

**A. Adasenka,
V. Solovyeva**

*Scientific supervisor
E. V. Kniazkova*

*Belarusian Trade and Economics
University of Consumer Cooperatives
Gomel, Republic of Belarus*

THE INTERACTION OF BASIC ELEMENTS OF CULTURE IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

In recent years, social, political, economic and business upheavals, scientific and technological progress open up more and more opportunities, types and forms of cross-cultural communication, the main condition for the effectiveness of which is mutual understanding, dialogue of cultures, tolerance and respect for the culture of communication partners. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines culture as "the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations".

This paper highlights the basic elements of cross-cultural communication and explains how understanding of the cultural differences is invaluable for international communication process. The basic elements of cross-cultural communication are:

1. Social structure – the overall framework that determines the roles of individuals within the society and individuals' mobility within the society. In the United States, for example, culture promotes individualism. Children are trained to believe that their destinies lie in their own hands. Conversely, Japanese culture stresses the importance of working together within groups and maintaining social harmony, or wa. Virtues such as unity, loyalty, and harmony are highly valued in group-oriented societies. These characteristics are more important in hiring decisions than are personal accomplishments or abilities.

2. Language – an essential tool by which a society's members communicate with each other. Language organizes the way members of a society think about the world and affects unpredictably the messages that are sent when two individuals try to communicate. The presence of more than one language group is an important signal about the diversity of a country's population and suggests that there may also be differences in income, cultural values, and educational achievement.

3. Religion, as an important aspect of most societies, affects the ways in which members of a society relate to each other and to outsiders. Religion shapes the attitudes its adherents have toward work, consumption, individual responsibility, and planning for the future. Countries characterized by religious diversity may offer greater challenges.

4. Values are the principles and standards accepted by the members; attitudes encompass the actions, feelings, and thoughts that result from those values. The interaction of these elements affects the local environment and the ability of countries to respond to changing circumstances.

5. Communicating across cultural boundaries, whether verbally or nonverbally, is a particularly important skill for international managers. The chances of miscommunication increase substantially when the people are from different cultures. Members of a society communicate with each other using more than words. In fact, some researchers believe 80 to 90 percent of all information is transmitted among members of a culture by means other than language. This nonverbal communication includes facial expressions, hand gestures, intonation, eye contact, body positioning, and body posture. Because of cultural differences, nonverbal forms of communication can often lead to misunderstandings.

To go international successfully communication partners must remember that they are the foreigners and must attempt to behave according to the rules of the culture at hand. There are numerous ways to obtain knowledge about other cultures to achieve cross-cultural literacy. The best and most common way, not surprisingly, is through personal experience that results from conducting business abroad – as part of either a business trip or a long-term assignment – or from non-business travel. Many firms offer cross-cultural training programs to their employees headed for foreign assignments. Information about specific cultures can also be obtained from various published sources. Cross-cultural literacy is the first step in acculturation, the process by which people not only understand a foreign culture but also modify and adapt their behavior to make it compatible with that culture.