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Summer 2004 Edition

Is Your Written Communication Working (for an international Audience)?

by Kathryn L. King

Your information is gathered, facts are checked, and sources are documented. You are ready to deliver a position paper, report, or proposal which will strengthen your credentials as a professional in your field. You have worked hard-but is your written communication working for you? Are you delivering your message in a way that will enhance understanding and build relationships with an audience from a different culture?

Open any writing guide and one of the initial chapters will address the process of writing, including the importance of identifying your purpose and knowing your audience. As an expert in your field you probably had no trouble determining the purpose of your communication. Your written document will define, analyze, persuade or evaluate, as necessary. You have considered your purpose but have you adequately evaluated your audience?

Have you analyzed your audience in the context of global diversity?

Effective written communication becomes even more challenging when your audience spans the globe. An international audience will think, act and feel differently compared to your own experience. Audience members may have different learning styles, unfamiliar behavioral characteristics and limited technology required to access your written communication. By raising your cultural awareness of a specific audience, you can identify those characteristics that may impact the intended meaning of your message. Some cultural differences are readily apparent while others that are unspoken or even unconscious require more effort to identify. The writer's challenge is to balance the quality of the document with the time available to gather information about the specific international audience.

Equity, not Equality: A New Vision for Diversity

by Rita Izaguirre

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its subsequent iterations set into motion anti-discrimination and affirmative action policies. The United States Equal Opportunity Commission published Management Directive 715 (EEO-MD 715), the latest addendum to Title VII, on October 1, 2003. It maintains that Federal agencies must ensure that their policies and practices foster equal access to employment in that sector. An organization's failure to abide by these standards can create low worker morale and the ineffective use of human capital.

While this directive, along with Title VII and its progeny speak of *equal access* and *equal protection*, their practical intentions have often been interpreted to mean *equal treatment*. Over time, this misreading has had an insidious effect in the American workplace. Meanwhile new societal

trends are requiring organizations to take a different approach if they hope to thrive or even survive. This article will discuss the difference between equality and equity and the impact of misinterpretation in the US workplace. It will also explore the social forces that call for a new vision regarding workplace diversity. Observing key trends in employment, independent of the law, demands a movement away from an "equal treatment" interpretation, and a better understanding of the barriers that personally-held myths and organizational value systems create. Companies can then begin to craft a new, more functional and productive definition of diversity.

There is a sharp contrast between equal access to employment and equal treatment as it is practiced by organizations. Organizations blur this distinction when they interpret anti-discrimination

IMQ Update
Editor's Welcome

Welcome to the Summer 2004 edition of the Intercultural Management Quarterly. We have an interesting issue that covers a range of topics in the field of intercultural management.

In this issue Kathryn King shares her insight on effective written communication in "Is Your Written Communication Working (for an International Audience)?" Also Rita Izaguirre's article, "That All Men Are Created Equal..." discusses the difference between equality and equity and the impact of misinterpretation in the US workplace.

Since global coaching is a current hot topic, we asked Stephen Ladek to review the book "Coaching Across Cultures: New Tools for Leveraging National, Corporate, and Professional Differences." Also, Sherry Mueller and Melissa Whited relay the challenges and triumphs of citizen diplomacy in their article, "The International Thanksgiving Fellowship: A Case Study in Citizen Diplomacy."

Every seasoned publication should assess its strengths and weaknesses; thus, in this issue Hamiliton Bean, and Ian Larsen, both former IMQ managing editors, along with Jeffrey Bernstein contend with the challenge of assessing IMQ's literature in their article "Intercultural Management: An Analysis of the IMQ Literature." Their findings are an important contribution to the field of intercultural management and the future of the Intercultural Management Quarterly; thus, we encourage our readers to read the article and give us your feedback.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the IMQ.

Sincerely,
Sherry Zarabi

Save the Date!

March 10-11, 2005

the Intercultural Management Institute

6th ANNUAL SPRING CONFERENCE

at American University

A Forum for Business, Education Training Professionals

For more information, visit www.imi.american.edu.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Interculutral Management Quarterly* (*IMQ*) is published by the Intercultural Management Institute at American University. *IMQ* combines original research conducted in the field of interculutral management with the applied perspectives of industry experts, professors and students.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Professionals, scholars and students are invited to submit articles of no less than 1,000 words and no more than 1,500 on issues related to the contemporary study and practice of intercultural management. Submissions could consider aspects of training, research and any other scholarship that relates to the area of intercultural management.

Articles must be innovative and contribute to the knowledge in this field and yet authors should avoid overly academic jargon. Footnotes or endnotes are discouraged except for direct quotes, paraphrasing or citing the research of others.

Each submission is refereed by members of the IMQ editorial review board and accepted pieces are subject to editing to conform with the writing style appropriate to IMQ.

REPRODUCTION

Intercultural Managment: An Analysis of the IMQ Literature

by Hamilton Bean, Jeffrey Bernstein, and Ian Larsen

Intercultural management is a field of inquiry that is hardly known outside a small community of academics, students, and professionals. Within this community, the boundaries of this multidisciplinary field are often indistinct. However, few argue with the importance of intercultural management, particularly as business becomes more and more multinational and multicultural.

The *Intercultural Management Quarterly (IMQ)* was created four years ago as the first professional journal representing our field. Being the first publication of its kind, *IMQ's* task has been to delineate the kinds of research necessary to better define the field and clarify its purpose. The forces of globalization make intercultural management a ripe area for research, but with a range of research approaches to choose from, how can we pick an appropriate course of action in research or in our organizations?

The purpose of this article is to identify some of the underlying approaches to intercultural management research and practice. Through a survey of IMQ's literature, we aim to stimulate debate and encourage the use of more diversified approaches to the study of culture, management and organizations.

We argue that there is a need for more variety in intercultural management research by presenting a survey in which twenty-eight intercultural management articles were examined from the *IMQ's* Inaugural Spring 2000 edition to the Fall 2003 edition. The survey found that a consistent, yet limited, set of approaches guided the conclusions of the articles.

This article: 1) describes the survey to identify the recurrent approaches represented by the *IMQ* literature; 2) analyzes the findings to show how a dominant perspective influences research and practice; and 3) concludes by offering some recommendations to improve the field.

Survey of Past IMQ Articles

The articles reviewed were categorized along several dimensions, the first being topic-oriented (see Table 1, page 5). Four categories were used to classify the articles topically: basic research foundations, individual approaches to culture and management, organizational approaches to culture and management, and curriculum. *Basic research foundations* include overviews of the field and descriptions of the field's key texts. *Individual approaches* include personal attitudes, experiences, and observations. *Organizational approaches* focus on organizational policies and how awareness of cultural issues is dealt with at the group level. *Curriculum* includes classroom and training guidance. Specific functional topics, i.e., diversity, training, or relocation, were not classified individually due to the limited scope of the survey, and book reviews were also excluded. The data indicate that organizational approaches to management and culture predominate in the literature.

Linking Research with Intercultural Management: Perspectives from Small Business

The authors examined two U.S.-based international consulting firms to identify ways in which small businesses address intercultural management and to analyze how on-the-ground realities compare and contrast to the advice of the intercultural management community represented in the *IMQ* literature. The two examples show different approaches to these issues.

An evaluation of the role of intercultural issues at Company X revealed a business in which such issues are both implicitly and explicitly addressed on a nearly continuous basis. Company X is a consulting firm whose projects currently focus primarily on providing legal, regulatory, and policy assistance to governments and private clients. The office environment normally includes between nine and eleven employees from a variety of different backgrounds, including American, Belgian, Brazilian, Peruvian and Sudanese. Every staff member has lived and worked in at least one country other than that where they grew up, and several are at least bilingual.

Given the varied cultural backgrounds of Company X's employees, as well as the common experience of immersion in new cultures, intercultural sensitivity is implicit in the routine daily interactions among the office staff, clients, and other visitors to the office. Employees rarely have "official" discussions of the cultural similarities and differences among the employees, but all employees are aware of the various cultural backgrounds and that there are cultural differences that manifest themselves on a variety of levels. The mix of cultures in the office ensures that employees implicitly expect to encounter differences in such cultural characteristics as interpersonal communications, language, religion, and family structures, and that the employees arguably always treat the discovery of such differences as learning experiences.

Company X's employees also deal with issues of intercultural management in the specific projects on which they work. Because almost all of the company's work either is focused on projects in other countries or ongoing work that occurs in the United States but can or will have an impact in other regions, cultural sensitivity is an important factor in the work processes and final deliverable produced. Failure to take the cultural aspect into account can lead to a variety of consequences ranging from simple frustration to the development of complex recommendations that cannot or will not be implemented due to some cultural characteristic that conflicts with the recommendation. For example, an ongoing project in a Middle Eastern country requires not only an understanding of the legal, technical, regulatory and economic issues inherent in the country, but also an understanding of Arab and Muslim cultures, in order to ensure that the informal advice, work processes and formal recommendations are appropriate to both the sector and the culture. An effective strategy and work process for changing the role of a government regulatory agency, for example, has included consideration of the Arab and Muslim cultures that have shaped the development of the current regime, and how Company X can customize the work process and proposed changes to best meet

The International Thanksgiving Fellowship:

A Case Study in Citizen Diplomacy

by Sherry L. Mueller and Melissa Whited

Citizen Diplomacy

During these days when we are bombarded by grim news stories from Iraq, North Korea, and other troubled places around the globe, accounts of successful citizen diplomacy seldom claim headlines. Yet it is a time when America's ability to "win the hearts and minds" of others is questioned as never before. One of America's best assets in this battle are her citizen diplomats. Citizen diplomacy is the notion that in a vibrant democracy, the individual citizen has the right – indeed, even the responsibility – to help shape U.S. foreign relations, as some phrase it, "one handshake at a time."

Promoting effective citizen diplomacy and expanding opportunities for Americans to practice citizen diplomacy is the mission of a variety of well-established nonprofit organizations in the United States, including the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV).

Founded in 1961, NCIV is a national network of individual members, program agencies, and 95 community organizations throughout the United States that are expert at matching their communities' resources with the needs of participants in a variety of exchange programs. All NCIV members implement the State Department's International Visitor Program through working with International Visitors – foreign leaders selected by U.S. Embassy personnel abroad to travel to the United States for three- to four-week visits to Washington DC and other communities in geographically diverse parts of the country. They organize professional programs, cultural activities, and home visits for International Visitors with two overarching goals in mind: 1) To provide a thorough overview of the relevant professional field and opportunities to exchange ideas and techniques with their U.S. professional counterparts; 2) To offer, through a series of personal encounters and cultural experiences, the chance to develop a much greater appreciation of the history, heritage, values, and democratic institutions of the United States.

An alumna of the International Visitor Program, Ms. Madhura Chatrapathy, Trustee Director of the Asian Centre for Entrepreneurial Initiatives, Bangalore, India, eloquently summarized the impact of citizen diplomacy at its best: "You welcomed a stranger and sent home a friend."

Four of NCIV's active member organizations grew out of an initiative begun in 1956 as the International Thanksgiving Fellowship Program. The program, begun as a holiday display of hospitality, soon transformed into a tradition of diplomacy performed by ordinary Americans during the depths of the Cold War. This case study in citizen diplomacy demonstrates the first-hand learning experiences that international exchange programs make possible, experiences that are increasingly important in our contemporary world and meriting many more resources than currently available. These programs and experiences are long-term investments. They are opportunities for individual citizens to play an important role in U.S. foreign relations – to do what governments can never do as well – underscore the common human aspirations we all share.

The International Thanksgiving Fellowship Program (ITF)

For many people a reference to "Paris" brings to mind the sophisticated metropolitan area that is the capital of France. For others, former international students who studied in Chicago, Paris is a town of 10,000 people in rural Illinois – the home of Trudy Trogden, founder of the International Thanksgiving Fellowship Program in 1956. Located about 200 miles south of Chicago, Paris, Illinois is where thousands of international students have enjoyed a host family, an introduction to the quintessential American tradition of Thanksgiving, and a strong memory of a candlelight ceremony in the local Armory.

Trudy was born on October 22, 1912 in the country near Paris, Illinois. She credits her parents with instilling in her a desire to share her home with others. As

Trudy expresses it: "My parents were by no means wealthy, but they never turned away anyone who needed a meal or a place to sleep." As she recovered from a serious illness in 1955, Trudy searched for a way to build international understanding. She thought about the international students in Chicago who had never experienced the warm hospitality and open friendliness of small-town America. Working with friends of Church Women United, Trudy went to the Director of International Student House, Mr. Jack Kerridge, and extended an invitation to all international students to come to Paris, enjoy a homestay and the Thanksgiving holiday with a family, and, as she phrases it, experience the "real" America.

That first year, 1956, more than 143 international students from 35 countries accepted the invitation to live with a family from the Wednesday before Thanksgiving to the Sunday after. Trudy and her colleagues raised money for the buses that would transport the students, recruited host families, and planned a program of community activities to bring the families and students together. These included visits to farms, hospitals, and local government offices. Potluck dinners were also part of the mix.

The International Thanksgiving Fellowship Program provided international students the essence of a true exchange experience – the opportunity to learn about a country and a culture by being part of a family and living in that family's home. U.S. hosts, while cooking meals (and being sensitive to the dietary restrictions of some of their guests), organizing tours, and planning special events learned firsthand about the different perspectives, cultures, and countries of their guests. "I am sure my personal contact with various kinds of the citizens in Paris have made my views about America and Americans change, and I was greatly impressed to see your earnest attitude to promote the international understanding and good will. In the period of world crisis such as the present, one cannot overstate the need for understanding among nations and their people," remarked a student from Japan.

The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported, "As

Intercultural Management..

Table 1.   Articles Classified by Topic Category

Topic Category	Frequency	Percent
Organizational Approaches to Culture and Management	17	61%
Individual Approaches to Culture and Management	6	21%
Basic Research Foundations	4	14%
Curriculum	1	4%

   To explore how a dominant set of assumptions informed the articles, we analyzed the sample in three different ways - first by research approach, second by time frame, and finally by epistemology.

   Table 2 below presents the frequency of research approaches. Case studies (54%) and surveys (43%) comprised the vast majority of research approaches. These two approaches account for all but one of the articles (97%). Surveys included statistical surveys and literature surveys.

Table 2. Articles Classified by Research Approach

Research Approach	Frequency	Percent
Case Study	15	54%
Survey	12	43%
Field Experiment	1	3%
Mixed Method	0	0%
Ethnographic Research	0	0%

   The data were also analyzed by time frame (see Table 3, page 7). This refers to the research period upon which the author based their conclusions (i.e., a onetime impression or multiple observations.) Three categories were used to classify the articles: snapshot, multiple time period, and no time frame. Articles with no time frame accounted for the majority of the articles (57%).

Linking Research.....

the client's needs while respecting the social structure and cultural norms that define the client's environment. Company X discussions of cultural norms and structures are a vital part of broader discussions on project strategies and progress, and employees believe such a combination develops final products that are tailored to the client's needs while, ideally, working within existing cultural norms and boundaries.

   The question brought to mind in this examination of Company X is the utility of intercultural management research to such a company. The firm already incorporates intercultural management concerns into its work processes, both internally and externally. What would they have to gain from the research, case studies, and analyses presented in *IMQ*?

   While Company X staff might find such a publication to be interesting, it would likely be considered lower-priority reading than other publications which directly relate to the telecommunications sector. There are at least two key reasons for such a choice. First, intercultural management materials clearly fall into a category of research for Company X that is not tied to any specific project. Due to the project-oriented focus of Company X, such avenues of research are clearly a lower priority than sector-specific research. Second, given the intercultural awareness of Company X staff, intercultural management writings would likely be viewed as something akin to "preaching to the converted."

   This is one of the central concerns about intercultural management research: the audience with the greatest need for intercultural management research is also the least likely to recognize or value that need, while the audiences with the greatest interest in such research likely already recognize the importance of such issues and require some truly innovative and practical knowledge to pique their interest and improve their business.

   In order to make the research featured in a publication such as *IMQ* useful outside of the academic realm, the intercultural management field should further explore this question of its utility to these two disparate audiences.

   Company Y is a small consulting firm that designs and executes communication plans for foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations and multinational corporations. Its headquarters office houses six full-time employees in the United States. All but one of these employees are natural-born U.S. citizens. Approximately half of the staff are fluent or conversant in a second language.

   In addition to the U.S. headquarters office, Company Y has small offices in major cities in North and South America, Europe, East Africa and East Asia. The company also works periodically with part-time consultants in other parts of the world.

   Approximately 90 percent of the company's clients are based outside of the United States. All clients engage in global operations, and all of Company Y's projects for clients are executed internationally.

   The company's attitude toward intercultural issues in business is that they are of secondary or tertiary importance. The implicit belief is that business is built on the quality of the product or the service provided to the client much more than it is on the ability of the company to successfully negotiate delicate cultural issues. This is a particularly surprising point of view because Company Y is itself a communications company, a field that is generally quite sensitive to cultural differences among audiences.

   Despite this attitude, Company Y has a long history of maintaining extraordinarily high profile clients around the world, and the company's business continues to grow.

Is Your Written...

International Audience Analysis: Malaysia

For five years I lived and worked in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. While serving as Executive Director for the American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM), I found myself immersed in Malaysia's fascinating national culture and challenging business environment. A primary goal of the American Chambers of Commerce around the world is to represent US business to their host country governments. In Malaysia, we accomplished this in large part through written communication including memorandums, position papers, and reports. By conducting an international audience analysis, we became aware of how seemingly trivial items could enhance the effectiveness of our written communication. The following sections give several examples of the impact of culture on written documents. We approached our audience analysis by assessing cultural differences on three levels: apparent, unspoken and unconscious.

Apparent Cultural Differences

Cultural differences at this level are readily apparent and easily researched. They include characteristics such as language, currency, date, time, units of measure, economic data, political, social, religious, educational, and technical capability.

Language: English is one of several languages in which Malaysians are proficient, and it is the language they use in much of their global business. But whose English? British? American? In this case we decided to use American English. We did this to identify AMCHAM's ties to US business. We checked carefully for consistency throughout our documents. Sometimes I would have to remind myself whether a word ended in -ise or -ize because I was so accustomed to reading British English.

Numbers, Currency: Conventions for using commas and decimals vary. Even the definition of billion is not consistent across countries or corporations. These differences made gathering data through a written survey very challenging as AMCHAM members used different systems of measurement. In our final trade and investment reports, we clearly defined the units and maintained consistency throughout the document.

Dates: Does 1/2/04 refer to an important event on January 2, 2004 (US) or February 1, 2004 (Malaysia)? Because both Americans and Malaysians refer to AMCHAM's documents, we spelled out the name of the month. Then the day could lead or follow the name of the month (January 2, 2004 or 2 January 2004) avoiding confusion.

Technical Capability: How will your audience access your written communication? Are you shipping multiple hardcopies? Probably not, since you can quickly email vast quantities of data. Digital media, including email and CD-ROMs, work very well if you have a personal computer, printer, printer cartridges, and paper. In many developing countries, copy machines are carefully monitored by customs (to curb piracy), paper is a costly luxury, printer cartridges can be dried out, and uninterrupted power remains a dream. Internet connections are generally dial-up, if available, so downloading large graphics-laden documents is a challenge, if not impossible. AMCHAM delivers several reports every year on US business performance and other topics of concern to Malaysia's Ministry of International Trade. From 1998 to 2002, we went from delivering a requested number of paper copies, to a combination of paper copies and a digital file, and finally, to only a digital file containing the report. Malaysia's technical capability transformed over just a few years - this is not the case in many other developing markets.

Unspoken Cultural Differences

These characteristics require careful observation but can be researched somewhat easily. Differences reveal themselves in business protocol, social etiquette, gift giving, topics for conversation, color, symbols, and heroes.

Business Protocol: Written communication usually takes on a standardized format such as a cover letter, memo, or a longer report. Specific elements of these standardized formats vary across countries and again, across corporations. In a nod to US business our cover letters were formatted as recommended in most writing guides. However, after much in-house discussion, we decided to incorporate a feature present in every letter received from the Malaysian government. We added a subject line (e.g. SUBJECT: <DESCRIPTION OF LETTER>) in bold capital letters placed *after* the salutation and *before* the body. Typically the subject line is used in a memo format but not in letters. We adopted this revised format to give our letters a familiar feel for our Malaysian audience.

Gift Giving: While extravagant gift giving is avoided in business, corporations can make an impression with small tokens of appreciation, such as office related items. I learned of a situation where an American company missed the mark when giving a gift to a potential business partner located outside the US. The company spent time and money designing a good-looking leather portfolio. The portfolio could accommodate pens, business cards, and a pad of paper. It had zippers, pockets and even a small 3-ring binder section. The gift was in good taste but not functional. In many countries outside the US, the standard paper size for business is A4 (8.25 x 11.66 inches) and binders are usually 2-ring instead of three. While the gift was not fatal to the business relationship, a more functional gift may have given the company better visibility.

Color, Symbols: Color and symbols can generate a trained response, possibly sending a message not intended by someone unfamiliar with the culture. During my time in Malaysia a very large multinational energy company rolled out its new corporate logo. The logo was simple, colorful, and clean lined. Unfortunately, the logo was also similar to the symbol of the political party in opposition to the ruling party in Thailand. In a case like this, it is unlikely that the corporation is going to revise the already unveiled logo, but through increased cultural awareness corporate representatives in Thailand can be prepared to handle the situation with sensitivity.

The International Thanksgiving ...

a result of the program, there are many here and many from foreign lands who have a new appreciation for the common goals of common people….An even greater reward rests with the individuals and the families who shared in the experience. Open hearts and open minds… will go a long way toward solving world problems." And indeed, with the departure of every international student, the face of a different America - an open, personable, and sincere America – radiated outward. "The remarkable warmth and hospitality we received will not stay within us solely, but will find its way to all the nations represented," promised a student from the Philippines.

The second year more than 200 students participated. News of the International Thanksgiving Fellowship spread. In addition to considerable local news coverage, the United States Information Agency featured the program in overseas films and broadcasts highlighting what one American community was doing to help build world peace.

And gradually it was not just one American community. Other Illinois towns joined Paris and established International Thanksgiving Fellowship Committees. Of these towns, four later became active members of the National Council for International Visitors. Their work and success hosting international students naturally suggested them as hosts and program organizers for the foreign leaders and specialists who come to the United States as participants in the International Visitor Program.

The International Thanksgiving Fellowship Program endures. The staff of the International House at the University of Chicago estimates that during the last 47 years, approximately 17,000 international students enjoyed Thanksgiving holidays with American host families in rural Illinois.

In 1960, President Eisenhower captured the essence of international exchange and citizen diplomacy in remarks made in Santiago, Chile in response to a letter from Chilean students, some of whom he later invited to stay in Paris, Illinois. "And I repeat to you one great truth: the peace that we all seek, in justice and in freedom, can be based only on one thing, mutual understanding. Unless we have that among peoples, and eventually governments, which are always seemingly behind the people rather than ahead of them—unless we have that kind of understanding – mutual understanding – we are not going to have true peace. Each of you that helps in the tiniest way to bring about this understanding is thereby promoting the peace for himself, his children, and those who are to come after him."

Celebrating Success

We live in a time and place where popular culture fuels the quest for instant gratification and the preoccupation with short-term results predominates. These facts make it even more important to celebrate the relatively slow process of building friendships over time – a process that well-conceived exchange programs set in motion. Both the international students and the U.S. hosts appreciate the long-term relationships that have evolved from the International Thanksgiving Fellowship Program.

So, who will be at your Thanksgiving celebration this year?

Sherry L. Mueller, Ph.D. is the President of the National Council for International Visitors and Melissa Whited is a Program Associate at the organization.

Intercultural...

Table 3. Articles Time Frame

Article Time Frame	Frequency	Percent
No Time Frame	16	57%
Snapshot	8	29%
Multiple Time Period	4	14%

Finally, the articles were examined according to epistemology, or their underlying philosophical approach. We classified these under the nominal categories of social science epistemologies: positivist, interpretive, and critical studies. *Positivist* approaches test theory using objective methods to generate predictive understanding. *Interpretive* approaches assume that people create their own meanings and understandings of events, and the goal of interpretive studies is to generate a relativistic, shared understanding without appealing to universal or objective standards. *Critical* studies offer a critique of the status quo through the exposure of historically conditioned structural forces, i.e., race, class and gender, which shape the overall context of the phenomena under investigation.

The positivist approach was further broken down into descriptive studies, which were not guided by any particular theoretical tradition. Descriptive studies presented what the author believed to be objective or factual accounts of events to illustrate issues of interest to the intercultural management community without *explicitly* stating any theoretical tradition. Descriptive studies accounted for 82% of all articles.

Table 4. Articles Classified by Epistemology

Article Epistemology	Frequency	Percent
Positivist	2	7%
Descriptive	23	82%
Critical	2	7%
Interpretive	1	4%

Organizational approaches to culture and management that do not explicitly convey an underlying theory typify the *IMQ* literature. The majority of authors assume that cultural differences are: 1) often concealed from one's awareness; 2) have a tangible impact on organizations;

Is Your Written ...

Unconscious Cultural Differences

Some cultural characteristics are so deeply held that a person may not be consciously aware of a particular behavior. They include non-verbal communication, hand and facial gestures, sense of time, physical space, speech patterns, level of individualism, and degree of ambiguity accepted by the society. These differences are not easily known and require more time and effort to uncover.

Non-verbal Communication: Perhaps you have been invited to present the contents of your written communication in front of an audience. If you were presenting in Southeast Asia, you would want to know that it is rude to point with your index finger, especially when referring to a person. Pointing with your middle finger or thumb is just fine. I must admit that I could never master pointing with my middle finger (considered quite offensive in my home country) and to this day feel comfortable using my thumb to point (which my friends at home consider strange, but not offensive).

Individualism: Analyzing a global audience using a well-researched model of culture can offer valuable guidance as you construct your written communication. Geert Hofstede's work, for example, reveals that Malaysian culture places high value on the family structure, pursues relationships over tasks, and accepts strong leadership. This cultural awareness guided our writing style at AMCHAM. Our documents began very formally, showing great respect for the individual recipient and for their organization. Before closing we would reference a more personal aspect of the relationship, recounting an enjoyable past event or complimenting our host government on a recent achievement. These inclusions did not significantly change the document but they did set a desired tone.

Conclusion

Give your message the advantage by creating written communication that rec-ognizes the global diversity of your audience. Effective documents are clear in their purpose and also consider the needs of the audience. In addition to ensuring accuracy, a culturally sensitive document can build bridges and strengthen relationships. Conveying your written message accurately to an international audience requires cultural awareness. Without altering the purpose of your document, you may have to incorporate revisions to account for cultural differences. Conduct an international audience analysis to reveal the cultural differences between you and your audience. Cultural differences can be grouped into three categories and includes those that are readily apparent and easily incorporated, those that are unspoken and require more effort to identify and finally, those differences that are unconscious and require in-depth knowledge of a particular culture. The international audience analysis offers a useful framework to assess the effectiveness of your document.

AMCHAM earned a solid reputation with the Malaysian government for submitting documents that were relevant to the concerns of AMCHAM members and government officials. The documents were accurate in their reporting using clear language and meaningful examples. Additionally, we demonstrated our raised cultural awareness by reviewing our written communication and incorporating changes where we could to increase the accessibility of our documents by our Malaysian audience. Through a series of memorandums, reports and position papers presented to the Malaysian government, AMCHAM contributed to the country's economic growth by continuously improving the business environment for existing business and attracting new foreign investment.

After five years in Malaysia, I moved to Nigeria with hopes of building the first American Chamber of Commerce in Nigeria. A few months after I arrived in Lagos, I received a personal note from Dato' Seri Rafidah Aziz, Malaysia's Minister of International Trade and Investment. In addition to a few pleasantries (that wonderful Malaysian trait) she acknowledged the good working relationship that we had established and highlighted how important AMCHAM input had been in creating a healthy Malaysia-US business relationship and promoting Malaysia as an attractive trading partner and investment location. Dato' Seri's comments are a measure of our success in not only transmitting accurate and relevant information, but doing so within the context of Malaysian culture. I am going on three years in Nigeria and no Chamber yet, but when there is I look forward to creating valuable written communication within the context of Nigerian culture.

Kathryn L. King teaches Intercultural Technical Communication for the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Book Review

Review by Stephen Ladek

Coaching Across Cultures: New Tools for Leveraging National, Corporate & Professional Differences

By Philippe Rosinski
Nicholas Brealey Publishing/
Intercultural Press
2004, 306 pp.

Personal and professional coaching emerged just over a decade ago in the United States, but presently has gained a level of legitimacy and acclaim throughout the world establishing it as a burgeoning profession. Coaching is a practice distinct from consulting, mentoring, therapy or teaching. Coaching focuses respectively on process vs. solutions, facilitation vs. advice, and client designed vs. a pre-set curriculum.

Coaching Across Cultures: New Tools for Leveraging National, Corporate & Professional Differences, is written for business leaders and managers. However, it would be best used by professional coaches who are interested in understanding how culture may affect their practice and how their clients can leverage this variable to be more effective leaders and communicators. While generally practiced by certified and trained coaches, the coaching skill set can be valuable for anyone in a leadership or management position who does not wish to hire an outside professional for themselves or their team.

Coaching Across Cultures is divided into three sections and 14 chapters. The first section offers an overview of the coaching profession and cultural studies. The second section outlines the author's "Cultural Orientations Framework" and then provides a chapter to detail each key area of this framework. The third section is a self-help toolbox that instructs the reader how to assess, analyze, and then take action on general leadership issues in a more culturally sensitive context.

The brief introductions into coaching and culture as presented in the first part of the book are a good review for individuals already familiar with both concepts. However, the overuse of coaching vernacular, the sometimes too "flowery" idealism, and general newness of coaching as a skill set make it difficult for a novice to truly understand how coaching works or how it benefits those who use it. Similarly, the section on culture provides only the briefest of summaries about the study of culture as a social phenomenon. This unfortunately belittles the richness and diversity of the discipline which investigates topics as different as communication difficulties across international borders and how an individual's non-verbal communication is sometimes more powerful than their spoken words. While it is commendable that culture has been chosen as a unique dimension for the coaching profession to understand, how it affects us in individual, professional, and international settings deserves a much more detailed study.

Readers unfamiliar with the scholarship and discourse surrounding culture would do well to consult works by Hall and Hofstede. For novices to coaching, quality materials that specifically address this profession can be found through the International Coaching Federation (http://www.coachingfederation.org).

The second part of the book introduces the reader to the author's 'Cultural Orientation Framework.' The author uses these chapters to connect the language of culture to the language of coaching. His framework, drawing on the work of many cultural scholars, identifies seven categories based on cultural dimensions "that correspond to critical challenges people undoubtedly face, regardless of their culture or work," but that are especially important for any coach to recognize, understand and be able to work with. These dimensions and their corresponding cultural dimensions are seen in Table 1.

Category	Dimension
Sense of Power and Responsibility	Control/Harmony/Humility
Time Managmenet Approaches	Scarce/Plentiful Monochronic/Polychronic Past/Present/Future
Definitions of Identity and Purpose	Being/Doing Individualistic/Collectivistic
Organizational Arrangements	Hierarchy/Equality Universalist/Particularist Stability/Change Competitive/Collaborative
Notions of Territory and Boundaries	Protective Sharing
Communication Patterns	High Context/Low Context Direct/Indirect Affective/Neutral Formal/Informal
Models of Thinking	Deductive/Inductive Analytical/Systemic

The author provides a chapter for each category of the framework that describes how to leverage each in a coaching situation. Each chapter also follows a pattern of first explaining the category's cultural dimensions as they relate to coaching, a "how to leverage" section, applications and advice, and then some tool the author has created or antidote about his work in the past. For example, in Chapter 4, the author first describes differing viewpoints of Power and Responsibility through the different orientations of Control, Harmony and Humility. Then he describes how to leverage each of these orientations by keeping in mind "the richness in each orientation, while watching for their downsides." Finally, the author offers a coaching tool - in this case a "visioning model" that exposes how many business planning situations rely on one of the three orientations described in the chapter.

The third part of the book is a self-help section that asks the reader to "connect to your own personal voyage." For those familiar with the coaching profession, these three chapters present a textbook coach-

Book Review:

ing session. First, the reader is asked to conduct a self-assessment of desires, strengths, weaknesses, present situation, and preferences. This assessment is then analyzed through the author's "Global Scorecard" - a tool based on the "Balanced Scorecard" work of Robert Kaplan (http://www.bscol.com) and the EFQM Excellence Model (http://www.efqm.org) - to identify areas where readers would like to make changes in themselves or their organization. Last, after creating specific goals based on the areas identified earlier, the reader is invited to truly coach himself or herself towards improvement. Should the reader employ a coach, this would be the point where the coach would hold the reader accountable for the actions they must take to achieve the goals they have set.

Coaching Across Cultures provides a variety of examples and tools that might inspire the reader to look deeper into how culture affects them and their organization. The examples come from Mr. Rosiniski's experiences working with companies such as IBM, Unilever and Chubb. Targeted at business professionals, this work reads more like a 'self-help' book than a business leadership guide. From my perspective as a CoachU student, this book is a hard sell for coaching as a leadership and management tool, which uses the variable of culture as a unique departure point. Yet, the work comes across as genuine; I believe the author is truly concerned about the ability of employees, managers and leaders to recognize and understand how culture plays a role in their decision making in the office, at home, and in international settings. The author's 'Final Words' are a plea to his readers to help build peace and understanding in the post 9/11 world.

Mr. Rosinski's energetic and passionate book is a good introduction for those interested in coaching as a management tool. As stated by the author, "coaches help people find practical solutions to the concrete challenges they face," such as managing time, inspiring leadership, accomplishing personal and professional goals, enhancing creative thinking, and achieving life balance. I personally believe coaching is an effective way to help people live inspired lives and achieve greater happiness and satisfaction in their work and relationships. But without a formal introduction into what coaching 'is', they may be put off by its intangible and nebulous goals such as helping to 'achieve objectives', 'tap potential' and 'overcome obstacles.' For those seeking to learn about how culture plays a role in our personal and organizational communication, choosing one of the many works devoted specifically to the subject would be more appropriate.

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Equity, not Equality...

laws regulations to mean equal treatment. This obscures the intent and hinders the creation of a level playing field in the workplace.
Equality vs. Equity

A review of the laws and regulations that govern workplace discrimination reveals that judicial and legislative interpretive language is grounded on the concepts of "equal protection" and "equal access." But while Title VII and its progeny have served to curb overt discrimination, it is evident that making discriminatory behaviors and policies illegal has not eradicated the impact of attitudes held by supervisors and managers, nor changed the "belief systems" in organizations that block the real benefits of diversity.

As an adaptive behavior, equal treatment has been good for American employers, as it has reduced the number of lawsuits stemming from overt discrimination. However, when equal treatment has meant simply acting out of fear of litigation it has undermined efforts to create a productive, inclusive workplace. Employers find themselves in a dilemma over how to align this policy with their desire to value and recognize individual diversity and its tangible contribution to corporate goals. A work environment and internal culture permeated with dissonant values causes protected classes to emerge and managers become trapped when they fall back on belief systems and attitudes that presuppose what roles certain classes of people can take on within the organization.

Hiring managers who hold myths about particular racial or gender groups may unwittingly sideline employees to whom they do not relate, the resulting perception is that the organization is cloning new hires or that only certain types of people get fast-tracked into plum opportunities. Despite all the mandates and expressed desires to comply, the organization will – beyond rational explanation – continue to fail at finding enough "qualified" minority or diverse candidates "out there."

No amount of legislation or awareness training alone will bridge the gap between goals and actual behavior. Mandates are only as effective as an organization's – especially its leadership's — willingness to recognize how its own policies, practices and beliefs exclude those considered outsiders, including diverse in-house talent.

A recent positive example is the Ford Motor Company, which in the face of safety issues around its top-selling SUV, has been noted on Wall Street as a model turn-around. Ford also was ranked "number one" by *Diversity Inc*., of the top 50 companies for diversity in America. Rank was not assigned simply for numbers of diverse employees, but for exhibiting behaviors that clearly showed a commitment to the premise that employees with different attributes open new opportunities and bring new perspectives to the company. Among Ford's seven principles for doing business, two – community and quality relationships – were noted as exemplary. The first states that Ford recognizes the cultures of the communities around the world where it does business. The latter refers to the company's commitment to developing the individual skills of *all* its employees.

Equity, not Equality...

A New Vision for Diversity

Beyond the issues of equitable treatment, lies the fact that human beings have a need to feel and actually *be* included. Bernardo Ferdman and Martin Davidson (2002) conclude as much, offering that inclusion is everyone's responsibility within an organization. In light of several paradigm-shifting social trends impacting the workplace, inclusion becomes a central management issue that warrants renewed attention.

A survey published by The Society for Human Resources Management in June 2003, predicted a dearth of skilled workers by 2010. Of the human resources professionals interviewed, 45% of those working with companies with more than 100 employees believed their employers will be dealing with a severe shortage of skilled workers within the next five to ten years. As economies shift and markets – including labor markets – become more global, competition for a smaller pool of highly skilled workers will add urgency to the need to become an "employer of choice." Treating members of a global work team equitably will become primordial to obtaining and retaining talent.

Adding to the pressure is the entrance to employment of the Digital Generation. Born between 1978 and 2000, Digitals number more than 60 million in the United States alone. This generation grew up surfing the Internet establishing personal relationships around the world. Nearly three-fourths of Digital kids were on the Internet by age 10 and have "virtual friends" who are racially and culturally different. Text messaging, file-sharing, multi-player gaming, and global marketing and entertainment add to the list of forces binding them together. In matters of personal style they tend to be more direct in their communications and more willing to take risks incongruous with their age or years of work experience. A self-reliant attitude derives in part from the fact that this generation has received less direct parenting as their mothers entered the workforce and both parents worked longer hours. Not surprisingly coaching is their preferred management style over more directive, hierarchical approaches. Finally, one in three in the United States is a member of a minority group. Coming of age in a more diverse culture, their intolerance of overt discrimination and favoritism is pronounced.

Portability of skills is another factor requiring that employers gain a new understanding of inclusion through equity not equality. The notion of a long-term job is nearly dead. In his book, *JobShift* (1996), William Bridges told us that "jobs" had run their course, at least in the US where the trend is a shift to services rather than manufacturing. Situational work teams are replacing standing departments. Workers now expect to have more than one employer and several careers, and feel valued and secure when their skills are utilized and rewarded immediately.

A growing number of workers of every age are creating their own sense of value through entrepreneurship, especially women and minorities. The U.S. Commerce Department and others have found that during the recent economic turnover, employment growth was driven by small businesses. This trend is illustrated best by the growth rate of women- and minority-owned business enterprises, which the U.S. Census Bureau reports was 150% between 1992 and 1997, the most recent data available. The same data indicate that these enterprises generated $495 billion in annual revenue. The Center for Women's Business Research reports that between 1997 and 2002 the women owned category grew by 11%, or more than one and a half times the rate for all privately held businesses. Anecdotally stories from media such as *Fast Company* and *Diversity Inc.* tell of women and minorities leaving corporate ranks to start businesses that feed their passions not only due to downsizing or outsourcing but also out of a desire to spend their work life in situations where ability is recognized.

Conclusion

In summary, it is arguable that despite legislative or judicial intent, mandates and laws surrounding discrimination can only go so far in changing the American workplace. A misreading of these rules to favor equality over equity may actually undermine the intent the laws mandate. Added to this, social forces independent of the law are demanding a changed definition and role for diversity. The 1990s bore witness to the demise of the life-long job, the rapid advance of globalization and the emergence of new workers and new ideas about the value of work. In the current decade the impact of these trends, which are extending globally, has only begun to be felt. The enlightened organization will realize that while we deserve equal protection, we are not all created equal; and that we thrive when our differences are recognized, valued and integrated into the organization's overall plan for success. At that point the need for diversity and inclusion training will become as passé as the jobs of the industrial revolution.

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Intercultural...

and 3) that the solution to cultural problems is to become more aware of its impact.

Survey Analysis

While many authors do not state theoretical underpinnings in their articles, one can assume from their backgrounds, careers, and experiences that their claims are well founded and many of the authors are renowned within the intercultural management community. It must also be acknowledged that the article length limits authors to emphasize core themes instead of focusing on underlying assumptions. This type of literature is appropriate for *IMQ*. After all, the journal was created to be a publication for practitioners rather than an academic one. However it may also create challenges for scholars and practitioners.

For scholars, the *IMQ* literature may not support the development of a strong research tradition or framework in which to test hypotheses. Therefore, the discipline may face challenges to its legitimacy from more established academic fields including the major social and behavioral sciences. Intercultural management research may find it useful to borrow theoretical approaches from existing traditions such as Anthropology, Sociology, or Organizational Behavior rather than construct new ones, but without any theory, critics may be compelled to dismiss the research as relatively weak.

Practitioners also require strong evidence to persuade skeptics in their organizations that the intercultural management community's recommendations are worthwhile. Much of the training-oriented literature in *IMQ* begins by acknowledging that participants resist the need to understand and deal with cultural differences. As Nigel Nicholson states in his article *Jazz up Your Workers* (Spring 2002), "When you are big and powerful it is easier and safer to hang out with your mates and hope no one else steals a march on you." Nicholson rightly points out that anecdotal evidence is often insufficient in the boardroom. Thus, *IMQ* should play a vital role in making complex research more interesting and accessible to busy professionals.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, promoting more positivist research might draw the ire of interpretive and critical scholars for its instrumentality. For such scholars,

IMQ is a vehicle to promote a shared understanding of culture and expose the social structures that result in inequality and conflict. Irrespective of which position one advocates, the debate itself would help spur more interesting and useful research and ultimately improve the field.

Conclusion

While *IMQ* encourages diversity in organizations, as well as diversity in one's own ideas about culture, it could place more emphasis on diverse research approaches and philosophical assumptions. How can this be encouraged? We recommend a return to the field's key themes and foundations to help construct theories and employ a variety of research strategies, especially experiments and in-the-field research that may be more effective with audiences outside the intercultural management community.

Returning to Weaver's *Connecting Intercultural Communication and Management* (Spring 2000) we find five useful starting points: 1) investigate why and how cultural differences enhance creativity within organizations; 2) examine how cultural issues relate to retention and productivity; 3) explore the dynamics of cross-cultural adaptation; 4) study how groups (including one's own) and individuals view the world, their values and beliefs, and how they reason and solve problems; and 5) establish cross-culturally validated management principles. These five areas alone could provide an almost inexhaustible list of research questions.

The challenge for future *IMQ* contributors is to conduct research that can be used more effectively by scholars, managers, and others not already familiar with the field. *IMQ* is a critical resource for those interested in intercultural management issues. Including more dynamic and multi-faceted research in *IMQ* will support the expansion of the field of intercultural management and help it achieve its potential.

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Linking...

Traditional intercultural studies would suggest that such an organization would likely not be successful in an international setting, yet the evidence in this example is precisely the opposite. This paradigm poses an important question for those studying intercultural management: What elements allow certain organizations to maintain successful practices internationally even if they minimize the importance of intercultural management in those practices?

One possible answer to this question that is widely ignored in intercultural studies is the concept that all parties in intercultural relations are essentially "moving targets." For example, American executives may receive training in best practices for doing business with the Japanese, but that training will likely ignore the fact that the Japanese business culture is itself well prepared to anticipate American executives to be themselves – *American executives*. As such, even poorly prepared American executives could likely continue to have at least some success within the Japanese setting precisely because their Japanese counterparts are prepared for conducting business within the American mindset.

We do not suggest here that Americans should be excused from intercultural business training because their reputation precedes them. We simply suggest that intercultural business studies should accept that all parties in international business are observing the others based partially on their own cultural constructs and partially on what they perceive to be the cultural constructs of the other parties.

By addressing the questions asked above more fully, intercultural management theoreticians could sharpen their understanding of *exactly* what role the field should play in international business. Perhaps intercultural management should be framed as a lubricant that allows international transactions to take place more successfully and helps businesses better deliver their core products or services to their clients or markets. While the issue is certainly crucial to success in many ways, it cannot take the place of a high quality product in a competitive market.

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