intercultural Communication.

Q 9. Identify the key challenge of intercultural communication:

- Direct and Indirect Communication
- Trouble with accent and fluency
- Different attitudes towards hierarchy and authority
- Conflict norms for decision making

Q 10. Identify the key advantage of intercultural communication:

- Broader coverage of workers
- New communication technology
- Inclusion of different perspectives

Section Four: Level of involvement of the Management in Managing Cultural Diversity

To what extent is the management involved in ensuring a conducive intercultural climate is provided for in the university?

Full Participation ()

Ex-

plain.....
.....
.....
.....

Partial Participation ()

Ex-

plain.....
.....
.....
.....

Zero Participation ()

Ex-

plain.....
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What is your perspective on intercultural communication and multicultural workforce? Do you think that creating an environment where employees of differing cultural Backgrounds can work together harmoniously, is possible?
2. In dealing with a cultural diverse workforce, what do you think is key to more effectively? Managing this environment, from an organizational and management point of View? What is being done in your organization?
3. What are the barriers to intercultural communication?
4. What are the advantages of intercultural communication?
5. What are your suggestions on how to manage intercultural communication in terms of management support and individual efforts?

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