Barriers In Intercultural Communication

Abstract

Cultural diversity in our community has grown as a trend with the increase of globalization in the world. The existence of variety of culture and ethnic groups has brought new challenges like intercultural communication. Since, our language shapes the way we perceive our surroundings, we ought to understand to create effective communication with different cultures for the greater good of humanity.

Introduction

Culture is an abstract idea to grasp, it has different classification depending on the society. The simple way to explain culture would be ‘the arts and the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time’ (dictionary, 2019). Our culture shapes the way we understand the world and influences our perception. However our world has change drastically, it has become increasingly diverse and has directly affected our communication with each other. Communicating with a person with different culture and tradition can be scary, confusing, overwhelming but it can also be exciting, enlightening, and be a learning experience for us. Thus, we will always experience barriers while intercultural interactions however we can work to navigate the obstacle and create a sound business environment.

Body

Culture surrounds everything we do, it is an integrated system of behavior patterns that reflects the traits of the society and its members. Our culture is the synergy of our social structure, political systems, language, religion, education, and philosophy. According to EDWARD SCHIEN, there are three levels to any of the culture. The first level is visible patterns, behavior, and artifacts. For example, food and dress. The second is less visible and is made up of cultural communication that includes strategies, goals and philosophies. The third is invisible which includes the ideas, assumptions, values, beliefs, and norms. This level is at the unconscious level of human mind. It basically shapes out reality and help us understand humans and human relationship. The picture given in appendices will help understand more about the levels of culture.

Our culture is the culmination of ideas, concepts, and practices, And Language is the part of that synergy. Language is an important part of culture, and they both are intertwined. Our language reflects our culture. One can learn about a whole nation’s culture and tradition through language and the way they interact (QIAN, 2018). In other word, culture and language have a homologous relationship. They were establish together and influenced each other as they evolved. In order to clearly understand the relationship between our culture and language we can look at example like one trying to learn Spanish. In such process, one ought to learn the alphabets, word arrangement, and rules of grammars and while learning that one learns about the customs and behaviors of Spanish people. In order to fully grasp and learn the language

one must understand the workings behind the language that is culture. Furthermore, if there is an interaction between two different cultures, we can always expect communication complications between two groups as they have distinctive background, beliefs and language. However, we can learn each other's culture in addition to the language to avoid mistakes in intercultural communication (jiazu, 2002).

We live in a world of globalization where everything is accessible through means of transportation and communication. Communication is a means of expressing and conveying our intentions and motives. Similarly, at some point in our life we ought to communicate with a person of different culture and may have to deal with many barriers while exchanging dialogues. Some barriers to intercultural communication could be linguistic, emotions, preferences, perceptions, culture and attitudes. Although there are thousands of barriers preventing our smooth intercultural communication, we can generalize the barriers into ethnocentrism, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination (Dr. Jorde jakamovski, 2019). Firstly, ethnocentrism is the belief that one's cultural norms and value are superior to those of other social groups. Such concept tend to scale and rate others with references. For example, Americans often feel disgusted when they see Indians eating food with their hands. They believe it is unhygienic and unhealthy and prefer to eat with cutlery. However, Americans do not understand the culture behind the use of hands. Hindus believe that eating with hands evokes emotion as the fingers stimulates the five elements (air, fire, water, earth and space) and helps in bringing forth digestive juices in the stomach. Secondly, stereotypes are the distorted views towards other cultures and traditions. One has a pre-conceived notion that some cultures are naturally evil and menace. Moreover, stereotypes impede smooth communication. For example, people have a bad idea about Russian people, people tend to think that Russians are naturally rude the way they speak and known to be merciless as portrayed in movies. However, that may not be the case. Thirdly, prejudice in intercultural barriers means to have negative thinking towards other people based on faulty stereotypes. Such irrational attitudes may result in conflict in opinions. People with prejudices may be hostile, violent and hurt a group of people. For example, the movie "American history X,' where two brothers involved in white supremacy killed dozens of immigrants in USA. And lastly, Discrimination refers to prejudicial treatment to categories of people. In other word, discrimination is the behavioral manifestation of the prejudice and be the major obstacles in communication. Discrimination can be seen in various forms like verbal insults, turning back, genocide, showing hatred, creating boundaries and caste. Discrimination is an extreme case to barriers in communication because when one discriminates a person from another culture, he/she is not only insulting that person but also questioning and disrespecting the whole collective community of that culture. Such may result in massive outrage and brawl.

As humans we always have room to improve ourselves by learning from our mistakes. We can understand more about other's culture by having a free mindset. In order to avoid misunderstanding in intercultural interaction, one must be careful not to offend others by their unjust words or actions. One should closely pay attention to their own words and actions. Secondly, the root of any problem or confusion is ones prejudged assumptions, one must be able to control their biased opinions and channel it through the medium of curiosity and humility. Thirdly and most importantly, one must learn to engage in transfection—the process of empathizing across cultures, gaining knowledge and experience. One can tune in with different culture and cherish the uniqueness and variety of being a human being. Thus, by following certain steps and being ethical we can improve intercultural communication. (Dr. jorde jakamovski, 2019)

Cultural diversity has grown as a trend in the workplace, and the impacts of such diversity can be both favorable and unfavorable depending on how we use the cultural differences. Many research and studies have been done in order to turn cultural differences into a workplace advantage. For example, Indians and Pakistani have two different view regarding the ongoing conflict of Kashmir but Credit to researches, we are now able abridge the gap of differences and leave in harmony in the workplace. Some negative effects of cultural diversity are interpersonal conflicts, lost productivity, and lack of peace in groups. However, the pros are better results created by a variety of culture experiences, expanding business in other countries, understanding of others culture (Martin, 2014). Cultural diversity can help in the expansion of an organization's tactics, approach marketing plan, and creation of new idea, new operation, and launching new products.

Conclusion

In conclusion, cultural differences will exist till the end of humanity and we need to accept the fact. Learning and gaining experiences while accepting each other's differences and looking for similarities will create a sound environment for effective communication across culture.

References

1. Dawn, M., 2015. women the nest. [Online]
2. Available at: https://woman.thenest.com/demonstrate-diversity-workplace-5291.html
3. [Accessed 17 May 2019].
4. dictionary, c., 2019. cambridge dictionary. [Online]
5. Available at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/culture
6. [Accessed 17 May 2019].
7. Dr. jorde jakamovski, D. m., 2019. barriers of intercultural communication. VIZIONE, Volume 32, pp. 81-90.
8. jiazu, G., 2002. language and culture. 1 ed. sanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language education press.
9. Martin, G. C., 2014. The Effects Of Cultural diversity in the workplace. Diversity Management, 9(2), pp. 90-93.
10. QIAN, J., 2018. The relation between language and culture. s.l.:MAC Praque Consulting s.r.o..
11. SCHIEN, E., n.d.