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Lillian Chaney Jeanette Martin
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Table of Contents

1. The Nature of Intercultural Communication Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	1
2. Universal Systems Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	23
3. Contrasting Cultural Values Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	55
4. Cultural Shock Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	79
5. Language Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	99
6. Oral and Nonverbal Communication Patterns Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	125
7. Written Communication Patterns Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	153
8. Global Etiquette Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	177
9. Business and Social Customs Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	201
10. Intercultural Negotiation Process Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	225
11. Intercultural Negotiation Components Lilian Chaney/Jeanette Martin	255
Index	287

Contrasting Cultural Values

Objectives

Upon completion of this chapter, you will

- appreciate the role that values play in communicating effectively with persons from other cultures.
- understand differences in word meanings among cultures.
- learn how attribution and perception play a role in cultural values.
- appreciate attitude differences toward men and women in various cultures.
- understand how attitudes toward work and ethics vary with the culture.
- learn how religious influences impact cultural values.
- understand how individualism and collectivism play a role in cultural values.

VALUES

Values form the core of a culture. **Values** are social principles, goals, or standards accepted by persons in a culture. They establish what is proper and improper behavior as well as what is normal and abnormal behavior. Values are learned by contacts with family members, teachers, and religious leaders. What people hear, read, and watch on television influences their value systems.

People in various cultures have different attitudes toward women, ethical standards, and work. Semantic differences and attributions affect cultural values as do religious influences. Because the U.S. workplace is becoming increasingly diverse culturally, managers need to be aware of the values of all workers. Managers are more likely to understand what motivates people of different cultures and to deal effectively with problem situations if they understand the cultural background of the person.

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Contrasting Cultural Values

Some values held by people in the United States are not shared by people in other cultures. In their book *American Ways*, Althen and Bennett (2011) identify a number of U.S. values and assumptions, including equality, informality, individualism, directness, and attitude toward the future, time, and work.

People in the United States may claim that all persons are equal and that no person is superior to another simply because of wealth, education, or social status. In reality, subtle distinctions are made within a group to acknowledge status differences, many of which are nonverbal. Because of this belief in equality, U.S. Americans are uncomfortable with certain displays of respect, such as bowing, that are common in some cultures. Although inequalities do exist, many women hold positions of power and influence in education, government, and industry.

People in the United States are also rather informal when compared to people of other cultures. They often dress more casually. In fact, it is not unusual to see the president of the United States dressed in casual attire. The posture of U.S. people is often informal; assuming a slouched stance or putting feet on a desk or chair is not uncommon. The speech of U.S. people is also rather informal; they often address people they hardly know by their first names.

Another quality that people in the United States value is directness. They prefer that people be open and get to the point. Such sayings as "What is the bottom line?" and "Put your cards on the table" illustrate the importance placed on directness in the United States. In some cultures, such as those found in Asia, people do not value directness. They will not reveal their emotions using the same nonverbal cues as Westerners; therefore, people in the United States have difficulty reading Asian body language (the reverse is also true). U.S. Americans generally believe that honesty and truthfulness are important unless the truth would hurt a person's feelings or unless they do not know the person well enough to be candid. They are less concerned with saving face than are people in Asia.

People in the United States value time; they study time-management principles to learn how to get more work done in a day. They are concerned with punctuality for work and appointments, and they study ways of working more efficiently. The success of the fast-food industry in the United States is directly related to eating on the run rather than wasting time lingering over meals. In other parts of the world, mealtime is very leisurely. In many South American countries, businesses close for two hours in the middle of the day for a long meal and a *siesta* (rest), but people often work into the evening.

The importance of time to different cultures is directly related to religious dogma. The Puritans who came to the United States were more concerned with wasting time and with planning for the future than about the past or present. Native Americans, African Americans, Latin Americans, and Asians, however, come from a different combination of religious biases and cultural differences and are occupied with the past and present. One of the reasons Deming's theory of management was adopted in Japan before it was adopted in the United States was the amount of time it takes to formulate group decisions as opposed to individual decisions. The Japanese have always been team oriented; therefore, it was easier for Deming to sell them on his theories.

People in the United States do not place as great an emphasis on history as do people of many other cultures; they look to the future and consider change to be desirable, particularly if they are Christians. In the Asian, Arabic, and Latin cultures, the past is revered. Their future is determined by fate or, in some religions, by the Almighty. People of the Islamic faith believe that if they work hard and pray, everything will be as Allah desires. They simply try to live

Contrasting Cultural Values

in harmony with whatever changes occur, rather than seeking change, as is true in the U.S. culture. Table 1 contains contrasts of the priority of cultural leadership theories (CLT) of the different cluster groups in the House study (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004, p. 682).

A study of the chart reveals that while a culture may have some leadership characteristics that they share with another culture, no two cultures rank the leadership characteristics the same way.

TABLE 1 Ranking of Societal Clusters Using Absolute CLT (Cultural Leadership Theories) Scores

Charismatic/ Value Based	Team Oriented	Participative	Humane Oriented	Autonomous	Self-Protective
<i>Higher</i>	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Higher</i>
Anglo L. America Southern Asia Germanic E. Nordic E.	L. America	Germanic E. Nordic E. Anglo	Southern Asia Sub-Sahara Arabs Anglo	E. Europe Germanic E. Confucian A. Southern Asia Nordic E. Anglo Middle East L. Europe Sub-Sahara Arabs L. America	Southern Asia Middle East Confucian A. E. Europe
Sub-Sahara Arabs L. Europe E. Europe Confucian A.	E. Europe Southern Asia Nordic E. Anglo Sub-Sahara Arabs Germanic E. Confucian A.	L. America L. Europe Sub-Sahara Arabs	Confucian A. L. America Middle East E. Europe Germanic E.		L. America Sub-Sahara Arabs L. Europe
Middle East	Middle East	E. Europe Southern Asia Confucian A. Middle East	L. Europe Nordic E.		Anglo Germanic E. Nordic E.
<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower</i>
Charismatic/ Value Based	Team Oriented	Participative	Humane Oriented	Autonomous	Self- Protective

SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES

Semantics is the study of the meaning of words; it involves the way behavior is influenced by the use of words and nonverbal methods to communicate.

Words in the English language often have multiple meanings, some of which are contradictory. The word *sanction*, for example, may mean either to restrict a particular activity or to authorize it. Semantic differences are compounded when interacting with people of other cultures. Even when both speak the same language, a word may have a different meaning and implication in another culture.

Although England and Australia are English-speaking countries, words are often used in a different way in these countries from the way they are used in the United States. The word *homely*, for example, means “plain” in the United States although in England, it means friendly, warm, and comfortable. To the English, a sharp person is one who is devious and lacking in principles rather than one who is quick, smart, and clever, which is its meaning in the United States. The expression “quite good” has a different meaning to the English than to U.S. Americans. While the English interpretation is “less than good,” the U.S. meaning is “very good.” Australian English also holds some surprises for people in the United States. In Australia you would hear such terms as *bloke* for “man,” *lollies* for “candy,” and *sandshoes* for “sneakers.”

A misunderstanding over the meaning of one word during an important meeting in World War II caused an argument between U.S. Americans and the British. The problem was caused by the British interpretation of the phrase “to table an item,” which to them means to bring up the item for immediate consideration. The U.S. interpretation, on the other hand, was to shelve or postpone the subject.

Language problems are compounded when conducting business with people in non-English-speaking countries. Differences in the meanings of words are often lost in translation. Sometimes a word has no real counterpart in the other language, and the translator must select a word that he or she believes is similar to the meaning intended.

Semantic differences can be seen in the meaning of the word “stop” in the United States and in South America. A U.S. American while traveling in Bolivia observed that drivers rarely stopped at the red octagonal sign with the word *alto*, the Spanish word for “stop.” A local Bolivian explained that in this country, the stop sign is more a recommendation than a traffic law.

Brand names for U.S. products have caused problems when translated into another language. For example, the Spanish translation of Ford Motor Company’s *Fiera* truck means “ugly old woman,” not a very flattering name for a vehicle. U.S. firms have had to exercise greater care when introducing products in non-English-speaking countries because of marketing errors made in the past when product names and slogans were translated into another language. When conversing with people of other cultures, be sure your meaning is clear by avoiding slang, contractions, and idioms; by paraphrasing what the other person has said; and by speaking slowly and distinctly.

ATTRIBUTION AND PERCEPTION

Attribution, or the ability to look at social behavior from another culture's view, can cause communication problems because known experiences from your own culture are used in explaining unknown behaviors of those in another culture. **Perception**, the learned meaning of sensory images, may involve learning a new reaction to an old learned stimulus.

Dunkin' Donuts discontinued an ad featuring Rachael Ray, a celebrity on the Food Network, when it received complaints that the fringed black-and-white scarf Ms. Ray was wearing could be viewed as support for Muslim extremists and terrorists. (Fox News, 2008)

To lessen anxiety when communicating with someone of an unfamiliar culture, reducing uncertainty and increasing predictability about your own and the other person's behavior are important. According to **uncertainty-reduction theory**, people use uncertainty-reduction to determine who they can interact with or develop a relationship with based on similarities they find between their own attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs and those of others. People who have high uncertainty avoidance prefer to specialize, avoid conflict, want clear instructions, and do not want competition. Some ways to reduce uncertainty about other people include observing them, trying to get information about them, and interacting with them (Gudykunst, 1985).

Uncertainty avoidance can be used to determine whether people who have different convictions can be personal friends. People from countries with weak uncertainty avoidance are more likely to remain close friends in spite of differing opinions, although those in countries with strong uncertainty avoidance are less likely to remain friendly following open disagreements. Some key differences between weak and strong uncertainty avoidance societies in the workplace are noted in Table 2 (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Attribution training involves making people aware of their own cultural context and how it differs from the cultural context of the country to which they will travel. Measuring employees' attribution confidence and then training them to be cognizant of their personal differences with the assignment culture is often used to prepare employees for overseas assignments. Employees are given scenarios that summarize problems they may encounter while living in another country. Participants are then asked to select the one response considered correct from

TABLE 2 Uncertainty Avoidance

Weak Uncertainty Avoidance	Strong Uncertainty Avoidance
Shorter employment time with employers	Longer employment time with employers
Few rules expected	Emotional need for rules
Tolerance for ambiguity	Need for precision and formalization
Top managers concerned with strategy	Top managers concerned with daily operations
Focus on decision process	Focus on decision content
Better at invention, worse at implementation	Worse at invention, better at implementation

Source: Based on chart in *Cultures and Organizations* (p. 189) by G. Hofstede & G. J. Hofstede, 2005, London: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Contrasting Cultural Values

the viewpoint of the native of the country being studied. With feedback from the trainer and exposure to numerous situations, participants are better able to understand cultural variations in behavior and look at the situation from the other culture's viewpoint.

ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN

Attitudes are our likes (or affinities) and dislikes (or aversions) to certain people, objects, or situations. Attitudes are rooted in our behavior and in our emotions (Moran, Harris, & Moran, 2011). Sometimes our personal attitudes may differ from those of the macroculture or dominant culture. For example, a U.S. American male may have the attitude that women belong in the home and not in the workplace. The attitude of the macroculture, however, is that women may choose to work or to stay home and take care of the family.

A society's attitudes toward women are influenced by cultural roots. In some cultures, such as the United States, women are supposed to have the same rights as men. In other countries, such as Libya and Kenya, women are considered subordinate to men. In fundamental Islamic cultures, women are allowed to work only with other women.

Although according to the Qur'an women must give consent to their marriage, are given inheritance, and have equal religious rights and responsibilities with men, Qur'an verses also depict men as superior to women. However, Muslim women cover themselves for protection from those who might hurt them. The Muslim proverb demonstrates this: "A woman is like a jewel: You don't expose it to thieves." Most women of Islamic faith embrace their religious traditions just as women of other faiths embrace theirs (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2009, p. 95).

Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world to ban women—both Saudi and foreign—from driving. The prohibition forces families to hire live-in drivers; those who cannot afford the \$300 to \$400 a month for a driver must rely on male relatives to drive them to work, school, shopping, or the doctor. (Al-Shihri, 2011)

This attitude toward a woman's role in society is carried into the workplace. In the United States, gender differences in the workplace are deemphasized. The women's rights movement has worked for such legislation as fair employment laws requiring that men and women must be given equal pay for equal work. Even though differences in pay still exist, treating men and women equally is expected in U.S. firms. The acceptance of women at higher levels is evidenced by the appointments of Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the U.S. Supreme Court and Hillary Rodham Clinton as U.S. Secretary of State. The number of women appointees to top national- and state-level positions continues to increase. In large corporations, the number of women executives is also on the increase. Women-owned businesses are making a significant contribution. In fact, in 2006 there were 7.7 million businesses owned by women in the United States generating \$1.1 trillion in annual sales and employing 7.2 million people (National Numbers, 2006). Women in the United States own 10.73% of the businesses compared to 18.45% that are owned by men (Allen, Elam, Langowitz, & Dean, 2007).

Women in the United States earn 80 cents for every dollar men make, which is much better than the 59 cents to the dollar that women earned in the 1960s. The largest differences are for women with college degrees (Bravo, 2008). Compared to this U.S. trend, women in France own 3.16% of the businesses compared to 6.66% owned by men; in the United Kingdom 6.15% of females own businesses compared to 15% owned by men; and in Thailand 45.42% of businesses are owned by women compared to 51% that are owned by men. What is interesting is that the

Contrasting Cultural Values

gender difference is more pronounced in high-income countries. Europe and low- and middle-income Asian countries show the largest gaps with Latin American and Caribbean low- and middle-income countries showing the largest business ownership by women. However, women entrepreneurs in high-income countries have more education than those in low- and middle-income countries (Allen et al., 2007).

According to Wilen (2000), the number of women in business continues to increase and companies are no longer focusing on international managers in terms of gender. More companies, such as DuPont and Procter & Gamble, were hiring women. More women are earning business undergraduate degrees and M.B.A.s than ever before. In certain situations, it has been found that women give a company a competitive advantage. Many times the largest hurdles for women are the misperceptions and sexist attitudes of managers in the United States rather than barriers in international business.

U.S. women have been socialized to be deferential and patient, which gives them an advantage over U.S. men when conducting business in Japan.

Recent studies have found that women adapt better than men in intercultural situations (Halsberger, 2007). Women manage adversity better and are often given “glass cliff” assignments that have a greater risk of failure and criticism than men do (Wilen, 2000). One problem for men and women are couples who have dual careers. Companies are beginning to recognize the special problems these couples face and are trying to give support to the spouse as well as to the employee in international assignments (Altman & Shortland, 2008).

Following the collapse of communism and the rise of the Pacific Rim, a New World order is emerging with a larger number of countries following the democratic system of government. With democracy come increased opportunities, especially for women and especially in government and politics.

In the United States, women hold top management positions in 20% of the businesses; Australia, 23%; the United Kingdom, 21%; Thailand, 38%; Poland, 32%; European Union, 30%; New Zealand, 27%; Denmark, 13%; the Netherlands, 15%; China, 31%; Philippines, 47%; the Russian Federation, 42%; India, 15%; and Japan, 7%. The Philippines had the highest number of women in senior management positions (Thornton, 2011). U.S. women in international assignments comprised 13–14% of the employees on international assignment in 1998 (Varma, Stroh, & Schmitt, 2001).

In many countries of the world, women are just beginning to be accepted at managerial levels. Progress in the advancement of women is slow in the Middle East. In such countries as Saudi Arabia, the Islamic belief in the subordination of women has impeded the progress of working women. Women in Mexican businesses are respected, but they are expected to compete on an equal footing with men and prove their competence. Although Mexican businesses have historically been male dominated, this seems to be changing as many Mexican businesswomen are now enjoying success at managerial levels.

With mounting global competitiveness, companies need to examine their current attitudes and practices toward women to ensure that they are making maximum use of their resources and that selection and promotion decisions are based solely on qualifications rather than along gender lines. Fortunately, people in many other countries, including those where women are not treated as equals, are beginning to change their sexist attitudes, and are less concerned with gender than performance.

Although some women in various countries may have received their first job opportunities from family or political connections, others advanced because of professional qualifications

Contrasting Cultural Values

and job competence. Major problems that women in the workforce have faced, such as child-care and trying to combine a career and family, are common to all cultures. As more women are successful in managing multiple priorities and demands on their time and as they demonstrate that they are equally effective in high positions in business and politics, it will be easier for women in all cultures to advance to positions of prestige, importance, and responsibility. The following quote by the late mayor of Ottawa expresses the view held by many women in the workplace.

Whatever women do, they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily, that is not difficult (Charlotte Whitton, 2010).

WORK ATTITUDES

Attitudes toward work are culturally diverse. The term **work attitudes** refers to how people of a culture view work. **Work**, defined as mental or physical activities directed to socially productive accomplishments, in some societies is associated with economic values, status and class, and cultural values.

People in the United States value work and tend to subscribe to the **work ethic**, which means that hard work is applauded and rewarded, although failure to work is viewed negatively and with disdain. U.S. Americans admire people who work hard and are motivated to achieve; they have an aversion to idleness and prefer people of action to people of ideas. This concept of the United States as a work-ethic society is sometimes referred to as the “Protestant ethic,” which suggests that a person’s work (or “calling”) comes from God and that people demonstrate their worth to the Almighty and to themselves through their work. Proverbs such as “Blessed is he who has found his work” and “Satan finds mischief for idle hands” express the idea that in the United States, work is virtuous as well as respectable (Ferraro, 2010). Reward systems in many firms are based on an employee’s achievement and willingness to work beyond a 40-hour week. U.S. senior-level executives often work 56 hours a week, far more than in many European countries. They take only 14 days of vacation a year, far fewer than in some countries in Europe, where people often close businesses for a month to go on vacation (Utroska, 1992). The average number of hours worked per week, per person for select countries, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2010), is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3 Working Hours per Week by Country (2009)

Country	Hours (Avg.)	Country	Hours (Avg.)
Singapore	46.3	Japan	40.7
India	46.9	United Kingdom	40.7
China	46.8	Germany	40.3
Mexico	44.5	The Netherlands	38.4
South Korea	43.4	New Zealand	38.3
United States	42.3	France	37.5
Switzerland	42.0	Canada	30.4
Brazil	41.3	—	—

Contrasting Cultural Values

This attitude toward work and responsibility to a job is ingrained from an early age in the United States. Parents teach their children about the American free enterprise system, which is based on the premise that you are the master of your own destiny, that you can be anything you want to be if you are willing to try hard enough, and that you will be rewarded for hard work. In contrast, people in the Islamic countries place great importance on the will of Allah and believe that planning for the future would conflict with religious beliefs.

To people in the United States, the job is almost an identification badge. A person's personal identity is associated with his or her occupation. Evidence of this identification with the job is shown when making introductions. People tend to include the person's occupation or job title along with the name; for example, "I'd like to present Betty Freeman, owner of the Health Hut" or "This is Jay Hunt, president of Southern Express." Success is not only measured by the job title but by the perception of what one earns; the implication is that the high income has probably resulted from the person's willingness to work 12- and 14-hour days, seven days a week.

People in the United States are action oriented; they are often unable to relax because they feel guilty doing nothing. People from other cultures have observed that U.S. Americans even work at relaxing. Television commercials in the United States often depict an activity as leisure—activities that persons in other cultures would consider manual labor such as gardening or washing the car. When they do take vacations, U.S. Americans are inclined to plan what they will do and where they will go so that the entire time is scheduled. Even those who participate in sports for recreation seem to try to make work out of it (Althen & Bennett, 2011).

A graduate student from India recounted his first experience at being invited to the home of a U.S. graduate student. When he arrived, his U.S. friend invited him into the house, where he was dressing his son while his wife was sweeping the patio. His friend then asked him to help with grilling the chicken outdoors. As the Indian student narrated the story in his intercultural communication class, he expressed surprise that his friend and his wife did all their own work. In his country, he had never swept a floor, cooked a meal, or dressed his children.

Unlike people in a number of countries, many people in the United States consider spending hours visiting a waste of time and may excuse themselves from a group because they say they need to get back to work. People in other countries view with both amazement and amusement this apparent obsession with work.

In much of Europe, attitudes toward work seem to be more relaxed. Many businesses close during the month of August when people go on vacation. Most Europeans do not work on weekends or holidays, as they believe this is time that should be spent with family or engaging in personal activities. The French, in particular, value their vacation time and prefer not to work overtime. They enjoy the longest vacations of any country in the world; French law dictates that employees receive a minimum of five weeks of vacation a year. German companies appear to be moving in this direction as well. Despite the extended free time, people of both France and Germany are very productive when they work. Australians, too, value free time; they say they work to get a vacation. Australians have the shortest working hours of any country in the world, and they enjoy taking frequent breaks throughout the day.

Although many people of the United States receive a two- or three-week vacation, the individual vacation time periods are staggered so that businesses will not be closed for an extended period. Upper-level management workers often do not take all their vacation time each year. Because of these attitudes toward work, the culture of the United States is referred to

as a “live to work” culture in contrast to the cultures in countries such as Mexico that are “work to live” cultures.

The attitude of Japanese men toward work is very group oriented, and it plays a major role in their lives. They work Monday through Friday; 18-hour days are not unusual. Because of the long hours, relaxation does not include working around the house. Instead, they relax by watching television, playing computer games, browsing the Internet, drinking, or joining their friends at the local bar. However, this attitude appears to be changing as they become more westernized.

A study in Mexico of Mexican expatriate managers found that they could motivate the workforce through building community and allowing collective control versus paternalistic control to dictate the way the facility operated. They found that most problems were caused by intercultural misunderstandings (stereotypes) rather than by local cultural issues (Litrico, 2007).

ATTITUDES TOWARD ETHICS

Ethical standards are guidelines established to convey what is perceived to be correct or incorrect behavior by most people in a society. According to Ferrell and Gardiner (1991), ethical conduct “is something judged as proper or acceptable based on some standard of right and wrong” (p. 2). According to Borden (1991), being ethical means keeping your values in balance; if you compromise your values, you are being unethical. What it comes down to, according to Rabbi Dosick (2000), is that you have to determine what is right and what is wrong. Although there are sometimes penalties for doing both right and wrong, you have to be able to live with yourself and sleep at night.

When ethics is viewed in a global context, it is important to recognize that what is unethical in some cultures may not be considered unethical in others. Thus, managers who conduct business globally will want to be aware of the terms **ethical relativism** and **ethical universalism** in order to gain an appreciation for differing cultural views in what is considered right and wrong.

Those who believe in ethical relativism maintain that ethical principles vary with the culture. For example, in the United States, it is considered customary to care for the aged and infirmed either in the home of adult children or in special retirement/nursing homes for the elderly. On the other hand, the Inuit custom is for the elderly and infirmed to go away to die rather than be a burden on the tribe during a move to winter quarters. Those who believe in ethical universalism, however, believe that certain values are universal across cultures regardless of race, gender, culture, or religion. An example of ethical universalism is the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Klopf & McCroskey, 2007; Moran, Harris, & Moran, 2011). Three of the 30 articles included in the Declaration relate to intercultural communication and declare that all people are born free and equal in rights and dignity; have a right to freedom of religion, thought, and conscience; and have the right to freedom of expression and opinion (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2009).

In the United States, the dominant culture (macroculture) makes the determination of what is right or wrong. Even though nondominant groups (microcultures) may disagree with these standards for ethical/unethical behavior, their views are not a consideration; they must abide by the criteria established by the macroculture (Klopf & McCroskey, 2007).

Honesty and truth telling, according to beliefs of people in the U.S. macroculture, are important aspects of ethical behavior. When a clerk gives a customer too much change during a transaction, for example, the recipient is expected to be honest and point out the error. U.S. children are often told the story about young Abraham Lincoln who, as a clerk in a small dry-goods store, realized after the customer left that he had overcharged her. Lincoln reportedly walked two

Contrasting Cultural Values

miles through the snow to return the overcharge of a penny. Dosick (2000) sums up feelings of people of the U.S. macroculture regarding honesty: "Dishonesty is dishonesty, and cheating is cheating, whether it involves a little or a lot. If you cheat, you defraud; you diminish yourself as a human being, and you violate the trust that others have in you. And eventually, you will pay" (p. 32). To emphasize the importance of always telling the truth, some U.S. parents even tell their children, "If you'll just tell me the truth, I won't punish you." Therefore, as adults, U.S. persons subscribe to the saying, "Always tell the truth; let your word be your bond, and let your honor be your word" (Dosick, 2000, p. 19).

People in some U.S. microcultures may have a different attitude toward honesty and truth telling; they may feel that clerks who give customers too much change should suffer the consequences. Further, people in some microcultures may condone lying in certain circumstances, such as lying about the condition of a house in order to make a sale. In addition, people in these microcultures may feel that saving face is more important than telling the truth. According to people in the U.S. macroculture, however, truth and honesty must take precedence over benefiting financially, making a sale, or causing offense.

Ethical standards are subject to change, even within a culture. In the United States, for example, slavery was considered moral at one time; however, it is no longer considered so.

Ethical standards should be addressed when conducting business with persons of other cultures, especially those whose standards of ethical behavior differ markedly from our own. Even though we carry our frame of reference and value system with us when conducting business internationally, we should also be aware that our values may differ from those of other countries. For example, in the United States, bribery and graft are illegal. In some of the Latin American countries, however, using gifts to assure success in sealing an agreement is an accepted way of conducting business.

A suggested approach to international business ethics includes the following:

- Identify in writing both individual and corporate ethical values; specify which values are rigid, such as honesty and integrity, and those that are flexible, such as taking into account another culture's values.
- Involve all employees in the development of a corporate code of ethics.
- Assure that all individuals understand the company's ethical values; have employees sign a statement periodically indicating that they have read and understand the corporate code of ethics.
- Monitor compliance with the code of ethics; establish consequences for breaching the code of ethics (Scevola, 2009).

Personal ethics or moral standards may differ from societal ethics. Your own standards of what is right and wrong may be more stringent than those of your society as a whole. Problems may occur when the reverse is true, that is, when your ethical standards are lower than those considered acceptable by society. Of course, your ethical standards must meet the minimum level of behavior identified by law as acceptable. It has been found that peer reporting of unethical behavior is affected by cultural attitudes and styles of communication. Cultural unfamiliarity affects the communication of seen unethical behaviors. Culturally diverse encounters have revealed different patterns of expression, modes of behavior, value sets, attitudes, and styles of communication within the same nation. Cultural diversity includes race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, socioeconomic backgrounds, and such. Some of the culturally diverse issues are personal, some are group, and some are corporate. Personal issues include prejudice, stereotyping, personality, values, and identity. Group issues include ethnocentrism and intergroup

Contrasting Cultural Values

member conflicts, and corporate issues include acculturation, structural, informal integration, and institutional bias. It is important to understand that many levels of ethical differences exist; thus, a determination of what constitutes unethical behavior should take into consideration the cultural standards involved (King, 2000).

Although many U.S. Americans are inclined to believe that their standards of business ethics are shared by other countries, in reality, standards of business ethics are not universal. For example, the Islamic standard of ethics is based on participating in religious ceremonies, adhering to codes of sexual behavior, and honoring one's parents. This definition or interpretation of ethical standards is not shared by U.S. Americans. Another dimension of business ethics relates to what is commonly referred to as using "backdoor connections" for conducting business; using such connections is common, for example, in South Africa and Nigeria as well as in the People's Republic of China. In fact, the Chinese use informal relationships in allocating resources and making decisions. Another ethical problem U.S. firms face when conducting business abroad is the unorthodox accounting and taxation practices used in some countries. In such countries as Brazil and Spain, keeping three sets of accounting books as a means of avoiding taxes is common. These practices violate not only the ethical standards of U.S. businesspeople but also the U.S. law. Another ethical problem encountered by U.S. firms doing business in other countries is the nonsanctity of legal contracts. To U.S. businesspersons, "a card laid is a card played." To Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese, who emphasize long-term relationships, renegotiation is common. As a result, U.S. businesspersons are never sure when they have a final agreement. People of the United States also question the ethicality of certain activities such as taking a potential customer on a yachting trip or a weekend gambling outing, clearly intended to influence buying decisions (Engholm & Rowland, 1996). An increased concern for ethics has been seen in the United States because of blatant misconduct of persons in government and industry. Religious leaders have been convicted of fraud and Wall Street moguls found guilty of insider trading. An increase in ethical training is taking place in schools, so that the next generation will be better prepared to make appropriate decisions involving ethical behavior.

Religion also affects ethics. All religions are against murder, robbery, lying, and adultery. All religions also stress humility, charity, and veracity (Samovar et al., 2009). With these similar ethical principles, religion should be more of a unifying principle than a dividing one. However, religion is truly a way of life for many people in the world.

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES

Religious influences have an impact on when and how business is conducted in international settings. In some cultures, such as those of North and South America, Australia, and Europe, lifestyle and religion are separate. In much of northern Africa and southern Asia, no distinction is made between lifestyle and religion because religion is a lifestyle. Businesspersons in these countries may seek the advice of religious leaders on business matters.

The United States has never had an official state church; religious observances rarely interfere with business. Although business is not conducted on such religious holidays as Christmas, no one feels obligated to participate in religious ceremonies or observe religious customs. Religion is a personal matter in the United States. Members of one family often hold different beliefs and belong to different denominations.

The United States subscribes to the doctrine of "separation of church and state." According to this doctrine, the government does not lend official support to any particular religion and may not interfere with a person's practicing any religion. A total of 85% of the population say

Contrasting Cultural Values

they are religious. About 24% of the population is Roman Catholic; 51% is Protestant. Other Christian denominations make up about 3–5% of the total, while non-Christian groups also have substantial numbers in the United States (*CultureGrams*, 2010).

Some countries have officially recognized religions and participate in religious rituals that would affect business encounters. In Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Iraq, for example, Islam is the official religion. Muslims observe the ritual of stopping work five times a day to pray. Meetings with people in Islamic countries should be sufficiently flexible to allow for this daily ritual, which is a way of life for Muslims. Conducting business during the month of Ramadan (which varies from year to year) is not recommended because Muslims are required to fast from dawn to sunset. Because of the impact of religion on all aspects of life in Islamic countries, businesspeople should learn about religious rituals and beliefs prior to conducting business there. The majority of Chinese people practice a combination of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism (*CultureGrams*, 2010).

A newly admitted patient became agitated about the arrangement of his hospital room. He kept saying that his bed should be on the opposite wall. The nurse explained that this would be impossible because the oxygen and other needed equipment had been installed on this side of the room and the wires were not long enough to reach the other side. When the nurse learned that the patient was Muslim and needed to face the east toward Mecca to say his prayers five times a day, she arranged for him to be moved to another room that met his needs. (Dresser, 2005)

Fasting for the month of Ramadan means not eating anything—no gum, no water, not even medicine—although you are not asked to fast if you are sick. The virtue of fasting is that you feel what it is like to be hungry so you can empathize with the poor. In addition, you are not to hurt anyone during fasting; you are to be tolerant. If you hurt someone, then you have broken one of the pillars of fasting. Islam is about peace, not violence (Hammouri, 2008).

When working with people in countries that practice nonliterate religions (those that lack written precepts), an understanding of the logic of their beliefs is important. Some Native Hawaiians, for example, believe in curses and spirits; this belief should be accommodated. Witchcraft is practiced in such countries as Zaire; conducting business with people of these cultures may involve changing the sales and marketing techniques that you would ordinarily use.

Religious beliefs and practices affect business in many countries. Although both the United States and Italy are primarily Christian countries, religious holidays are more numerous in Italy than in the United States. Sri Lanka, for example, has 27 holidays. Religious beliefs also affect consumption patterns; for example, Hindus do not eat beef, and Muslims and Orthodox Jews do not eat pork. When conducting business internationally, religion must be considered.

Worldwide there are 1.3 billion Muslims: 270 million in Arab nations, 400 million in the rest of the Middle East, and 6 million in the United States, not including the Nation of Islam (excluded because they do not follow the five pillars) (Shabass, 2004). In many countries where Islam is practiced, it controls life, with all other parts of life taking a secondary role. Religion answers many questions for people such as what is life and death, how was the universe created, how did our society originate, how do we relate as individuals and members of a society, and what is our relationship to nature? Religion in many cases is the psychological welfare for individuals, helping them to understand what cannot be easily explained. Religion is responsible for many of the contrasting cultural values between people (Samovar et al., 2009).

INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM

Individualism refers to the attitude of valuing ourselves as separate individuals with responsibility for our own destinies and our own actions. Proponents of individualism believe that self-interest is an appropriate goal. **Collectivism** emphasizes common interests, conformity, cooperation, and interdependence (see Figure 1). Individualism and collectivism are the opposite ends of a continuum. Thus, we have to remember that some societies have factors near each end plus factors from the middle. It is impossible to put a society or an individual from a given society at one end of the continuum or the other because most people have attitudes that are associated with both ends of the continuum.



FIGURE 1 Individualism Versus Collectivism

Cultural values, whether they are of our culture or any other culture, are learned through shared activities or cultural practices and shared meanings or cultural interpretation. Because these components are cumulative, both within and between people in a culture, people who belong to a particular culture know how others will act. As people develop their values within a culture, they go through three tasks: relationship formation, knowledge acquisition, and autonomy/relatedness. Cultural learning evolves over a lifetime, over historical time, and over evolutionary time. The environment we are in, what society tells us is valued, and the values we develop based on cultural learning make each of us in the world unique. When someone tends toward the collectivistic or interdependent end of the continuum, he or she considers individual choice as less important than the group and social obligations and responsibilities. When someone leans toward the individualistic end of the spectrum, individual rights are very important and social obligations are of primary importance. Countries that are more collectivistic include China, Japan, India, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Puerto Rico. Values that are important to these cultures include responsibility, honesty, politeness, respect for elders and family, and looking to the society for the values to embrace. Germans, European Americans, and the Dutch all embrace individualism, which includes self-maximization, independence, creativity, curiosity, assertiveness, self-esteem, and education. Cultures where people are face-to-face, in smaller communities, or are in a subsistence economy tend to value tradition, and change comes very slowly because they are more collectivistic. Examples include Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and many of the smaller African nations. In major cities, with extended economies, you find more individualism. Criticisms of the individualistic/collectivistic paradigm include that the paradigm is too simplistically applied to countries and all people within a country, that the paradigm does not allow for both individualistic and collectivistic values to coexist in the same culture, that some values are valued by

Contrasting Cultural Values

both individualistic and collectivistic cultures, and that qualitative and quantitative variability exists within the individualistic/collectivistic paradigm (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003).

Hofstede originally studied the IBM Corporation in 53 countries and determined the dimensions on which countries' business cultures differed. Using statistical analysis and theoretical reasoning, Hofstede developed five dimensions, which he labeled power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, and long-term versus short-term cultures. The countries were then ranked according to their scores (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). This study was the first of its kind, and the data were collected in the late 1970s from 50 countries in one organization; he wrote his first book in 1980. Since then, many more women are working in corporations than in the 1970s, more countries are involved in international business, and cultural changes have taken place during this time period; therefore, it is necessary to look at the Hofstede study data in relation to new studies that are being completed, such as the GLOBE study headed by House et al. (2004).

The United States ranked first in individualism in the Hofstede study, followed by Australia, Great Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands. Countries that ranked lowest on individualism included Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, Ecuador, and Guatemala (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

People from the United States place great importance on individuality and self-reliance. Well-known phrases typically used by parents to convey this emphasis on self-reliance include "Do your own thing," "You made your bed, now lie in it," and "You'd better look out for yourself; no one else will." U.S. Americans have been conditioned from childhood to think for themselves, to express their ideas and opinions, and to make their own choices; they are taught to consider themselves as individuals who are responsible for their own actions as well as for their own destinies. Parents start training their children early in this way of thinking; they offer them choices of food, clothes, and toys and usually accommodate their preferences. When the choice does not work out, the child then experiences the results of the decision. The goal of parents is to bring up a self-reliant, responsible person by the age of 18. When children move out of their parents' home at that age and are completely self-supporting, parents feel successful. Children who still live with their parents past the age of 18 or 20 are viewed as immature and unable to live independently. The value U.S. Americans place on individualism, self-reliance, and independence is perceived by persons of different cultures as being self-centered with little consideration for other people (Althen & Bennett, 2011). This emphasis on individuality carries over into college/university choices as well as job choices that may take children away from friends and family members. Although individualism and the value placed on the family as an important unit are often associated, evidence shows that this relationship may not always exist. Costa Ricans, for example, have individualistic tendencies but they also value the extended family structure. Examining cultures within cultures is, therefore, important.

In other cultures, such as the Japanese, emphasis is placed on the group approach rather than on the individual approach to all aspects of life. The Chinese and Malaysians also value the group approach and the family. Their concern with following family traditions and with respecting the opinions of their parents is perceived as a sign of weakness and indecisiveness by U.S. Americans.

The GLOBE study found individualism/collectivism to have multiple levels within the two constructs. They discovered an in-group collectivism and institutional collectivism. The institutional scale showed societal variability that was not captured by the in-group scale (House et al., 2004).

The Power Distance Index is concerned with inequality within a society and how the country distinguishes between inequalities. The inequality can be of power, wealth, status, and social position, as well as physical and intellectual differences. In the business world, it concerns whether the employee and boss prefer a dependent or independent relationship with each other.

Contrasting Cultural Values

The index measures the extent to which the weaker members expect and accept the unequal distribution of power (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The GLOBE study found that strong power distance was associated with male-dominated societies. In addition, they found that where power distance was strong, it was also most disliked (House et al., 2004).

The Masculinity and Femininity Index concerns how a society views assertiveness versus modesty. It is a relative construct rather than a biological distinction being made between countries. Although the terms masculinity and femininity are derived from what is considered important in life to the two genders (masculine includes earnings, recognition, advancement, and challenge; feminine includes manager, cooperation, living area, and employment security), the country's dimensional position and equality of the genders in the workplace have no relationship with each other (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The GLOBE study on the gender egalitarianism of a country is probably more appropriate for intercultural business communication because it discusses the implications of the differences in gender egalitarianism. Societies that believe men and women are suited for similar positions are more gender egalitarian than societies that believe the roles for men and women should be different. The GLOBE study found that the cultural value of gender egalitarianism affected the type of leadership dimensions of charisma, participatory, or self-protectionist. In societies where men and women are more gender egalitarian, they rate the leadership dimensions more similarly (House et al., 2004).

The Uncertainty Avoidance Index measures the threat of ambiguity and unknown situations. Does a person embrace the unknown or does he or she become anxious concerning the unknown? Countries in which people have a strong uncertainty avoidance behavior tend to have a lot of laws and rules specifying correct behaviors as opposed to the countries with weak uncertainty avoidance behavior in which people only want rules when they are absolutely necessary (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). In the GLOBE study, uncertainty avoidance was defined as the tendency toward orderliness, consistency, structure, and regulation. The study found that uncertainty avoidance may be related to societal, economic, and organizational values such as innovation, perception of risk, per capita cash holdings, and growth. Higher uncertainty avoidance values were found where there was higher team orientation, humane orientation, self-protective leadership, and lower participative and charismatic leadership values (House et al., 2004).

The difference in a country's orientation to long-term or short-term goals can affect business. A long-term orientation is concerned with the future, perseverance, thrift, hard work, learning, openness, accountability, and self-discipline. A short-term orientation is concerned with the bottom line, control systems, respecting tradition, preserving face, and fulfilling social obligations (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The GLOBE study calls this future orientation. They found that all cultures value future orientation whether or not they practice it except for Denmark. Countries that had weak future practices aspire to having stronger future orientation. Lack of visionary leadership or government control seems to indicate weaker future orientation practices. The Hofstede and GLOBE scales showed no relationship to each other (House et al., 2004).

A brief description of selected cultural values of 10 countries with which the United States conducts most of its international business follows (Bosrock, 1994, 1995a, 1995b; Country Studies, 2008; *CultureGrams*, 2010; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Brazil

Many Brazilian women work outside the home, especially those who live in the larger cities. While women hold upper-management positions, they are rarely found in the top positions of large firms. Women are found in positions in government, including members of Brazil's Supreme Court, as well as in education, medicine, and journalism. While Brazil has no official religion, about

Contrasting Cultural Values

70% of the population is Roman Catholic. In fact, Brazil is said to be the largest Roman Catholic country. Approximately 20% of the population is evangelical, nearly half of whom belong to the Assembly of God. Brazilians tend to think that the group is more important than the individual. Brazil ranks 39th, tied with Arab countries, on Hofstede's individualism index.

Canada

In Canada, women are accepted in business and government and are well represented. As in the United States, businesswomen feel free to invite businessmen to lunch or dinner; the one who extends the invitation usually pays. The two largest religious groups are Catholicism and Protestantism, but people of British descent are mostly Protestant. Canada also has significant numbers of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs. Canada, like the United States, believes in the separation of church and state. Canada is a work-oriented culture; both parents often work outside the home. Canada is a highly individualistic society; the country tied with the Netherlands and Hungary for fourth place in Hofstede's ranking of individualistic countries.

China

In China, the official government position is that citizens should be atheists. The Chinese constitution guarantees religious freedom with certain limitations. Many religions are practiced, including Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and Christianity. Confucianism, a philosophy and a way of life, is practiced by the majority of the Chinese. China is a collectivistic society. Both women and men are employed in the economy. However, women generally do not have the highest positions in the economy although purportedly women are equal to men. Hofstede ranks China as 56th, tied with Bangladesh, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and West Africa in the ranking of individualistic countries.

Hong Kong's religious philosophies include Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism; only 10% of the population is Christian. Laws protect religious freedom. Both men and women are employed in the economy. The people in Hong Kong tend to be less conservative than the rest of China.

Germany

Although East German women have always worked, West German women have been catching up for the past 30 years. West German women have had more traditional family values, and more of them are now pursuing university degrees and careers (Country Studies, 2008). Although sex discrimination is unlawful in Germany, cases are rarely pursued. A businesswoman should feel free to invite a German businessman to dinner and pay the bill without incident.

About 34% of the German people are Protestant, and 34% are Roman Catholic. Muslims are 4%. Although a number of other religions are active in Germany, almost 28% of the people have no official religious affiliation. In Hofstede's ranking of individualistic countries, Germany ranked 18th.

Japan

Women are highly visible in today's Japanese business world, comprising about 50% of the workforce. However, the majority hold lower-level staff positions, with only 10.1% in management positions (Fackler, 2007). Japanese women have made progress in the areas of government, advertising, publishing, and such technical fields as engineering. The possibility of their making

Contrasting Cultural Values

significant advances to the higher levels of management in the near future is unlikely because traditionally the Japanese power structure has always been male dominated. Many families of Japanese people practice a combination of Buddhism and Shinto. Only about 1% of the Japanese are Christian. Japan is not an individualistic culture; in Hofstede's ranking of individualistic societies, the country was tied with Argentina and Morocco for 33rd place. The Japanese traditionally place the welfare of the group above the welfare of the individual. They respect age and value ambition, education, hard work, loyalty, and politeness.

Mexico

The role of women in Mexican society is changing. In the past, very few women entered business and politics. Now, however, Mexican women are holding more important positions in business and politics and are visible in the professions as dentists, doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Women were 23.5% of the workforce in 2006 (Nolan, 2007). Although men control the Mexican society, women control the men. Foreign businesswomen are not advised to invite Mexican businessmen to dinner because a man and woman dining alone suggests that they are romantically involved. The predominant religion (practiced by 89% of Mexicans) is Catholicism; small percentages are of Protestant and Jewish faith. Although the Catholic Church has little political influence, it does play an important role in the Mexican culture. Mexico is not considered an individualistic culture; the country was ranked 46th and tied with Bulgaria and Romania in Hofstede's ranking of individualistic countries. However, Mexicans have a sense of individualism in certain areas. For example, they try very hard to distinguish themselves from other Mexicans as they are aware of how they are perceived personally. Mexicans also value the family and personal relationships.

The Netherlands

Women are egalitarian in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is one of the leading nations in Europe for work equality between the genders. The religions practiced in the Netherlands are Roman Catholic (31%); Protestant, which is largely Dutch Reformed (21%); Muslim (4.4%); and other religions that make up about 3% of the population. The role of religion has diminished, and there is a strong separation of church and state. Although the Dutch are known for their liberalism, it is not a topic of polite conversation. The Netherlands ranks fourth, tied with Canada and Hungary, on Hofstede's individualism index.

Singapore

The population is 77% Chinese, 14% Malay, and 8% Indian. Religion may be more important than race in social relationships. The religious breakdown in Singapore is 43% Buddhist, 9% Taoist, 14% Muslim, 15% Christian, 15% atheists or agnostics, 4% Hindu, and 15% are other. Singaporeans are collectivistic.

South Korea

Women are not considered equal to men in South Korea; there is still a separation of female and male roles. In South Korea, 50% of the population is Christian, but Confucianism permeates the culture. Interactions are determined by a person's status and relationship with others. South Korea ranked 63rd in Hofstede's study on individualism and collectivism.

United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland)

Although British women have made progress in the workplace, they have not fared as well as women in the United States and Canada. In 2008, the women of the United Kingdom (UK) made up 16.7% of the members of the House of Commons; in the United States, 15.2% of the House of Representatives seats and 18% of the Senate seats were held by women. According to 2008 figures, 19.5% of British barristers (lawyers) were women, while 30% of U.S. lawyers were women. England's state religion is the Church of England (Anglican Church) headed by the Queen. Although it no longer has political power, the Church has had much influence on England throughout its history. Other religions represented in the United Kingdom include Roman Catholic, Protestant (Presbyterian and Methodist), and Judaism. The Church of Wales is also an Anglican church with its own archbishop, and the Church of Scotland is a Presbyterian church. Northern Ireland is 44% Catholic. Three percent of United Kingdom's population is Muslim, 1% is Hindu, 0.7% is Sikh, and 0.5% is Jewish. Many in the United Kingdom claim no religious affiliation, and of those who do claim a religious affiliation, few are regular at church services. The United Kingdom is a very individualistic society; it is ranked third in Hofstede's ranking of individualistic countries.

United States

U.S. women are considered equal to men in the workplace, despite continued salary differences; women currently earn about 80 cents for every dollar that men are paid. Women hold leadership positions in government, business, and education. The United States has no official church. About 80% of the U.S. citizens are Christians; over half of the population is Protestant (primarily Baptists, Methodists, and Lutherans). A fourth of the population is Roman Catholic. Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists are other religious groups. Religion has little effect on business because of the government provision for the separation of church and state. The United States is an individualistic country; it ranks first on Hofstede's individualism index.

Terms

Attitudes	Ethical universalism	Values
Attribution	Individualism	Work
Attribution training	Perception	Work attitudes
Collectivism	Semantics	Work ethic
Ethical relativism	Uncertainty-reduction	
Ethical standards	theory	

Exercise 1

Instructions: Circle T for true or F for false.

1. T F Values are learned; they are not innate.
2. T F In the United States, the family is a top priority.
3. T F A characteristic valued by U.S. persons is directness.
4. T F People in Asian cultures value history.
5. T F Semantic differences between cultures that speak the same language are rare.
6. T F The word "yes" means the same in all languages.
7. T F Women in management are treated similarly in all cultures.

Contrasting Cultural Values

8. T F Japan has a well-enforced equal employment law preventing discrimination against women.
9. T F The U.S. society is considered to have a strong work ethic.
10. T F Ethical standards are culture specific.

Questions and Cases for Discussion

1. Explain how values are formed.
2. In what ways are the values of persons in the United States different from those of persons in other cultures?
3. Explain how semantic differences can affect intercultural communication. Give some examples.
4. Explain what is meant by the term attribution.
5. How are attitudes toward women culturally different? In what countries are women and men treated equally in the workplace?
6. Explain the differences between work attitudes in the United States and other countries. Are your personal work attitudes typical of the U.S. culture or another culture?
7. How are attitudes toward ethics in the United States different from those in Latin America?
8. What role does religion play in conducting business in the United States and Saudi Arabia?
9. Explain individualism and collectivism. Give examples of cultures that are primarily individualistic and those that are primarily collectivistic.
10. Explain the difference between ethical relativism and ethical universalism and give examples of each term.

CASES

The following procedure is recommended for analyzing the cases: (a) read the case carefully paying attention to details; (b) read the questions at the end of the case; (c) reread the case, taking notes on or highlighting the details needed for answering the questions; (d) identify relevant facts, underlying assumptions, and critical issues of the case; (e) list possible answers to the questions; and (f) select the most logical response to the question. Your professor may ask that you submit answers to the case questions in writing.

Case 1

Ching Lee was transferred by his Asian firm to assume a managerial position in a large automobile production plant in the United States. In his first report to his supervisor, he expressed concern that U.S. workers were not giving him the proper respect. What behaviors by U.S. workers could have led Ching Lee to draw this conclusion?

Case 2

A U.S. firm sent its senior-level manager, Laura Green, to negotiate a contract for a chain of fast-food restaurants in Saudi Arabia. What cultural

attitudes and behaviors related to gender should she expect to encounter?

Case 3

When Brandon Hunt was sent to Mexico to oversee a production facility for his company, he became concerned over what he perceived to be a lack of seriousness about work on the part of Mexican workers. Employees were frequently late for work, left early, or did not come in at all. When questioned, employees explained that they had to help members of their family with their problems. Explain the apparent differences in U.S. American and Mexican attitudes toward work.

Case 4

When Disney opened its \$4.4 billion Euro Disneyland outside Paris, concerns over the park's impact on French culture were expressed. To begin with, the French dedicate Sundays only to family outings. In addition, they are unaccustomed to snacking and eat promptly at 12:30, which creates bottlenecks at parks and restaurants. Disney learned that French employees objected to providing the friendly greetings and smiles expected of all amusement park

Contrasting Cultural Values

workers. They then hired multilingual employees from all over Europe because Disney's goal was to attract people from all countries of Europe. A complaint of European investors was that rigid U.S. management style did not take into account the values and customs of the people it intended to attract. For example, Europeans often bring their own lunches and do not spend money at the park's gourmet restaurants and hotels. The park initially lost money after it opened in 1992. Discuss the course of action Disney could take to accommodate the values and customs of the people it hopes to attract.

Case 5

A mission of several U.S. businesspeople visited Taiwan. After meeting with the high-level officials

of the Taiwanese firm, one of the U.S. people stated that although the U.S. firm members were received with courtesy and listened intently to comments, the U.S. group members unanimously agreed that they did not have a clear understanding of the points the Taiwanese wanted to make. They also shared the impression that the atmosphere was chilly during the meeting and that the Taiwanese appeared arrogant. During the meeting, as reported in the local Taiwanese paper the next day, the Taiwanese extended their utmost courtesy, were good listeners, did not strongly push their own views, and felt the U.S. group appreciated the fact they had not been aggressive. What went wrong? How is silence being used and confused in this situation? How do the differences in individualism and collectivism affect this situation?

Activities

1. Ask one person from each of the groups listed in this question: "What is your attitude toward work?" Report their responses to the class.
 - a. blue-collar worker
 - b. business professional
 - c. educator
 - d. high school student
 - e. college student
2. Clip an article from the local newspaper related to ethics in business; summarize the article for class members.
3. Ask a professor or student from another culture to speak to the class on attitudes toward women in his or her culture.
4. Prepare a list of women in your state who have achieved high-ranking positions in either government or business. List the special qualifications these women possess that make them qualified for their positions. Prepare a similar list of women in high-ranking positions in another country of your choice.
5. Prepare a list of words (other than those mentioned in the chapter) that have different meanings in other areas of the United States or in other English-speaking countries.
6. Interview a U.S. student and an international student. Ask each student to rate the following values on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 representing of *little or no importance* and 5 representing *very important*: individualism, leisure, independence, family, equality, teams, freedom, privacy, work, respect for the elderly, efficient use of time, directness, formality, competitiveness, and materialism. Summarize similarities and differences in response of students from the two cultures.

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Glossary

Attitudes are likes (or affinities) and dislikes (or aversions) to certain people, objects, or situations.

Attribution is something seen as belonging to or representing something or someone.

Attribution training focuses on explanations of behavior from the point of view of a person in the host country.

Collectivism is the political principle of centralized social and economic control.

Ethical relativism is the belief that ethical principles vary with the culture.

Ethical standards are guidelines established to convey what is perceived to be correct or incorrect behavior by most people in a society.

Ethical universalism is the belief that certain values are universal across cultures regardless of race, gender, culture, or religion.

Individualism is the pursuit of individual rather than

common or collective interests.

Perception is awareness or comprehension through the senses.

Semantics is the study of the ways behavior is influenced by the words and other symbols used to communicate.

Uncertainty-reduction theory refers to the creation of proactive predictions and retroactive explanations about our own behavior, beliefs, and attitudes, and those of others.

Values are beliefs and attitudes held by a culture.

Work refers to mental or physical activities directed to socially productive accomplishments.

Work attitudes are how people of a culture view work.

Work ethic refers to the attitude that work is applauded and rewarded, although failure to work is viewed negatively.

Answers to Exercises

True/False

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. F |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Cultural Shock

Objectives

Upon completion of this chapter, you will

- understand the nature of cultural shock and its relationship to success in overseas assignments.
- be able to identify the typical stages of cultural shock.
- learn ways to alleviate cultural shock, including careful selection of persons for overseas assignments and predeparture training.
- understand the role of cultural stress, social alienation, social class and poverty–wealth extremes, financial matters, and relationships in dealing with cultural shock.
- understand how the extent to which persons in the host culture reveal their private selves may contribute to cultural shock.

Cultural shock (commonly called culture shock) is the trauma you experience when you move into a culture different from your home culture. Cultural shock is a communication problem that involves the frustrations of not understanding the verbal and nonverbal communication of the host culture, its customs, and its value systems (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2009). Frustrations may include lack of food, unacceptable standards of cleanliness, different bathroom facilities (see Figure 1), and fear for personal safety. Black, Gregersen, Mendenhall, and Stroh (1999) add another dimension to cultural shock. They suggest that the disruption of people's routines, which may range from getting up, eating breakfast, and going to work, creates a high degree of uncertainty that is very stressful. The more our routines are disrupted, the greater the level of anxiety and frustration. In addition, most people like predictability; for instance, they want the security of knowing how a hamburger at their favorite fast-food restaurant is going to taste. The English saying, "That song is best esteemed with

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Cultural Shock



FIGURE 1 Cultural Shock Can Result from Bathrooms with Different Fixtures or Arrangements

which our ears are most acquainted,” states the facts simply; we like to feel comfortable and be familiar with our surroundings. It is no surprise that cultural shock can cause so many problems with a person’s comfort level. Losing our familiar signs, customs, norms, and behaviors can be very disturbing.

A woman in her mid-fifties was attending an intensive Spanish language school in Mexico and developed all the typical signs of cultural shock. She finished her five-week course and went home to find a position teaching English as a second language. Her new position was in Albania. She reported to friends that she was happy she had experienced cultural shock in a nonjob situation because when she started to feel the same things in Albania she was able to understand and work through the cultural differences. She enjoyed Albania so much she signed up for a second tour.

In a survey of 188 students from two Mid-South universities who had traveled or lived abroad, the greatest degree of cultural shock was reported in the lack of modern conveniences and standards of cleanliness. Other types of cultural shock showing statistical significance included attitudes toward women, nonverbal communication, clothing/business dress, family and marriage practices, housing, climate, educational system, financial problems, and values and ethical standards (Chaney & Martin, 1993). The absence of conveniences (such as telephones that work, running water available 24 hours a day, or buses that run on time), which are taken for granted in the United States, is an additional source of frustration. People with strong religious ties may feel spiritually adrift without a church of their faith. In the absence of bounty of U.S. shopping malls, supermarkets, and multiple television sets, depression may result. In addition to depression, people who experience cultural shock can become homesick, eat or drink compulsively, and even develop physical ailments. Unexplained anger and aggression toward people in the host culture are also reactions associated with cultural shock (Samovar et al., 2009).

On her first day of teaching at the local university in La Paz, Bolivia, shortly after her arrival from Atlanta, Georgia, Katherine Montague asked directions to the ladies’ room. On entering, she observed three males using urinals and made a hasty retreat. Her U.S. colleagues explained that all restrooms were unisex; Katherine decided to take a taxi to her hotel.

Cultural Shock

Cultural shock has received increased attention by researchers only in the past two decades. However, Jack London, in his story “In a Far Country,” which was published in 1900, stressed that a visitor to another culture should be prepared to acquire new customs and abandon old ideals. He suggested that sojourners (people who visit or reside temporarily in another country) should find pleasure in the unfamiliar because those who could not fit into the new culture would either return home or “die” of both psychological and physical ailments. More than a hundred years later, London’s advice is still sound (Lewis & Jungman, 1986).

Engholm (1991) has identified a special kind of cultural shock experienced by U.S. travelers—**AsiaShock**. Engholm identifies the five progressive stages of AsiaShock:

1. Frustration with the culture, which includes the language, the food, and the local customs.
2. Unwillingness to understand the rationale behind the local ways of doing things; people of the United States quickly label a cultural behavior as backward and inefficient without trying to understand the rational basis for the behavior.
3. Ethnocentricity; people of the United States often label Asians as dishonest because they seem to say one thing and do another, failing to realize that Asians consider their behavior to be face saving rather than dishonest.
4. Racism, including the unflattering labeling of all Asians into such groups as Japs and coolies.
5. Avoidance of the culture; people of the United States tend to form their own clubs at which they commiserate about the difficulty of doing business in Asia rather than intermingling with the people of the culture.

Cultural shock can be costly to a firm because it often results in the premature return of U.S. businesspeople working overseas. Some research shows that employees sent to work in foreign countries do not fail because they lack technical or professional competence but because they lack the ability to understand and adapt to another culture’s way of life. Estimates on early return of U.S. expatriate managers reported by Ferraro (1990) ranged from 45 to 85%. More recent surveys report lower early return rates that range from 4 to 8% (Harzing, 2002). When companies implement measures to combat cultural shock, such as conducting training programs for sojourners, the early return rate drops to less than 2%.

A family spent eight years in Saudi Arabia while the husband, an engineer, worked for Aramco. The youngest son had been born in Saudi Arabia. On moving back to the United States, the son, who was eight years old, went with his parents to buy a car. When the mother got in the car to drive home, the boy exclaimed, “But you can’t drive a car, Mother!” He had never seen a woman drive in his entire life. Of course, his parents quickly explained that in the United States driving customs and laws are different from those in Saudi Arabia.

Some companies have used short-term stays of two to three months to determine an employee’s potential for tolerating the culture. Sometimes these short-term projects are designed to prepare the person for a longer stay later. On other occasions, these brief trips are simply ways to use the talents of technical professionals who would be unwilling to go in the first place if it meant disrupting the professional advancement of a career-oriented spouse. Short trips are also cost-effective as the need to move the family is reduced or eliminated. Although the degree and type of cultural shock experienced by people who travel to another country for a short stay may be similar to the shock experienced by those who plan an extended visit, the strategies for coping during the short-term visit may differ.

Cultural shock and missing your way of life can cause you to give up free trips. A mid-level U.S. executive was in Taiwan for four weeks. The company policy was that if you were in the Far East for more than three weeks, you could take an all-expense paid trip to Hong Kong at the end of the third week. The executive chose to work through the weekend and the next week so he could finish early and go home.

Brislin (1981) identifies these five strategies used for coping with the new culture during short visits:

- **Unacceptance of the host culture**—The traveler simply behaves as he or she would in the home culture. No effort is made to learn the language or the customs of the host culture.
- **Substitution**—The traveler learns the appropriate responses or behaviors in the host culture and substitutes these responses or behaviors for the ones he or she would ordinarily use in the home culture.
- **Addition**—The person adds the behavior of the host culture when in the presence of the nationals but maintains the home culture behavior when with others of the same culture.
- **Synthesis**—This strategy integrates or combines elements of the two cultures, such as combining the dress of the United States and the Philippines.
- **Resynthesis**—The integration of ideas not found in either culture. An example of this strategy would be a U.S. traveler in China who chooses to eat neither American nor Chinese food but prefers Italian food.

STAGES OF CULTURAL SHOCK

Cultural shock generally goes through five stages: excitement or initial euphoria, crisis or disenchantment, adjustment, acceptance, and reentry. Cultural shock has been visualized as being represented by a **U-curve**, with the top of the left side of the curve representing the positive beginning, the crisis stage starts down the left side to the base of the U, the adjustment phase starts at the base of the curve, then acceptance moves up the right side of the curve, and reentry into the original culture is at the top of the right side of the curve (Davis & Krapels, 2005). The **W-curve** theory, a theory that explains the adaptation of the reentry phase, explains that reentry actually takes the form of a second U-curve, with a repetition of the stages experienced during initial adjustment to the foreign culture. By combining these two curves, a “W” is formed. For some sojourners, the reentry phase when returning to the home culture is equally as stressful as initial adjustment to a new culture (Klopf & McCroskey, 2007; Schmidt, Conaway, Easton, & Wardrope, 2007).

The first stage is excitement and fascination with the new culture, which can last only a few days or several months. During this time, everything is new and different; you are fascinated with the food and the people. Sometimes this stage is referred to as the “honeymoon” stage, during which your enthusiasm for the new culture causes you to overlook minor problems, such as having to drink bottled water and the absence of central heating or air conditioning (Black et al., 1999).

During the second stage, the crisis or disenchantment period, the “honeymoon” is over; your excitement has turned to disappointment as you encounter more and more differences between your own culture and the new culture. Problems with transportation, unfamiliar foods, and people who do not speak English now seem overwhelming. The practice of bargaining over the purchase price of everything, an exercise that was originally amusing, is now a constant source of irritation. Emotions of homesickness, irritation, anger, confusion, resentment, helplessness, and depression occur during the second stage. People at this stage often cope with the

Cultural Shock

situation by making disparaging remarks about the culture; it is sometimes referred to as the “fight-back” technique. Others deal with this stage by leaving, either physically, emotionally, or psychologically. Those who remain may withdraw from people in the culture, refuse to learn the language, and develop coping behaviors of excessive drinking or drug use. Some individuals actually deny differences and will speak in glowing terms of the new culture. This second stage can last from a few weeks to several months.

In the third stage, the adjustment phase, you begin to accept the new culture or you return home. Those who stay will try new foods and make adjustments in behavior to accommodate the shopping lines and the long waits for public transportation. You begin to see the humor in situations and realize that a change in attitude toward the host culture will make the stay abroad more rewarding.

In the fourth phase, the acceptance or adaptation phase, you feel at home in the new culture, become involved in activities of the culture, cultivate friendships among the nationals, and feel comfortable in social situations with people from the host culture. You learn the language and may adopt the new culture’s style of doing things. You even learn to enjoy some customs such as afternoon tea and the midday siesta that you will miss when you return to the home country.

The final phase is reentry shock, which can be almost as traumatic as the initial adjustment to a new culture, particularly after an extended stay abroad. Many individuals are shocked at the fact that they feel the same emotional, psychological, and physical reactions they did when they entered the new culture. **Reentry shock** is experienced on returning to the home country and may follow the stages identified earlier: initial euphoria, crisis or disenchantment, adjustment, and acceptance or adaptation. You would at first be happy to be back in your own country but then become disenchanted as you realize that your friends are not really interested in hearing about your experiences abroad, your standard of living goes down, and you are unable to use such new skills as a foreign language or bargaining in the market. You then move into the adjustment stage as you become familiar with new technology and appreciate the abundance and variety of foods and clothing and the improved standards of cleanliness. You finally move into the acceptance stage when you feel comfortable with the mores of the home culture and find yourself returning to many of your earlier views and behaviors (Klopf & McCroskey, 2007).

A former student from the United Arab Emirates called his U.S. professor to ask for information on purchasing property on the North Carolina coast. He explained that he was homesick for the United States and had decided to bring his family here every summer. After spending 15 years in the United States earning his bachelor, M.B.A., and Ph.D. degrees with only occasional visits back to his home country, he was experiencing reentry shock. (He made the readjustment and did not buy the North Carolina property.)

Although reentry shock is typically shorter than the first four stages of cultural shock in a new culture, expatriates who have made a good adjustment to the host culture may go through a rather long period of adjustment, lasting six months or more, when they are confronted with the changes that have taken place in their absence. Some of these changes are work related; expatriates may feel “demoted” when they return to middle-management positions without the bonuses, perks, and professional contacts they enjoyed abroad. In other situations, changes have taken place in the home country, including politics and styles of clothing, which require readjustment. In research conducted by Chaney and Martin (1993), the four types of reentry shock experienced by college students who had traveled abroad that were statistically significant were readjusting to lifestyle, readjusting to changes in social life, readjusting to changes in standard of living, and reestablishing friendships.

Cultural Shock

Research on repatriation revealed that meeting the job expectations of the person returning to the United States was very important. Therefore, it is imperative that employers put returning expatriates into realistic positions upon their return. The feelings of alienation and isolation can cause more trauma because returnees have the expectation that they will be returning to a familiar environment (Stroh, Gregersen, & Black, 2000). Other causes of cultural dissonance for the returnee include personnel changes, new company policies and procedures, different performance evaluation methods, different benefits and compensation, and different job responsibilities (O'Sullivan, 2002).

Some reentry problems are personal in nature. Many repatriates have changed; they have acquired a broadened view of the world and have undergone changes in values and attitudes. Personal problems may include unsuccessful attempts to renew personal and professional relationships as the realization sets in that their former friends do not share their enthusiasm for their overseas experiences and accomplishments. They must then make new friends who share this common experience. Children of expatriates encounter similar readjustment problems as their former friends have made new ones and they find that the education they received abroad is sufficiently different to cause problems when returning to schools in the United States.

Because reentry shock is a natural part of cultural shock, multinational corporations must provide training for repatriates to ensure that the transition to the home culture is a favorable experience. In the absence of such training, you can do much to counteract reentry shock by sharing your feelings (not your experiences) with sympathetic family members and friends, particularly those who have lived abroad. Correspond regularly with members of the home culture; ask questions concerning changes that are taking place. Subscribe to the home newspaper to stay abreast of current events. Keep in touch with professional organizations and other groups with which you may want to affiliate. Many repatriates have found that maintaining ties with the home culture cushions the shock associated with reentry (Dodd, 1997; Dodd & Montalvo, 1987; Klopff, 2000).

ALLEVIATING CULTURAL SHOCK

Many multinational firms find that cultural shock can be alleviated by selecting employees for overseas assignments who possess certain personal and professional qualifications. Another method of easing cultural shock is to conduct training programs for employees prior to overseas deployment (Krapels, 1993). Employees who have been given feedback on how they are doing and who have been developed to their maximum potential will be more satisfied with their assignments.

Selecting Overseas Personnel

Careful selection of persons for overseas assignments is important to enhance the chances for a successful sojourn. Personal qualifications needed when working in an unfamiliar culture include adaptability, flexibility, empathy, and tolerance. Good interpersonal skills and high self-esteem are also important.

The ability to react to different and often unpredictable situations with little apparent irritation shows a tolerance for ambiguity. Ambiguities are inherent in intercultural communication; many people, situations, rules, and attitudes make little sense. Much confusion results from being in another culture. Maintaining a high degree of tolerance and flexibility is essential. When companies recruit at colleges, they are looking for candidates who already have such qualifications

Cultural Shock

as language proficiency and overseas experience. Many recruiters think that tolerance can be developed but that adaptability is difficult to develop; they prefer, therefore, to hire persons who have already acquired this trait through living abroad (Geber, 1992; McEnery & DesHarnais, 1990). Adaptability screening reduces costly turnover. Harvey (1985) suggests the use of the following questions to determine a candidate's adaptability:

- Is the person cooperative, agreeable, and sensitive to others?
- Is the candidate open to the opinions of others?
- How does the person react to new situations, and what effort does he or she make to understand and appreciate differences?
- Does the candidate understand his or her own culturally derived values?
- Is the candidate sensitive and aware of the values of other cultures?
- How does the person react to criticism?
- How well does the candidate understand the U.S. government system?
- Will the candidate be able to make and develop contacts with counterparts in the foreign culture?
- Is the candidate patient when dealing with problem situations?
- Is the candidate resilient when faced with adverse situations?

By using such questions as these, interviewers are better able to determine a candidate's suitability for the overseas assignment as well as the person's motivation for wanting to work abroad.

The ability to see the environment from the perspective of the host nationals is an indication of empathy. Bennett's concept of empathy recommends replacing the Golden Rule "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" with the **Platinum Rule** "do unto others as they would have done unto them." You can still maintain your own cultural identity but be able to interpret the new culture through the eyes of the national (Broome, 1991).

Professional qualifications include knowledge of business practices in the host culture and technical competence. Some companies consider language skills crucial. When the destination is the Far East, many companies believe some language training prior to departure is needed. When the use of English is pervasive in a country, proficiency in the host language may not be necessary. In any case, language knowledge seems to give an expatriate an extra chance of succeeding in the host culture. In addition to language knowledge, understanding the educational, political, economic, and social systems of a country is considered important (Tung, 1981).

An individual's success or failure is tied to qualities such as self-efficacy, prior international experience, age, cross-cultural fluency, interpersonal skills, flexibility, cultural sensitivity, and adaptability. **Self-efficacy** is an individual's self-image and confidence to adapt and function in a new environment. A sojourner's attitudes concerning personal safety, security, strength, and self-sufficiency correlate with a high self-efficacy. Bicultural individuals adapt better than monocultural individuals. Prior international experience is associated with a person's ability to adjust to a new culture. Bicultural people tend to be more cross-culturally fluent, culturally sensitive, and adaptable. Adaptive traits include anticipatory adjustments, psychological adjustments, and sociocultural adjustments. If what is anticipated actually happens, psychological uncertainty is reduced, so overlap between the two cultures can be very helpful in adaptation. The ability to understand new cultural behaviors, which is a personality characteristic, can reduce psychological adjustments. Sociocultural adjustments are helped if the host country people see the sojourner as a positive rather than a negative addition. Sociocultural training is very important to the success of this adaptation (Davis & Krapels, 2005).

Providing Predeparture Training for Host Country

An effective approach to cross-cultural training is to first explore how people adjust to new cultures. Learning principles that affect the success of training programs for global managers can be broken down into three steps: observing and emulating behaviors of persons in the host culture, retaining what has been learned, and experimenting with the new behavior until it becomes comfortable. For example, in the Philippines, social get-togethers are important in getting people of a company to feel comfortable together and to develop camaraderie that spills over into the workplace. These festive occasions, which often include cooking together, singing, dancing, and storytelling, serve an important function in employer/employee relations. Attending and participating are important; those who do not participate are viewed as cold and aloof. After observing such social events, U.S. managers who want to be successful in the host culture would then sponsor similar social outings to demonstrate their desire to become part of the new culture (Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992).

Because of the reported lack of intercultural training by U.S. multinational companies, acculturation problems have affected the overall success rate of businesspersons in foreign countries. Research conducted by Krapels (1993) involving 102 international businesspersons representing 35 international Mid-South companies determined that 46% of the firms participating offered some type of predeparture training; however, only one firm had a formal training program in place. Because early return rates drop significantly when training programs are implemented, many multinational firms are now experimenting with a variety of training programs. Some companies are trying to boost tolerance of another culture by including trainees from overseas locations in their U.S.-based training programs. Other firms conduct training sessions overseas and send U.S. managers to these courses to provide training in the host culture at the same time that some exposure to the culture occurs. Still other companies incorporate cross-cultural awareness into their regular management training courses.

Advances in communication technology are now being used in intercultural training. For example, a major international firm uses global videoconferencing to train employees and their families at more than 200 sites around the world. Global educational networks with various universities are being developed to train executives who are going abroad. Computers are being used to enhance training effectiveness. Computer-aided training or learning has immense potential for multicultural education because it cuts across traditional language barriers (Moran, Harris, & Moran, 2011). Research indicates that such instruction not only encourages one-to-one learning but can save 30% of the time of more traditional methods. Regardless of the type of training offered, companies realize that success is limited to the extent that there is no substitute for actually living in another culture.

Approaches to intercultural training may be grouped as follows:

- The **intellectual model** is also called the classroom model. Participants are given facts about the host country using a variety of instructional methods, such as lectures, group discussions, and videotapes. This model, which is used most frequently, is based on the belief that cognitive understanding is necessary for performing effectively abroad. This training method is popular in the military as well as in business and educational institutions. Reasons for the popularity of the intellectual model are that staffing is relatively easy and participants are familiar with this approach. A limitation of this approach is that the knowledge gained may not coincide with what is actually needed when a person lives abroad. In other words, the person has learned facts and generalizations about the culture that do not take into account everyday happenings that the person experiences when living in the culture. The model teaches for knowledge and is not based on experience; it does not develop problem-solving skills or flexible attitudes.

Cultural Shock

- The **area training model**, also called the simulation model, emphasizes affective goals, culture-specific content, and experiential processes. This approach is centered on the trainee rather than the trainer, requires trainee involvement in the learning process, and emphasizes problem solving rather than acquiring information. Through field trips or such simulations as Bafa Bafa (in which participants are divided into two cultures, Alpha and Beta), trainees learn the rules of their culture and interact with members of the other culture. Critics of this approach point out that because it is a simulation, this type of training may still be dissimilar from the actual experience abroad. In addition, those who desire to have more knowledge about the culture (the focus of the intellectual model) would consider the dissimilarity from reality a drawback of this approach.
- The **self-awareness model**, also called the human relations model, is based on the assumption that the trainee with self-understanding will adapt to the new culture better and will therefore be more effective in the overseas assignment. To accomplish desired outcomes, trainers use role play or the sensitivity or Training (T-) Group approach. The **sensitivity training**, or **T-Group**, movement, popular in the late 1960s and 1970s, has not received much attention in recent years. This approach involved training exercises in which people are told in a group setting by others why their behavior is inappropriate, such as that they are perceived as arrogant, dogmatic, or judgmental. This training approach was controversial at best. Although some may have perceived the feedback as helpful, others were uncomfortable exploring their feelings and emotions and viewed it as threatening. Some critics of this approach point out that the American T-Group is based on U.S. values of directness, openness, and equality. Further, this approach does not give participants a framework of conceptual knowledge for analyzing future situations. In addition, cultural relativity and differences in values are not addressed.
- The **cultural awareness model** emphasizes cultural insight, and like the self-awareness model, stresses affective goals and an experiential process. In this approach, participants go from recognizing their own values to contrasting their values with those of other cultures using a variety of techniques, including realistic role-playing. This approach, although not as familiar to trainees as the intellectual approach, more nearly approximates interactions participants would experience in the new culture (Moran et al., 2011).
- The **interaction approach** is based on participants' interacting with people in the host country, either nationals or U.S. persons who have been in the host country for an extended time (Moran et al., 2011).
- The **multidimensional approach** is based on the concept that using any single training approach is not as effective as using an approach that attempts to combine cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of training. Critics of this approach say that integrating approaches is overly ambitious. However, advocates maintain that the integrated approach, balancing content with process, affective learning with cognitive, and culture specific with culture general, will better prepare participants for a successful overseas experience (Bennett, 1986).

Providing Feedback and Rewards

Global managers need feedback and rewards just as managers in the home culture do. The appraisal and reward system is different from the home system because people in overseas assignments have to be evaluated and rewarded in a way that takes into account the values of persons in the host culture and the expectations of the particular assignment. The evaluation criteria must be made clear. Areas typically included are leadership ability, interpersonal skills, negotiation skills, customer service, communication skills, and achievement of organizational objectives. For international managers, a key factor to be evaluated often includes profits, but in some countries, the main goal might be

Cultural Shock

to build a presence in the country. In that case, making contacts and building close personal relationships with key officials in the host country are important. Another consideration in appraising overseas managers is who should do the evaluating. Many companies use a rating team headed by a senior human resources management executive. Persons who may be involved in the appraisal process include on-site superiors, peer managers, subordinates, and clients. The team leader might be expected to prepare an appraisal on the global manager every six months (Black et al., 1992).

Reward systems for global managers include special allowances for housing/utilities/furnishings, cost of living, hardship, education, home leave, relocation, medical, car and driver, club memberships, and taxes. The main objective of whatever reward system is used is to attract and retain quality employees. Rewards are especially important in overseas assignments because employees need to be compensated for what they are leaving behind: favorite foods, recreation, family and friends, educational opportunities, and health care. In addition, reward systems used for global managers need to take into consideration the idea of equity—the ratio between what they contribute and what they receive. A manager in the host country who is supposed to be on the same level as the U.S. manager often sees a disparity between what the two contribute and receive; this situation can cause friction and add to feelings of inequity between expatriate managers and local managers. Managers/government employees from the same country but not the same company/government agency also can experience feelings of dissatisfaction based on equity. One spouse of a U.S. expatriate complained that her husband's firm did everything "on the cheap," including housing allowances, bonuses, and home-leave airfares (economy class only), while their friends in other companies received higher housing allowances and bonuses and flew business class (Black et al., 1992).

Developing Employees to Their Maximum Potential

In the past, insufficient attention has been given to reacclimating global managers, specifically in planning for the return of managers who have been in foreign posts for some time. As a result, many managers become dissatisfied with their positions upon their return to their U.S. firm and leave the company. In fact, an estimated 20% of managers leave the firm within a year following repatriation. When you consider the firm's investment in the success of its global managers, the importance of focusing on repatriation becomes clear. Plans for successful repatriation adjustment should begin before the manager leaves the host country; the company should make clear the reason for the new assignment, what new skills and knowledge will be learned, and how the employee will contribute to the company's development upon his or her return. In addition, human resources department personnel should begin initial preparations for the manager's return at least six months prior to repatriation by providing home-country information and contacts. Other recommendations for successful repatriation include providing appropriate compensation for transition expenses, allowing sufficient time to move and get settled before reporting to work, assisting in the location of proper housing, and showing appreciation to the entire family for their contributions to the company during their overseas assignment (Black et al., 1992).

A U.S. expatriate made this observation on returning to his home in Dallas from an assignment in Caracas:

I was really looking forward to coming home, but now I don't feel like I belong. Before I left, I had a large corner office in my company; now I share an office with two other managers. Most people don't even know who I am. My wife isn't happy. In Caracas, our life was very social; we were invited to all the best parties. She had a cook, maid, seamstress, gardener, and nanny. Here she has no friends and no household help.

ASPECTS OF CULTURAL SHOCK

Aspects of cultural shock include cultural stress, social alienation, social class and poverty/wealth extremes, financial matters, and relationships and family considerations. In addition, differences between the extent to which persons in the host and home cultures reveal their private selves may cause acculturation problems, particularly in communication.

Cultural Stress

Entering an unfamiliar culture is stressful; in fact, transitions of any type are both psychologically and physically stressful. The stress of getting ready for the move, of unpacking and getting settled upon arrival, and of adjusting to new foods can be so stressful that people become physically ill. Problems with housing, climate, services, or communication in another language bring additional stress.

Expatriates learn to use a variety of coping skills to alleviate stress. Unfortunately, some coping behaviors are negative. Taking drugs or drinking alcohol may provide a temporary superficial relief to the stressful situation but avoids dealing with the real source of stress. Another negative coping method, using food to alleviate stress, may create weight-gain problems. Positive techniques include diversions such as taking up a hobby or learning a new skill, planning family events, sharing problems with friends and family members, and changing one's mental outlook. Physical coping mechanisms, such as exercise and meditation, are useful in alleviating stress, as are spiritual techniques such as volunteering to help others and religious worship.

Some companies have found that providing prospective expatriates with a mentor who has worked in the host country can help reduce anxiety about adjustments that may be necessary in the new culture. Providing a second mentor located in the host country can reduce stress associated with learning acceptable behavior in the new culture and help avoid serious business and social blunders.

To alleviate culture stress, prepare for the second culture by reading up on the country, studying the language, and becoming aware of customs and traditions in the culture. Maintaining a sense of humor is very important in dealing with cultural stress.

Social Alienation

An aspect of cultural shock that can have adverse effects upon the newcomer to a culture is social alienation and the feelings of loneliness associated with being isolated from friends and the home culture. Feelings of alienation may be delayed somewhat because concern over such basic matters as housing, transportation, and work may buffer these feelings initially. As the months pass, however, you may feel more isolated as you experience numerous cultural differences, such as what is considered an appropriate topic of social conversation. The concern of people in the United States with fitness, exercise, and healthful eating is not shared by persons of many cultures; such topics, therefore, are inappropriate for conversation. You may also feel uncomfortable during political discussions because persons of other cultures cannot understand the logic behind such decisions as voting for a presidential candidate who is inexperienced in the international arena rather than for a seasoned politician who is respected in the international community.

Making an effort to become familiar with the nuances of the culture and cultivating friendships with persons from the home culture as well as the host culture can alleviate feelings of alienation. Enrolling in language classes and including host nationals in social events can cushion the shock of the new culture and pave the way toward a better understanding and appreciation of the people and their culture.

Social Class and Poverty/Wealth Extremes

In many developing countries, no “middle class” exists. Social classes and extremes in poverty and wealth are readily apparent.

The mention of social class in the United States is greeted with uncertain responses because many U.S. citizens prefer to believe that no social class exists in the United States. Class distinctions do exist in the United States, but they are so complicated and subtle that visitors from other countries often miss the nuances and even the existence of a class structure. Therefore, the official propaganda of social equality is a myth. According to people in the lower stratum, class is related to the amount of money you have. People in the middle stratum acknowledge that money has something to do with it but believe that the kind of work you do and your education are almost as important. People in the top stratum believe that your tastes, values, style, and behavior indicate your class, regardless of your education, occupation, or money (Fussell, 1983). Because U.S. personnel are accustomed to perpetuating this “fable of equality,” the obvious existence of social class in other societies may make U.S. Americans uncomfortable. In cultures with virtually no middle class, U.S. persons are usually forced into the upper class of the host culture and may, at least temporarily, feel ill at ease in a social role in which numerous servants are the norm and distinctions are made between acceptable and unacceptable friends.

The informality of U.S. Americans, such as greeting strangers on the street with “Hi!” and calling people they scarcely know by their first names, is a source of cultural shock for many visitors to the United States. In many cultures, starting a conversation with a stranger in a shop or on a bus is considered unacceptable; in the United States, this behavior is commonplace. Foreigners are also often shocked to discover that not all U.S. Americans are wealthy and well educated—that we have large numbers of homeless persons and people who have not graduated from high school.

The poverty of the lower class in other cultures often makes U.S. Americans so uncomfortable that they feel compelled to help but may do so in socially unacceptable ways, such as paying a gardener twice the usual rate simply because the person is poor. Mentors in the host culture can be very helpful in advising U.S. persons regarding acceptable ways of dealing with poverty/wealth extremes and with gaining an insight into the class structure of the culture.

Financial Matters

Because adapting to a new culture and reentering the home culture involves financial adjustments, companies should provide financial counseling to both expatriates and repatriates. Although the focus is a little different, the primary consideration is the same: optimum use of the financial resources available.

Financial counseling for expatriates includes such information as cost and availability of housing, banking practices (including exchange rates), use of credit cards and checks, and costs of schooling for employees with families. Because substantial salary increases are often related to an employee’s willingness to relocate, these increases should be discussed in terms of real purchasing power. Expenses related to a higher standard of living that many expatriates enjoy would include hiring domestic help and investing in appropriate formal attire. Customs in purchasing, such as bargaining in the market, should be addressed as well as the additional marketing expenses, which may include paying someone to guard your car while you shop, paying someone else to carry parcels, and paying another person to find fresh eggs or meat that are available only on the black market. Buying goods in grams rather than pounds is an additional

Cultural Shock

purchasing consideration. Other costs include the added expenses of securing goods, such as the cost of tailor-made clothes in the absence of locally available ready-to-wear clothing.

By providing counseling before home-country reentry, the company is acknowledging that financial problems will occur and is demonstrating a willingness to help with these problems. One financial problem relates to the loss of buying power; on returning to the United States, the decrease can be about 30% in net disposable income. The focus of financial counseling for repatriates includes costs involved in relocating in a stateside home, accompanying adjustments to a lower salary, and the loss of perquisites. Because the loss of elite status is often difficult to accept, counseling should include the positive side of the changes, such as less money will be spent on clothes. To ease the transition financially, some companies provide a relocation pay supplement. Others grant annual leave in advance of the return to allow time for house hunting and related problems. Another expense that is receiving increased attention is the cost of providing counseling for family members, particularly children whose adolescence is delayed. Because repatriated children are usually retarded three to four years socially, counseling is often needed to help them work through this transition of readjusting to the home culture (Bird & Dunbar, 1991).

RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

Problems with relationships, such as the failure of the spouse and other family members to adapt to the new culture, are a major factor in the early return of expatriates. Family and personal issues can be disruptive to acculturation, especially for families with children ages 3–5 and 14–16 (Harvey, 1985). The 3–5-year-olds often have emotional problems being uprooted from familiar surroundings; the 14–16-year-olds may have problems ranging from adapting socially to adjusting to a different educational system. Adolescents in particular need social continuity and often feel resentment toward their parents for uprooting them. Care must be taken to prepare children for the move by discussing openly their anxieties and fears and by providing them with information concerning expected changes in their lives. Being separated from family members and friends in the United States may cause loneliness for all involved. In addition, the spouse is experiencing his or her own problems in adjusting to an alien work environment and is unable to provide the time and emotional support needed during this difficult period of adjustment.

Two-career families in which one spouse (usually the wife) gives up a career to accompany the relocated spouse pose special adjustment problems. Job opportunities in the new culture may be nonexistent, and resentment and boredom may lead to family conflict. Adding unhappy children and an unhappy spouse to the stress of the new job in a foreign culture increases the probability of an early return to the home culture (Harvey, 1985).

Companies that provide training for employees prior to departure rarely include the family in such training. Because adjustment problems often involve the family, difficulties could be avoided in many cases by including family members in predeparture training.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SELF

People in various cultures differ with respect to how much of the inner self is shared with others. A method of considering a person's inner world is through the **Johari Window**, which includes "panes" that represent the self that is known and unknown to a person and the self that is known and unknown to others. The Johari Window (Luft, 1984), named for its creators, Joseph and Harrington, is shown in Figure 2.

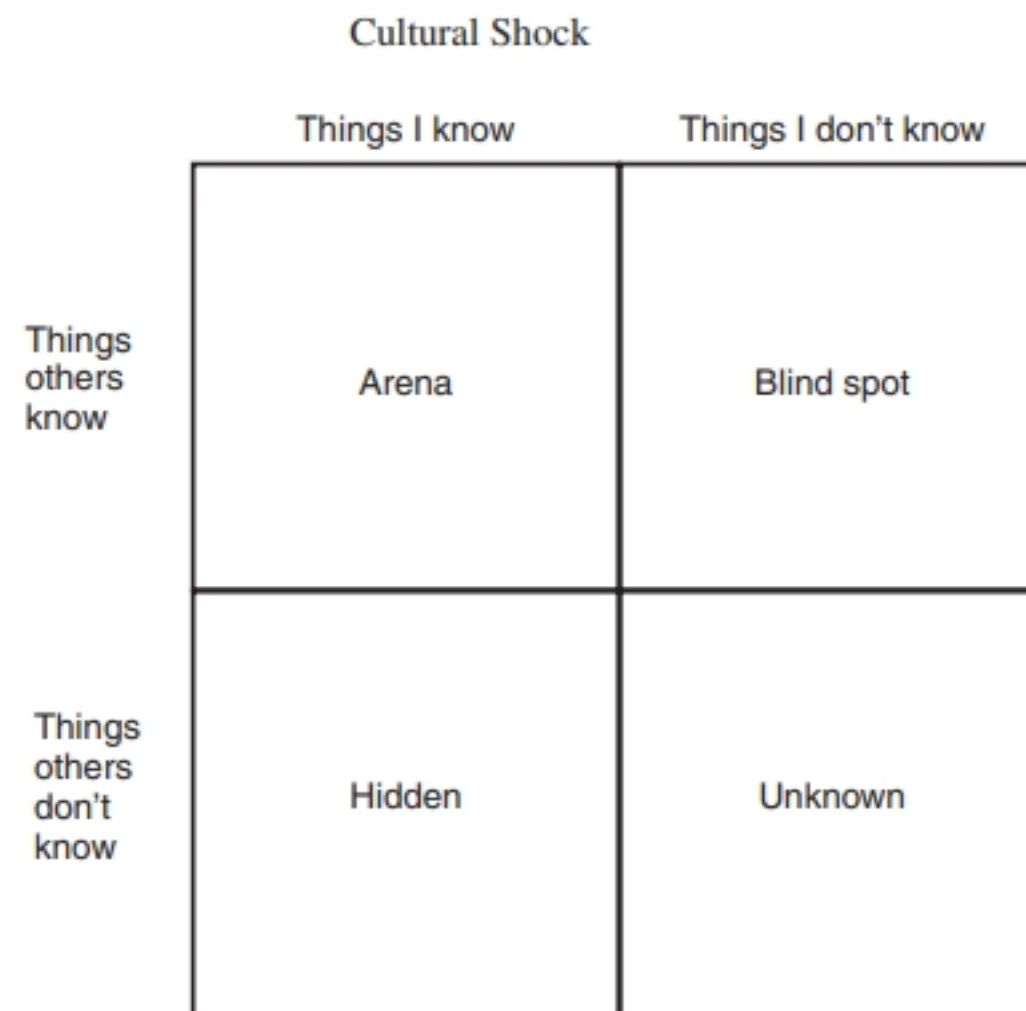


FIGURE 2 The Johari Window Source: Data from *Group Processes: An Introduction to Group Dynamics* by Joseph Luft. Copyright © 1963, 1970, 1984, Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company. Used with permission.

The first window pane is information that is shared; it includes what is known both to the person and to others. This information may be limited to a few facts that the person chooses to share, such as occupation or telephone number, or it may include numerous facts and opinions that are shared with a large audience. The second pane represents what is known to others but not to the person; it represents the person's blind area. This may include motives that others are able to discern but that the person cannot see. The third pane represents what is known to the person but is unknown to others. Information that a person chooses not to disclose to others may range from a past indiscretion to aspects of his or her family life, such as marital status. The fourth pane is that aspect of the person's inner self that is unknown both to others and to the person. This may be information that is embedded deeply in the person's subconscious to the extent that neither the person nor others know of its existence.

The major dimensions of the Johari Window (what is known to self and to others) can be translated into a person's public self and private self. The public self may include information about a person's work, family, and interests or opinions on political and social issues. In some cultures, such as the Japanese, the public self is relatively small, although the private self is relatively large. People of the United States use a style of communication that includes a larger public self with the private self being relatively small. U.S. citizens readily express their opinions and reveal their attitudes and feelings to a larger extent than do persons from the Asian cultures. U.S. Americans use a variety of communication channels, including greater verbalization and greater use of nonverbal communication, such as touch. They conceal less than the Japanese and communicate on a wide range of topics. The Japanese offer fewer opinions and feelings and have fewer physical contacts. People of the United States have less rigid boundaries between the public and private selves; they use more spontaneous forms of communication and fewer ritualized ones. Because of this larger public self, U.S. Americans are sometimes criticized by persons of other cultures as being too outgoing and friendly, too explicit, and too analytical (Barnlund, 1975).

Cultural Shock

Obstacles to effective communication may be overcome to some degree by becoming knowledgeable about the communication styles of other cultures and by compromising between the two styles. When communicating with the Japanese, for example, U.S. Americans should avoid prying questions, observe formalities and rituals, respect the use of silence, maintain harmony, and understand that evasiveness is a natural part of their communication process.

Cultural shock is a reality that must be addressed by firms doing business abroad. The subject must be openly explained and understood. By admitting the existence of cultural shock and explaining how it may affect individuals, the shock loses some of its intensity; and adapting to the new culture is less traumatic.

The length of cultural shock/reentry shock will depend on such factors as personal resiliency, the length of the assignment, and the effort you put forth prior to departure to learn about the host culture.

Terms

Area training model	Interaction approach	Self-awareness model
AsiaShock	Johari Window	Self-efficacy
Cultural awareness model	Multidimensional approach	Sensitivity training
Cultural shock	Platinum Rule	T-group
Intellectual model	Reentry shock	U-curve
		W-curve

Exercise 1

Instructions: Circle the appropriate number to indicate the types and degree of cultural shock (either positive or negative) you experienced when entering a foreign culture.

Type of Cultural Shock	High Degree				Low Degree	None
1. Attitudes toward time	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Attitudes toward women	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Gestures, eye contact, and other nonverbal messages	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Climate	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Clothing/business dress	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Customs, traditions, and beliefs	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Educational system	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Family and marriage practices	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. Financial problems	5	4	3	2	1	0
10. Food and diet	5	4	3	2	1	0

(continued)

Cultural Shock

(continued)

Type of Cultural Shock	High Degree				Low Degree	None
11. Housing	5	4	3	2	1	0
12. Lack of modern conveniences	5	4	3	2	1	0
13. Social class/poverty/wealth extremes	5	4	3	2	1	0
14. Social alienation (absence of people of same culture)	5	4	3	2	1	0
15. Standards of cleanliness	5	4	3	2	1	0
16. Transportation	5	4	3	2	1	0
17. Values and ethical standards	5	4	3	2	1	0
18. Work habits and practices	5	4	3	2	1	0

Exercise 2

Instructions: Circle T for true or F for false.

1. T F During the second stage of cultural shock, many sojourners develop such coping behaviors as drug and alcohol abuse.
2. T F Cultural shock can be alleviated by careful selection of employees for overseas assignments.
3. T F The Platinum Rule states: "Do unto others before they do unto you."
4. T F The intellectual or classroom approach to intercultural training is basically fact-oriented training.
5. T F Cultural stress can have both psychological and physical consequences.
6. T F A source of shock to foreigners is the discovery that not all U.S. citizens are well educated.
7. T F A source of cultural shock for many U.S. persons living abroad is the financial burden of the required higher standard of living.
8. T F A major factor in the early return of expatriates is family problems.
9. T F The Johari Window represents how you see the world.
10. T F Children of repatriates experience less reentry shock than do adults.

Questions and Cases for Discussion

1. Explain what is meant by the term cultural shock.
2. Identify and discuss the stages of cultural shock.
3. How can multinational firms alleviate cultural shock?
4. Identify and describe the approaches to intercultural training offered by multinational firms.
5. Identify types of cultural stress that may confront persons who are living abroad.
6. Identify positive coping skills that may be used to alleviate stress.
7. How can social class and poverty/wealth extremes be sources of cultural shock for U.S. Americans in overseas assignments?
8. What types of financial adjustments may be associated with cultural shock?
9. Explain how the Johari Window is related to cultural shock.
10. What types of reentry problems are often encountered by persons returning to the home culture? How can reentry shock be alleviated?

CASES

The following procedure is recommended for analyzing the cases: (a) read the case carefully paying attention to details; (b) read the questions at the end of the case; (c) reread the case, taking notes on or highlighting the details needed for answering the questions; (d) identify relevant facts, underlying assumptions, and critical issues of the case; (e) list possible answers to the questions; and (f) select the most logical response to the question. Your professor may ask that you submit answers to the case questions in writing.

Case 1

Larry was sent to Japan to represent his company and wanted to make a good impression on his Japanese hosts. He immediately asked them to call him by his first name and told several humorous stories intended to break the ice. He brought along gifts containing his company's logo and asked about the state of the Japanese economy. Larry got the impression that things were not going well and that he may have behaved inappropriately. What advice would you give him?

Case 2

Karl, his wife, and five-year-old son were completing a three-year assignment in Brazil and were scheduled to return to the United States in a month. Karl would return to work at the home office in Chicago. What should Karl and his family do to lessen the shock of returning to their home culture?

Case 3

Frank's company was planning to enter the Mexican market and had sent him to meet with Juan, the manager of the firm with which they planned to establish a partnership. They agreed to meet for lunch at 2 P.M. at a restaurant in Mexico City. At 2:30, Frank, thinking he had misunderstood the time or place, was leaving when he encountered Juan, who did not apologize for being late. Juan then ordered a special brandy for them and proceeded

to talk about the local museums, churches, and other points of interest. Frank indicated that he did not have time to visit local sites and was anxious to discuss their proposed business partnership. When the brandy arrived, Frank declined, saying he did not drink alcoholic beverages during the day. Each time Frank tried to turn the discussion to business, Juan immediately changed the subject to other topics, including inquiring about Frank's family and personal life. At the end of the two-hour lunch, no business had been discussed. Frank returned to the United States the following day and reported to his supervisor that the Mexican firm apparently had no interest in the proposed partnership. How could Frank have better prepared himself for the cultural shock he experienced?

Case 4

Janice Davis, a marketing representative for a U.S. firm, was looking forward to her assignment in Japan because she had visited the country on one occasion. However, her anticipation quickly turned to frustration. Because all store signs were in Japanese, she didn't know where to buy even a broom. Directions and instructions for using appliances were in Japanese. How could Janice have better prepared herself for the cultural shock she experienced?

Case 5

An international team is being organized. The members of the team are from Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, and the United States. The main language of the group is English. The German member criticized the Mexican member for not being committed to the project because the Mexican had arrived late for the first meeting. What does commitment mean to each of these cultures? As they started working on the project, they discovered that some of the members had goals that were separate from the project goals. How would task- and group-maintenance functions differ between an international team of workers and a

single country? What prejudices might these members have against other members of the group? Given what you know about these four cultures and any other cultural materials you may have, discuss the situation. Why were the members acting

as they did? What would everyone need to know as a member of an international team? How would exploring each other's beliefs, norms, and values at the initial meeting of the team affect the group?

Activities

1. For persons who have traveled or lived in a foreign country for a time, discuss the degree of reentry shock experienced upon returning to the home country in the following areas:
 - a. Reestablishing friendships
 - b. Readjusting to lifestyle
 - c. Readjusting to job
 - d. Changes in social life
 - e. Changes in standard of living
2. Assume that you have just been made manager of your company's plants in Egypt. Prepare a list of the types of cultural shock you would expect to encounter.
3. After a year in Kenya, you are being returned to your U.S. office. List the types of reentry shock you would expect to experience.
4. You are reviewing applications of persons in your firm who have expressed an interest in an overseas assignment. List the special qualifications you would look for in deciding which three to interview.
5. Conduct an online search to determine what training films or materials are available for predeparture intercultural training of businesspersons.
6. Interview a person who has lived in a country other than the United States. Ask the person to identify the major types of cultural shock he or she experienced upon arrival in the country and what techniques were used for coping with cultural shock. Prepare a one-page summary of the interview and share your findings with the class.

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Glossary

Area training model is also called the simulation model; an approach to intercultural training that emphasizes affective goals, culture-specific content, and experiential processes.

AsiaShock is a special kind of cultural shock experienced by U.S. people when traveling to Asian countries.

Cultural awareness model includes a comparison of values and behaviors of people in the home country and the host country.

Cultural shock is the trauma a person experiences when he or she moves into a culture different from his or her home culture; a communication problem that involves the frustrations that accompany a lack of understanding of the verbal and nonverbal communication of the host culture, its customs, and value systems.

Intellectual model is an approach to intercultural training, also called the classroom model, in which participants are given facts about the host country using a variety of instructional methods, such as lectures, group discussions, and videotapes.

Interaction approach refers to interaction with people in the host country, either nationals or U.S. persons who have been in the host country for some time.

Johari Window is a way of looking at a person's inner world (named for its creators, Joseph and Harrington). It includes panes that represent the self that is known and unknown to a person and the self that is known and unknown to others.

Multidimensional approach is an approach to intercultural training based on the concept that using any single approach is not as effective as using an approach that attempts to combine cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of training.

Platinum Rule is "do unto others as they would have done unto them."

Reentry shock sometimes called reverse cultural shock, refers to problems with readjustment to the home culture.

Self-awareness model is an approach to intercultural training also called the human relations model; it is

Cultural Shock

based on the assumption that the trainee with self-understanding will understand the new culture better and will therefore be more effective in the overseas assignment.

Self-efficacy is an individual's self-image and confidence to be able to adapt and function in a new environment.

Sensitivity training is one element used in the self-awareness approach to intercultural training; includes training exercises in which people are told in a group setting why their behavior is inappropriate.

T-group is a group used in sensitivity training in which people are told why their behavior is inappropriate.

U-curve is a theory related to stages of cultural shock that visualizes the top of the left side of the curve representing the positive beginning, the crisis stage starting down the left side to the base of the U, the adjustment phase starting at the base of the curve, then acceptance moving up the right side of the curve, and reentry into the original culture being at the top of the right side of the curve.

W-curve is a theory of cultural shock that explains the adaptation or reentry phase—explaining that reentry actually takes the form of a second U-curve (thus forming a “W”) with a repetition of the stages experienced during initial adjustment to the foreign culture.

Answers to Exercises

True/False

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. T |
| 4. T | 9. F |
| 5. T | 10. F |