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MASTER THESIS

International business communication between different cultures: case study of

Iran and Germany

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Abstract

Due to globalization and the advancement of technology, the world has become smaller which means that people are closer to each other, their cultures and communication styles have begun to interfere with each other. In international firms, professionals from different nations and cultures with varying sets of values, business rules, communication styles and most importantly different languages try to find ways to interact work and create a shared understanding.

The aim of this study is to examine effects of cultural background on face to face communication style based on a sample of 27 businesspersons in international firms originally from 2 cultural background.

This study uses Edward T.Hall intercultural model to explain whether cultural differences have an impact on the preference for directness, formalness, promptness, preciseness, task relatedness and relationship relatedness in face to face communication. In this regard, six hypothesis developed to investigate if cultural background affect face to face communication dimensions or not.

The results of survey conducted show that there is a relationship between cultural background and businesspersons face to face communication dimensions. The present study, concluded that people from countries with low context culture tend to be more direct and more formal in their face to face communication.

Key words: intercultural communication, communication styles, face to face communication

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Chapter I. Introduction

1.1. Problem Background

Many professionals in different industries seem to subscribe to the notion that internationalization is good for firms [1] resulting the appearance of many international firms dealing with diverse cultures. The internationalization of firms requires professionals from different nations and cultures, with varying sets of values, business rules, communication styles, and not least different languages, to find ways to work together effectively [2]. One can easily imagine that communicating with someone from a different culture is close to inevitable when part of a multinational business and increases significance of intercultural communication.

When individuals conduct business across national borders, they often bring to the negotiation table diverse cultural predispositions with which they interact with one another [3]. Face to face communication is the most information rich medium of interaction [4] which makes it the best communication medium in intercultural communications. Although comprehensive researches are conducted in understanding the cultural differences, such as Hofstede [5], that has led to many strategic managerial tactics in international firms, a research linking the cultural differences to face to face communication styles is infrequent. In conclusion, this research contributes to the academic literature in the field of communication in international firms.

Culture is communication [6] a single face to face message can be heard the same but decoded into different meanings by different cultures [7]. As many studies has confirmed moderating effects of cultural background on face to face communications, little studies has been conducted to show the metric relations between culture and face to face communication styles.

1.2. Research Objective

Although there are much research in intercultural communication which a vast array of them employs Edward T.Hall intercultural concept in various

communication settings, this research uses T.Hall model to aim conceptualizing the moderating effects of culture on international business communication.

This study by gaining insight on intercultural models, communication styles and effects of cultural background on communication styles literature explains whether cultural differences have an impact on the preference for directness, formalness, promptness, preciseness, task relatedness and relationship relatedness in face to face communication.

1.3.   Hypothesis

Culture is affecting all of human behaviors [8]. Many frameworks have been developed to conceptualize cultural values such as Hofstede's research [5] or the Edward Hall findings [6] which approach different cultures based on 3 dimensions:

- Context (high vs low contextual)
  In a high-context culture, many contextual elements help people to understand the rules. In a low-context culture, very little is taken for granted.

- Time (monochronic vs polychronic)
  In a monochronic culture, time is thought of as being linear. People are expected to do one thing at a time, and they will not tolerate lateness or interruptions. In polychronic cultures, time is thought of as being cyclical.

- Space (high vs low space orientation)
  In high space orientation cultures people are more territorial than others with greater concern for ownership. People with lower territoriality have less ownership of space and boundaries are less important to them.

According to literature, communication styles can be categorized in different dimensions as well. According to Adair [9], low context cultures are more likely to have a direct approach in their communications. A research by Bello [10] indicated that high context cultures are more direct in their communications. In terms of formalness, Bello also indicated that low context cultures tend to remain informal.

Based on [11] polychronic cultures favor doing multiple task at a same time resulting a less precise communication.

Low space cultures tend to put more emphasis on social interactions and relationships in communications [12] were in high space cultures relationships tend to be more long term oriented resulting less emphasize on relationships in communications [13]

Hypothesis 1: Face to face communications tend to be more direct in high context cultures than low context cultures in international firms.

Hypothesis 2: Face to face communications tend to be more formal in high context cultures than low context cultures in international firms.

Hypothesis 3: Polychronic cultures will show a higher preference for promptness in face to face communication than monochronic cultures.

 Hypothesis 4: Face to face communications tend to be more precise in monochronic cultures than polychronic cultures in international firms.

Hypothesis 5: High-space cultures will show a higher preference for task-relatedness in face to face communication than low-space cultures.

Hypothesis 6: Face to face communications tend to be more relationship oriented in low space cultures than high space cultures in international firms.

1.4. Research Structure

Based on the research aim and objectives this thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter gives an introduction to the research and the importance of the research. It points out the importance of understanding the intercultural communication methods and styles and summarizing some of the most cited frameworks for such researches.

The second chapter, literature review, first defines what culture is and what are the most important studies conducted in this field, then the chapter continues to define

the communication term and the factors affecting the communication process. Lastly the chapter reviews the intercultural communication definition, barriers and prior researches conducted in this field. Among all intercultural communication researches, little studies has been conducted to examine relations between cultural background and face to face communication style.

The third chapter describes the research methodology used in this chapter and the importance of the methodology. Also the philosophy, approach, strategy, time horizon and the techniques used in this research have been stated.

The fourth chapter contains the statistical analysis and the figures of the responses and the gathered information of the research.

The final chapter will conclude the research finding and the suggestions for future researches have been stated, also the limitations of this research have been described.

Chapter II. Theoretical Background

2.1. Introduction

This thesis is located in the intersection of three subject domains: cultural differences, communications and corporate culture.
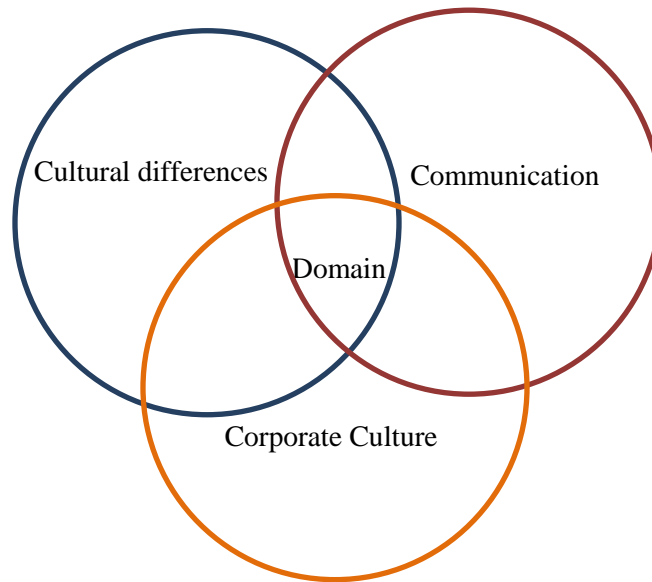
First we discuss the culture and the researches conducted in the field of culture and cultural differences, and afterward we discuss the communication methods and related researches, finally organizational behavior is discussed.

2.2. Culture Models and Theories

On the one hand, the term "culture" refers to all the characteristics common to a particular group of people that are learned and not given by nature [14]. Matsumoto (2008) defined culture as "a meaning and information system that is transmitted across generation" [15]. According to Prosser (1978) culture is defined as traditions, customs, norms, beliefs, values and thought patterning passed down from generation to generation [16]. According to Hofstede (2005), culture is defined as "the collective programming of the mind", which helps identifying one group from another [17] . Barnett and Lee (2002) [18] define culture as " a group's shared collective meaning system through which the group's collective values, attitudes,

beliefs, customs and thoughts are understood" (Leinonen, 2015). Guirdham (2011) also stated that "culture differ from one another because there is less contact between cultures than within them" [19].

Based on the analysis of the available definitions of culture, while the existing definitions vary greatly, there are several common elements present in virtually all of them. First, it is generally agreed that culture is a complex multilevel construct. "onion diagram" is depicted with values representing the core of culture, and practices, symbols, and artifacts in outer layers (diagram 2-1). Second, a group or society culture is shared among it's individuals. Third culture is formed over a relatively long period. Finally culture is relatively stable (Taras, et al., 2009) [20].
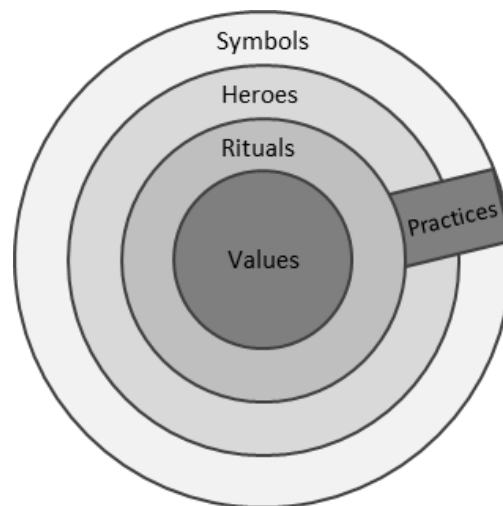
Diagram 2-1 Hofstede's culture onion diagram [17]

Values are powerful emotions in the culture that make it possible to distinguish between positive and negative ones. Practices are an indicator of behavior. While most of the early social science studies of culture defined culture by focusing on artifacts and traditions, values have been the focal point of cross-cultural studies in recent decades and a number of models even attempted to go beyond the value-based paradigm of culture. A large number of studies are associated with Hofstede´s cultural dimensions [17]. To a lesser extent it is Hall´s, Trompenaars´ cultural

dimensions and the fourth most popular classification system [21], which is the GLOBE approach that offers newer alternatives. Naturally, there are many other authors who are also involved in defining cultural dimension and values (Taras, et al., 2009).

Some early attempts had been undertaken by Hall (1997). Edward T. Hall defined the most important dimensions of communication to be of culture space, time perception and a degree of context (Hall, 1976).

Fons Trompenaars (1993) identified seven dimensions of national cultures. The first five Trompenaars´ dimensions of national culture relates to other people [22]. They include universalism vs. particularism, individualism vs. collectivism, Individualism versus Collectivism, related to the integration of individuals into primary groups, neutrality vs. emotionality, specificity vs. diffusivity, orientation on achieving vs. attributing. The sixth dimension which Trompenaars called orientation on the past, present or future relates to the relation to time and the last the seventh dimension refers to relation to the environment (to nature and its surroundings).

Geert Hofstede (2001) is engaged in the study of national culture in the context of management. He is famous for his extensive research of national cultures, implemented in the 70s of last century among employees of IBM then repeated and extended to the fifty states and three more national regions [23].

While Hofstede´s cultural dimensions theory is regarded as a classic model with a long history and is a sort of initial invention, the GLOBE Project (The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Project) by Ess and Sudweeks (2005) is more recent, and is based on a broader range of respondents that gives a wider view of cultural dimensions and differences [24]. This is a long term programmatic research project based on the analysis of complex and specific effects of various cultures on leadership, organizational effectiveness, economic competitiveness and psychological state of members of society [24].

Gelfand model is based on notion of cultural looseness-tightness that is the classification is made in terms of degree to which social norms and sanctions are enforced within societies [25]. This model originated as Pelto (1968) suggested that

cultures can be categorized according to the extent of their tightness and looseness [26], this suggestion was studied further resulting the Triandis (1989) research suggesting that homogeneous cultures are tight resulting a lower tolerance for variation in values, whereas latitude cultures were more loos and accepting different values and behaviors [27]. Gelfand (2006) anticipated a mutually reinforcing relation between the two later notions resulting his model which indicates that the degree of variation in individual differences across societies helps to reinforce and maintain the tightness–looseness of the societal context [20].

For analysis of various cultures the classification into different levels was accomplished. These levels represent smaller distinguishable components which are classified according to their belonging. Transnational level, National level and Regional, ethnic, religious and linguistic level are the most important culture levels. National level culture defines properties that are ascribed to citizens of countries. Regional level culture is pertaining to a group of people living in the same geographic area. Ethnic level is related to people who share common and distinctive characteristics. Linguistic level is describing culture of people who speak the same language and religious level is also related to culture of people with the same religion. In this thesis because of national level effect on face to face business communication will be mainly discuss.

Subculture, similar to culture, is formed by a group of people with distinctive values, norms and rules for behaviors. Social class and ethnicity are basis for subculture. Co-culture is also argued to be the same as subculture. As subculture exists within a dominant culture, co-culture is believed to exist alongside with other culture. Therefore, these cultures to create another set of values and rules for people from both cultures to understand should combine their rules and standards altogether.

To sum up, it had been recognized that culture is a multi-level, multi-facet construct. In this thesis our definition of culture is a group's shared set of distinct basic assumptions, values, practices, and artifacts that are formed and retained over a long period of time.

2.3. Communication

2.3.1. Communication Definition

The word communication means a combination, transmission and information exchange. "Communication is the process of developing a common understanding and interpretation of ideas, opinions and feelings between two or more individuals" [28]. Each social communication is a two-way process of information exchange between two or more individuals for the purpose of understanding. Allwood (1983) defines communication as the sharing of anything between two or more arbitrary entities [29]. Carlene (2010) defined "The communication process is a chain made up of identifiable links. Links in this process include sender, encoding, medium, decoding, receiver and feedback. [30]"

In order to communicate effectively, there are 5 elements: sender, message, channel/medium, receiver and feedback. For the first step, the sender plans the topic and an idea to send. Next step is encoding, which means converting the idea into a perceivable form, for example report form, letter form etc. After encoding finishes, the message can be presented in oral, written or nonverbal ways. Afterwards, the sender will choose a medium or channel to transmit the message to the receiver. The following step is transmitting the message and the sender's duty also ends with this step. Next, the receiver after receiving the message starts decoding it. At this level, having a common understanding or interest for sender and receiver to communicate effectively is very important. And the final step is feedback. This step is essential for a communication to be sure that receiver has understood the message correctly. The process of communication is displayed in diagram 2-2.
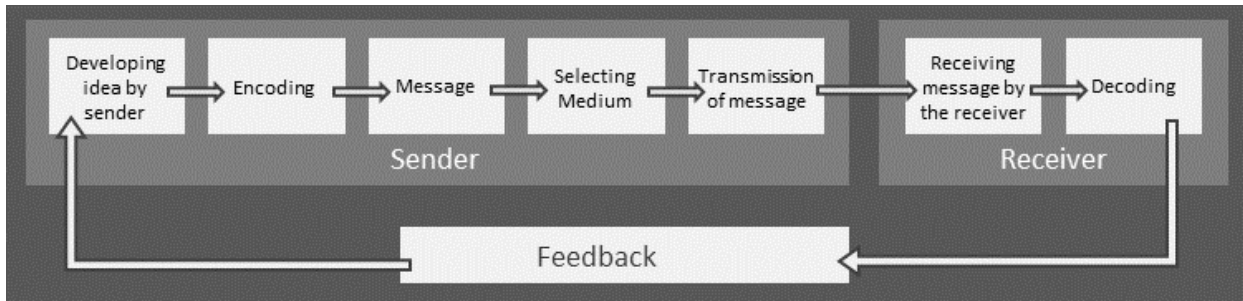
Diagram 2-2 Communication process [30]

2.3.2. Communication Categories

Communication can be divided into four basic areas: verbal, non-verbal, written and technologic communication. Oral and written communication, direct or mediated, live or recorded communication can be classified like a part of verbal communication such as phone calls, interviews and others. Non-verbal communication means the process of communication does not use words. Examples of this communication are gestures, greetings, facial expressions and body language. Written communication is mediated by written form of a manuscript, typescript or on computer including correspondence (official, personal or societal letters, CVs and cover letters, emails, SMS and MMS), business cards, professional publication and so on [31].

While communications can be categorized in 4 different types regarding their receiving end and the means of sending the message, the receiving end can be either an individual or a group of people and the means of communicating can be either face to face or via a technology medium, this thesis focusses on face to face communication.

Brown (2007) defines face to face communication as an interpersonal communication where two or more than two persons create a relationship based on communication [32]. Arndt (2011) defiance face to face communication as the personal mode of communication in which the participants can directly respond to signals of the counterpart. Face to face interactions can be defined as the communication of information within two parties were both parties are in close

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proximity of each other [33].

In theory, communication takes place with a certain purpose and a message. The sender send the message via the medium or channel to the receiver in a decoded form. The receiver then decodes the message. This way the perception of the receiver is dependent on serval factors. The message can be decoded and perceived different from what the sender had intended due to the limitations of the channel or the noises that impact the perception of the message [34]. Face to face communications can reduce the risk of misinterpretations as it is considered to be the riches communication channel available (Robbins & Judge 2013). Rich channel are the channel that can handle multiple cues simultaneously, that can facilitate rapid feedback and can be very personal. Other channels cannot offer all these facilities that create "rich" channels therefore they are labeled with low channel richness. The extent of channel richness is indicated in the diagram 2-3.
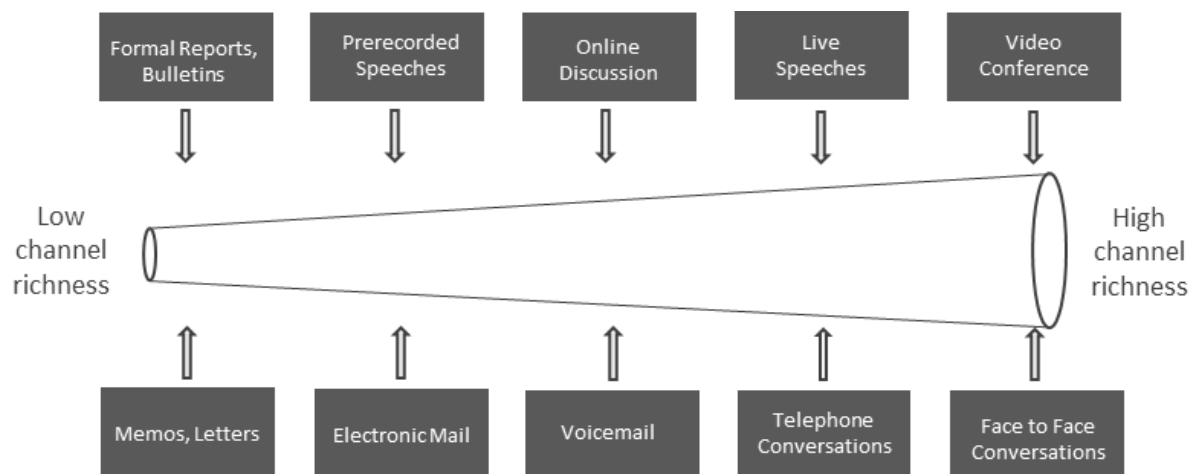
Diagram 2-3 Information Richness and Communication Channels [34]

In the context of communication, intercultural communication will be particularly discussed where the main failure is primarily lack of knowledge of the language [31], but also a different understanding what communication is [31].

Communication can also be defined by its direction, downward, upward and horizontal [35].

Downward communication happens when people from top of the organization communicate with people in lower positions. Managers communicate with employees through speeches message bulletins or manuals. Downward communication is used to implement goals, communicate job descriptions, deliver feedback and inform procedures.

Upward communication is the movement of information from subordinates to superiors in terms of corporate ranks. This type of communication is used to communicate expectations, suggestions for improvements, complains and financial and accountant information [36].

Horizontal communication happens to deliver information across the organization delivering messages from division to division. Horizontal communication resolves intradepartmental problems and helps better coordination between departments.

The Communication directions have been shown in diagram 2-4.
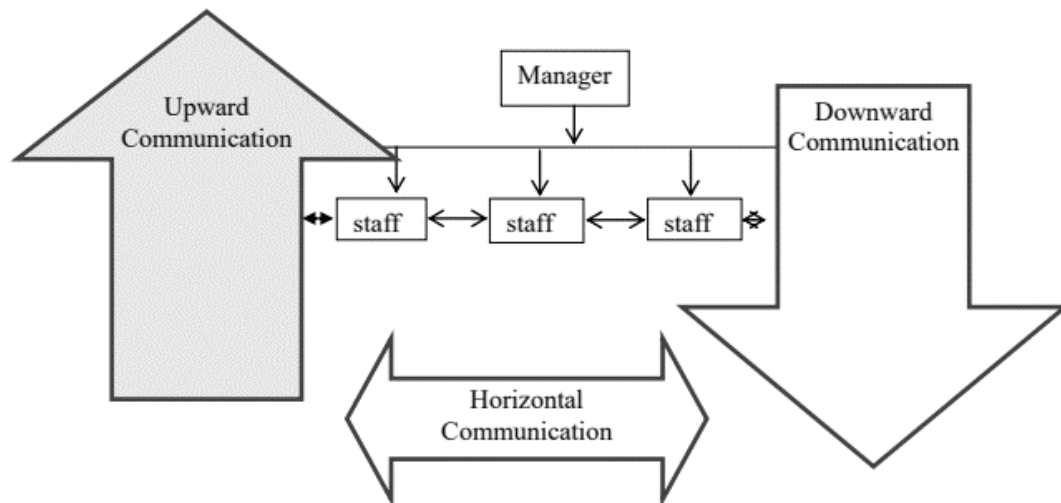
Diagram 2-4 Communication directions [36]

The perceptions of richness of communication channels by different people and tools by using media richness theory, focus on ability to gratify and satisfy necessities of communication channels usage, the potential to utility as a character of the company or organization's culture and media appropriateness or correctness.

Carlson and Zmud (1999) introduced channel expansion theory which focuses on how persons progress and improve awareness of a medium's richness or capability to assist common meaning and sense. They found support for channel expansion theory, their study only examined perceptions of e-mail's richness. Traditional channels, such as face-to-face communication and the telephone, and modern technologies, such as instant messaging, have not been examined from a channel expansion conceptual framework. Important differences in modern and traditional communication channels may create some empirical factors more or less relevant.

Face-to-face interaction and the telephone are dominant channels for communication in organizations. Relatively, e-mail and instant messaging are comparatively modern, and customs for their use were less well established.

Practicing and involvement with modern communications channels and also involvement with companies communication channels are important to be viewed with other contexts such as communication topic, channel perceived ease of use and usefulness in channels such as Email, Facebook, SMS, mobile, telephone and face to face communication.

Other theory that talks about the impact and perception of practicing different communication channels is media richness theory. The main principles of media richness theory are that means of communication describe in richness with face-to-face communication is considering the richest, while other means of communication have ability of transferring less clues. For example computer mediation communication are less rich. It is also better to say that usage of communication channels gets better when individuals use richer means or media when there are numerous explanations.

Most researches investigating media richness theory have tested the communication tools suitable perceived by measuring the communication channels choice of message correspondents or senders, not by investigating the real effects of channels performance.

The managers in an organization use richness communication tools effectively as basis of encouraging employees to do their jobs properly [37].

2.3.3. Face-to-Face Communication

Face-to-face communication is a medium of communication to interact face to face two or more people. Face-to-face as a channel of communication allows an individual to listen to and realize in a non-verbal manner by sending message and answering immediately. This kind of conversation also enables direct feedback, covers optical and aural cues perform and uses natural body languages. So that face-to-face remains the best influential human contact, never change confidence and closeness of people discussing in the same area. As stated in previous researches face-to-face communication is more rapid, easier and more suitable than computer-mediated communication.

The addition explanation that face-to-face communication plays an important role in connecting people to ambiguous jobs, creating choice and concluding compound responsibilities. Also employees are more gratified with exhausting face-to-face communication as compare to computer-mediated communication in a business company.

On behalf of Tom Crawford, the head of member of staff appointment at Deloitte, face-to-face communication is the best operational and exciting mode of communication because it is conveyed with morality, clearness and in a time-relevant manner.

Guffey (1997) mentions that face-to-face communication has nonverbal signs and evidences such as eye connection, facial expressions, physique or body activities, space, period, distance and presence influence the way the message is interpreted or

decoded, by the receiver. Meanwhile face-to-face communication sends the pure ideas, whereas communication channels convey a variety of important ideas [37]. Face-to-face communication happens when the members exist in the same bodily area in form of switching of information, beliefs, opinion, and feelings. It ensues in an extensive choice of business events, comprising official meetings, tea room chitchat, hallway encounters, one-on-one training, yearly assessments, work consultations, and other.

In the book Secrets of face-to-face communication, Bender & Tracz (2001) wrote, "when you are communicating with another individual, you are in a short-term partnership with that person". So that It's stated face-to-face communication has an influence, a correlation. But how much is planning to fly to a central palce is cost-effective, in this regard face-to-face communication through clever procedure of technology at fingers could be considered as a solution. Although new communication technology has incredible ability for several channels of industry exchange, it misses the mark unhappily in conditions concerning some features. Here is the main facts that others communication channels fail to deal with them. Conflict, emotion, priority, title and money. Regarding "Conflict", when persons are really sad and angry, long space practically in this situation can make individuals to come down. Also Employees in good emotional and sensitive and distressing situations reply more effectively to one another than to electrically conveyed messages. Priority is also a matter in other ways of communication except face-to-face because workers may need to become together in the same chamber or assembly in one building to highlight outcome of a task or service in the condition that what is achieved by the company. "Title" in this subject is about sometimes, for administrative concerns, it becomes obligatory for employees to comply with the boss's demands despite the portfolio of the boss. This cannot be easily defined during face-to-face communication. Making "Money" which is the last one talks about if a big inside or outside customer or buyer places an order to buy company product, the face-to-face mode of communication is the most effective to collect sufficient information from the customer.

In great-importance conditions or these including significant conflict, reaction, authority and money, face-to-face communication is the perfect. Other communication channels do not offer the team-building occasions that meeting in person can. Relationships grow when meeting members can have spontaneous discussions during pauses, at mealtimes, or even in the hotel, meeting points or chambers in the off periods. Some factors such as physique language, presences, vocal sound, period and spatial relationships specifically voice are more significant remote encounters then they are in person. It is public commercial error to consider that those factors count little. Because, people words convey for less than 10% of typical messages, this prove that actual electronic communication, like dialogue face-to-face, depends on real nonverbal performances. Thus it is recommended wisely to relate the greatest structures of face-to-face communication, especially nonverbal, when employees are incapable to get together in person [37].

2.4. Intercultural Communication

Due to globalization and modern technologies, the world has become smaller which means that people are closer to each other, their cultures and communication styles have begun to interfere with each other and this clash can have a crucial impact in the future. Many past researches has indicated that developing the ability to work successfully all over the world might be the best strategy for managers and companies that want to succeed. So intercultural communication significance is growing in human activities like trade and business, diplomacy, science and the arts as well as in tourism or sport.

2.4.1 Definition

Intercultural communication is a process in which people from different cultural background try to interact and create a shared understanding to achieve their personal goals as well as creating relationship. Cross-cultural communication focuses on communicating smoothly between people from other cultures (Dutta, 2008). Interpreting message or information and communicating happens different

from one culture to another. The differences in communication between cultures are mostly related to cultural patterns, verbal and nonverbal codes, relationships standards and roles, and social perceptions. When the degree of differences between cultures becomes relatively large, it would lead to misinterpretation and dissimilar expectations about how to communicate competently [38].

2.4.2. Intercultural communication barriers

Burke (1966) stated that communication between persons can never be perfect due to the differences in their personalities, cultures that will lead to different interpretations of a message within a communication [39].

Intra group conflicts are very natural in the organizations and can be useful and harmful, which depends on the way they are handled. To avoid the harmful conflicts, clear and open communication helps a lot (Nakatsugawa & Takai, 2013).

Communication barriers can be categorized in three major categories:
First is the communication between different groups but with the same cultural background, people may show prejudice and stereotyping barriers to other groups, this also applies to communication with cross-cultural background.
Second are the stereotypical cross-cultural communication barriers [19]. In intergroup communications, stereotyping and prejudice are considered to be the two general barriers. Stereotyping is defined as a pattern that people try to use their own values and thoughts to understand other people. This will result in less interest in communication with people other than a stereotyped mind's group. They also have presumption that the people outside their group are not trustworthy. Prejudice is an attitude towards others concerning racism, sexism, ageism and religion. The effect of prejudiced attitudes towards others is treating people differently in a negative way. Moreover, people who hold a prejudiced attitude have a high tendency of misunderstanding the people with whom they intend to communicate. On the contrary, people who are viewed with prejudice easily generate negative views towards people who hold prejudice against them, in the end, effective communication is interrupted.

The third barrier is the language barrier which although is critical to intercultural communications. Fantini & Tirmizi (2006) argue that foreign language skills are often overlooked in intercultural competence models [40]. Cultural specific barriers Language usage, in most cases, is a distinct differentiation among cultures; misunderstanding occurs often in communication due to improper use of language or different interpretation of the same words. Besides, even people speaking the same category of language, for example, English is spoken by many countries, can still cause misunderstanding because of their different cultural background. Non-verbal behavior mainly points to body language, attitude etc. It is a fact that similar signals can be interpreted different across cultures. In some extreme situations, it may have a completely different meaning. In detail, the way people communicate, gestures, eye contact and message delivery are all possibly misunderstood across cultures.

Communication strategies are dependent on individual styles and also cultural differences. There are more cross-culture barriers than mentioned above, such as Ting-Toomey's (1988) face theory and Ambady et al [41] regarding politeness. It is also argued that some cultures themselves contain the barriers of communication regardless of cultural differences (Guirdham, 1999).

2.4.3. Intercultural Communication Conflicts

Conflict can be both destructive and productive. It can destroy work relationships or create the impetus for needed organizational change. Through communication, organizational members create and work through conflicts in ways that can be either functional or dysfunctional [42]. Various authors have demonstrated adroitly and exactly that intra group conflicts can be divided into two types of conflicts, emotional conflicts and cognitive task conflicts [43]. The emotional or relationship conflicts can be described by interpersonal incompatibilities among group members, that are connected with pressure, hostility, and inconvenience. The task conflicts refer to contradictions among gatherings (group members) about the matter of their choices and decisions including differences in perspectives, thoughts, and results.

When the members of a group have distinct demographic backgrounds, they may have different belief structures for instance: priorities and understandings which this may raise the conflicts among the group members in the organizations. As the human resource is a competitive advantage for an organization and the diversity in the work force is one way to achieve targets, have considered the diversity to understand intra conflicts. Diversity defines as the relational oriented diversity (gender, age, ethnicity etc.) and the other as the task oriented diversity (education, tenure, interpersonal skills etc.). It is expressed that there is an important association between these two variables such as the conflicts among group members may harm the coordination and the inspiration of the group.

It also has been contended that inspecting the genuine contact that the cultural minorities create in diverse cultural changes, is significant to comprehend whether their cultural assimilation inclination had been met or not. In diverse changes, the acculturation contact inconsistencies may develop in the light of the fact that the cultural minorities can't generally pick how to take part in intercultural relations, as the host group or society may force pertinent boundaries and limit their goals. The interaction among the group members will be highly affected by the prevailing culture in the organizations, flexible cultures will definitely encourage the group work, and if the members belong to other cultural backgrounds then it also will not matter, because as the world changes, the people become diverse in nature, and the employees in organizations try to develop and enhance their adaptability skills [44].

2.4.4. Intercultural communication background

The research on intercultural communication dates back to 1950s when the "foreign service institute hired some of the best linguistic specials to train American diplomats [45].

The first objective of intercultural communication was to study the direct interaction on people who had different cultural backgrounds and so two key concepts needed to be put into consideration, culture and communication [46].

Much research in cross-cultural communication, however, rests on the frameworks of cultural analysis developed by Hall (1976) and Hofstede (2001). Many recent studies have investigated the validity of these models, which some scholars have modified or replaced.

Hofstede, et al. (2010) cultural dimensions theory is an important theoretical analysis of cultural differences (Hofstede, 1997) [23]. According to Hofstede model that is based on five cultural dimensions that are used to classify and cluster a wide range of national cultures, the dimensions are universal and any society can be positioned relative to other societies along each of the dimension continuums. Hofstede approach to culture initially identified four underlying value dimensions: (1) individualism vs. collectivism, (2) large vs. small power distance, (3) strong vs. weak uncertainty avoidance, and (4) masculinity vs. femininity (a fifth dimension, long- vs. short-term orientation was added later) [47].

Individualism on the one side versus its opposite, collectivism, is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side, we find societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

Large vs. small power distance dimension is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders.

Strong vs. weak uncertainty avoidance indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising and different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute truth. People in uncertainty avoiding countries

are also more emotional, and motivated by inner nervous energy. The opposite type, uncertainty accepting cultures, are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible, and on the philosophical and religious level they are relativist and allow many currents to flow side by side. People within these cultures are more phlegmatic and contemplative, and not expected by their environment to express emotions.

Masculinity versus its opposite, femininity, refers to the distribution of roles between the sexes which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found.

Another dimension is long- vs. short-term orientation which can be said to deal with Virtue regardless of Truth. Values associated with long term orientation are thrift and perseverance; values associated with short term orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's "face". Both the positively and the negatively rated values of this dimension remind us of the teachings of Confucius.

Guirdham (1999) argues that the cultural differences is based on communication. In her theory communication behaviors such as message codes, verbal and non verbal communications are formed by culture. She also investigated the barriers to communication and stated that miscommunication arises from noise.

Ess and Sudweeks (2005) pointed out Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project used a set of cultural values different from those used by Hofstede and that the validity of the choice of these alternative values has been supported by other scholars. The results of GLOBE have brought nine key parameters of national cultures: uncertainty avoidance, power distance, future orientation, gender egalitarianism, group collectivism, human orientation, assertiveness, performance orientation and institutional collectivism. As compared with the dimensions of the culture according to Hofstede, it is clearly seen that certain dimensions are interconnected which makes project GLOBE defined in more depth.

Edward T. Hall is considered as one of the pioneers in the field of intercultural studies. Hall's theory is based on three pillars, which are cultural differences in

interpersonal communication, personal space and time (Steers 2007), to which he refers as cultural dimensions [48].

The first dimension, the context, is divided into low-context culture and high context culture. During the communication in high-context culture, most of the information exists in the material context or internalized communications and rarely appear in the clear message. In the low context, a large amount of information depends on the delivery of a clear message. The type of context decides all the aspects of communication. This means that in the low context, people are to rely on language use to achieve the purpose of communication. In the high context, people rely less on the language usage as people in the low context do. Generally, in high context communication people use indirect messages to express their opinions. Furthermore, personal reputations, close human relationships and mutual trust are of high importance – higher than written promises. Examples of the first group are Germany, United Kingdom, and the United States. Representatives of the high context culture are Asian countries, as Vietnam, China and Japan, Arab cultures and Russia [49].

The second dimension refers to the personal space a person is claiming to feel comfortable. People from northern Europe as Finland, some Asian countries and the United States take more distance when speaking to each other. People who may quickly touch another person when speaking or passing each other and who stand closer together are, for instance, from Russia, Latin America and the most of the Arab countries [48]. Germany takes a place between Scandinavian cultures and the United States.

The third dimension concerns the manner of using time. Hall distinguishes between monochronic and polychronic cultures. Monochronic countries as the United States, Germany and Scandinavian countries can be roughly characterized by punctuality, being precise and being on time, "always focusing on the ultimate goal" [48]. They do not welcome interruptions and always try to concentrate on one activity at a time. Their counterparts may appear to them a bit disorganized and unfocused, because doing multiple activities at the same time, putting effort on work related relations and schedules is how organization and business culture is working there.

Southern Europe, e.g. France and Spain, South America and Arab countries, belong to polychromic countries. Due to the lack of a scale system Hall's theory describes countries as either belonging to one or the other dimension, as for instance either high-context or low-context culture. Moreover, culture is not a condition but can change with years, as countries might move from high- to a low-context culture. Especially the interaction between cultures might lead to changes.

Based on Halls model, Holtbrugge, et al. (2012) investigates whether Edward T. Hall's concept of culture can explain cultural differences in email communication [49]. Although a vast array of intercultural research employs Hall's concept in various communication settings, few take into account the computer-mediated communication technologies. Research results show that cultural differences in email can be explained by Hall's dimensions of context, time, and space orientation. In particular, cultural background has a significant impact on the preference for formalness, promptness, preciseness, task-relatedness, and relationship-relatedness in email communication.

Cultural orientation   **Email Communication Style**

Low context orientation
   0 → directness
   − → formalness

Monochronic time orientation
   + → promptness
   + → preciseness

High space orientation
   + → task-relatedness
   − → relationship-relatedness

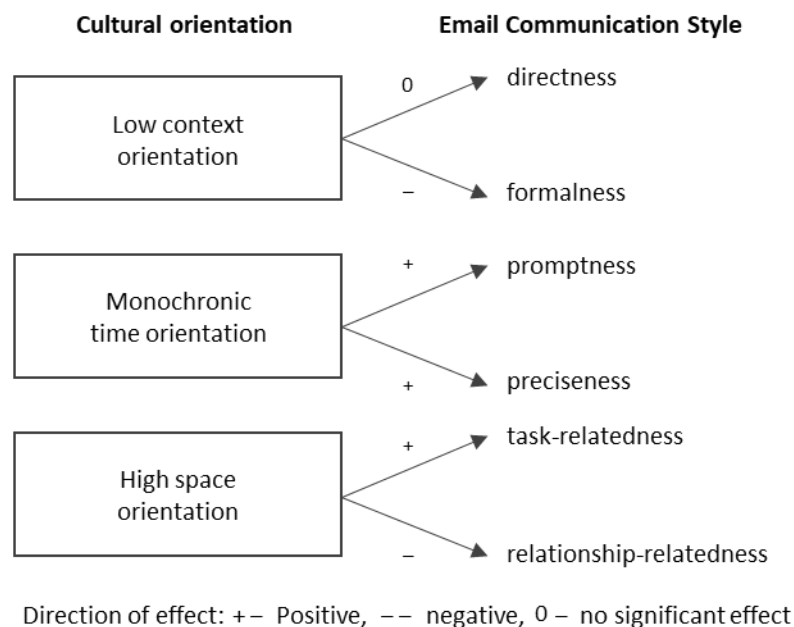Direction of effect: +− Positive, −− negative, 0 − no significant effect

Diagram 2-4 Holtbrugge result based on Hall model [49]

In another study Jan et. Al concluded in his research that different cultures have a different strategy in nonverbal communications, by categorizing the participants in

three cultural segments (Nordic, Anglo and Latin) and measuring the extent they use first person pronouns [49].

2.4.6. Intercultural communication skill set and mind set

Intercultural mindset and skill set is the unity of behavior and thoughts [50]. Mindset translates to the conscious knowledge of a person from it's culture. The mindset also consists of curiosity and tolerance of ambiguity that motivates the cultural differences.
The skill set is the ability to analyze and predict interactions and misunderstandings.

2.5 Corporate culture

The way an organization operates including its beliefs, values and assumptions is what conceptualized as organizational culture. The culture of an organization, determines the performance of the individuals that work in that organization and the organizational performance. An understanding of culture is very important for someone who is interested in the study of organizational growth and development because it gives an organization a strong competitive advantage. Strong organization cultures are more successful in achieving their goals, motivating employees, enhancing self-confidence, improving the contribution, commitment and team being [51].
Organizational culture can either be a strong or weak and is dependent on the extent to which members adapt to that culture. A strong culture exists when every member of the organization agrees and follows the agreed pattern of behaviour that has proven to be beneficial, both in content and context. Values and beliefs not strongly and widely shared cause a weak organizational culture.
Although the corporate culture is derived from the culture in the society, but researchers define corporate culture as a shared point of view and perceptions from

the organizational practices which makes it different from other organizations [52]. In this section we are looking at organizations and communication as cultures, from the field of anthropology, where scholars study the cultures of nations, tribes, and ethnic groups.

When we think about cultures, we think about a complicated patchwork of values, symbols, and behaviors that define an organization in various ways for various people. "Each organization has its own way of doing what it does and its own way of talking about what it is doing". To investigate organizational culture, it's necessary to discover ways of doing and talking of an organization. The concept of "culture" took the business and academic community by storm for several reasons. First, the metaphor of culture clearly resonated with both academics and practitioners. It simply made sense to see organizations as complex arenas of stories and values rather than as entirely rational institutions. Second, the cultural metaphor opened up new and fruitful areas of research. And, finally, culture quickly became a part of everyday talk in carpools and around watercoolers [42].

Some characteristics of culture are:

- Collective, cultures are not created by individuals alone, but as a result of collective actions.
- Emotional, the substance and forms of culture are filled with meanings and emotions.
- Historic, culture is connected to organization's traditions and history.
- Symbolic, symbols are most general and persuasive form of culture and at the same time are specific type of that. Symbols have to be interpreted in order to understand their meaning.
- Dynamic, despite connectivity of culture to history, isn't static and changes continually due to several factors.
- Diffuse, elements of organizational culture will get diffuse due to circumstance complexity.

Robbins and Judge also represent a composite picture of the organizational culture by going further to say that each of the seven characteristics exist on a continuum from high to low.

Though there are many definitions of corporate culture, most definitions outline some key elements [53]:

- Organizational culture is a shared phenomenon;
- Culture has layers, the outer layers consist of spoken language used by the group which is more visible and then there is a deeper layer that contains the groups values and norms which is less visible;
- The process in which new members learn the new culture which can be through informal channels such as existing employees or through formal channels such as training programs;
- Corporate culture can change through time.

Hofstede identifies three cultural layers for organizations. The top layer contains the unique characteristics of an organization then there is the occupational culture which is the globally common values of an occupation and lastly there is the national culture [54].

Robins identifies seven characteristics for corporate culture [55]:

- Innovation and risk: Describes the extent that employees are motivated to be innovative and risk taking.
- Attention to details: Is the extent to which employees are expected to analyze the issues and attend them in a meticulous way.
- Attention to results: Describe the extent to which a company requires employees to focus on results rather than the process.
- People orientation: Describes the extent to which the managers allow other employees to participate in decision making.
- Group orientation: To what extent the tasks are considered to be delivered by a group of people rather than persons
- Aggressiveness: To what extent the employees take risks and act without hesitation while tackling an issue.
- Stability: To what extent the organization focuses on maintaining the status quo rather than trying to change.

Carmeli defines organization culture with the following dimensions [56]:

1- Job challenges, which describes the complexity in a workspace. A job description which is clear and helps recruiting an employee which proper specialties is very important in reducing stress and challenges.

2- Communication, which describes the effectiveness of the communication between employees and top level managers and also among the employees. The way an office is arranged has a direct impact on communication.

3- Trust, the degree to which employees trust their manager and coworkers which enables free discussions.

4- Innovation, which indicates to what extent the environment of the organization supports creativity.

5- Social cohesion, which addresses the interrelations between the organizations members.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) in their "Strong Cultures" model argue that business success can be enhanced through the development of a "strong" culture. An organization by having the components of a strong culture, will be a better place to work and help individuals to have better performance and improve. In their opinion four key components of a strong culture are

1- Values, which are the beliefs and visions that members hold for an organization. For example, 3M Corporation espouses a value for innovation, whereas Prudential Insurance represents a value of stability.

2. Heroes who are the individuals come to exemplify an organization's values. Heroes become known through the stories of an organization. For example, Steve Jobs is a hero who exemplifies innovation and market savvy at Apple.

3. Rites and rituals to celebrate organization's values. An organization that values innovation may develop a ritualistic way of rewarding the new ideas of employees. In other organizations, rites and rituals might include a company picnic or an awards banquet for outstanding employees.

4. Finally, the cultural network is the communication system through which cultural values are instituted and reinforced. The cultural network could consist of both formal organizational channels, such as newsletters, and the informal interactions of employees [42].

Mckenna explains the advantages of a strong culture in an organization with three characteristics.

- Easier goal alignment
- Learning better from the past
- High level of employee motivation

Schein defines the corporate culture as a shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved the challenges and the problems occurring from the external environment [57]. Schein defines three layers for corporate culture.

- Artifacts which are the outer layer

   A number of different cultural indicators could be included at this observable level. The most obvious of these are the artifacts—or things—displayed by organizational members and the overt behavior of organizational members.

- Values which represent preferences for groups or people

   Values represent preferences or what and how "ought" to happen.

- Assumptions which are the beliefs that have been reinforced over time

   These basic assumptions are uniformly held by cultural or subcultural members and individuals can rarely articulate them because they have become such a natural part of "the way we are" or "the way we do things around here".

Artifacts

Values

Assumption
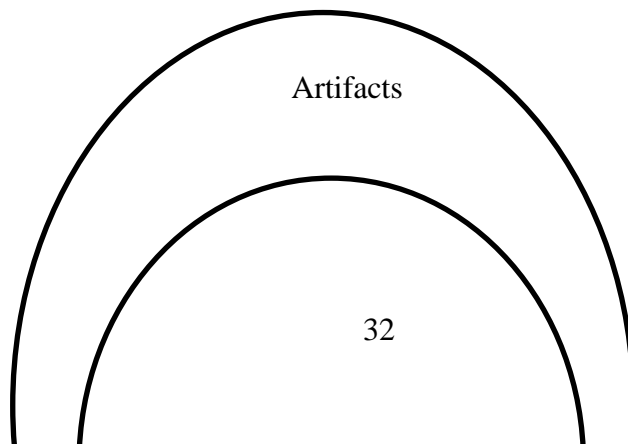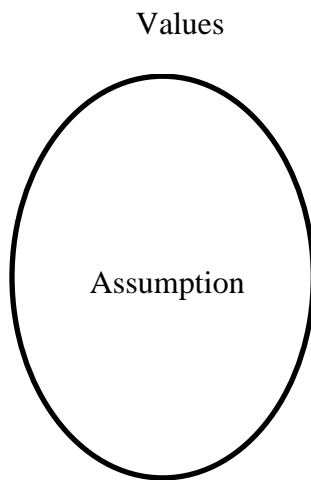
Diagram 2-5 Schein Cultural levels [57]

Today, most scholars eschew that organizational cultures are the simple prescriptive approaches rather than seeing culture as a "thing" that can and should be "managed," a culture is also seen as emerging and fragmented values, practices, narratives, and artifacts that make a particular organization "what it is". Organizational cultures are complicated, emergent, not unitary and often ambiguous. Wide variety of "markers" that are used by scholars demonstrate complexity of organizational culture. Despite diversity of cultural markers, it is not surprising that most scholars see organizational culture as a highly complex phenomenon. Taking emergent approach into the cultural is about cultures are socially created through the interaction of organizational members. Another thing is said about culture is that most organizational culture researchers agree that it is impossible to characterize an organization as having a single culture and are characterized by a multitude of subcultures. Finally, scholars recognize that there is not always a clear picture of the organization's culture and there may be multiple manifestations of culture that are difficult to interpret.

There are nine ways of learning an organization's culture: "Arte facts, Language, Behaviour patterns; Norms of behaviour; Heroes; Symbols and symbolic action; Believes, values and attitudes; Basic assumptions; and History. [54]

2.5.1 Multi-Cultural Corporations

Developing global managers is a very hard task, therefore corporations use expert who are skilled in cross cultural interaction to train their managers to prepare them for foreign assignments. The difference between a successful global manager and an unsuccessful global manager can be the difference in the way of thinking a perceiving the world, the successful managers tend have a more flexible understanding of their surrounding environment [58]. A global mindset is described in the diagram 2.6.

Diagram 2-6 Mindset Alternatives [58]

	Low Differentiation	High Differentiation
High Integration	Parochial Mindset	Global Mindset
Low Integration	Not applicable	Diffused Mindset

Low Differentiation   High Differentiation
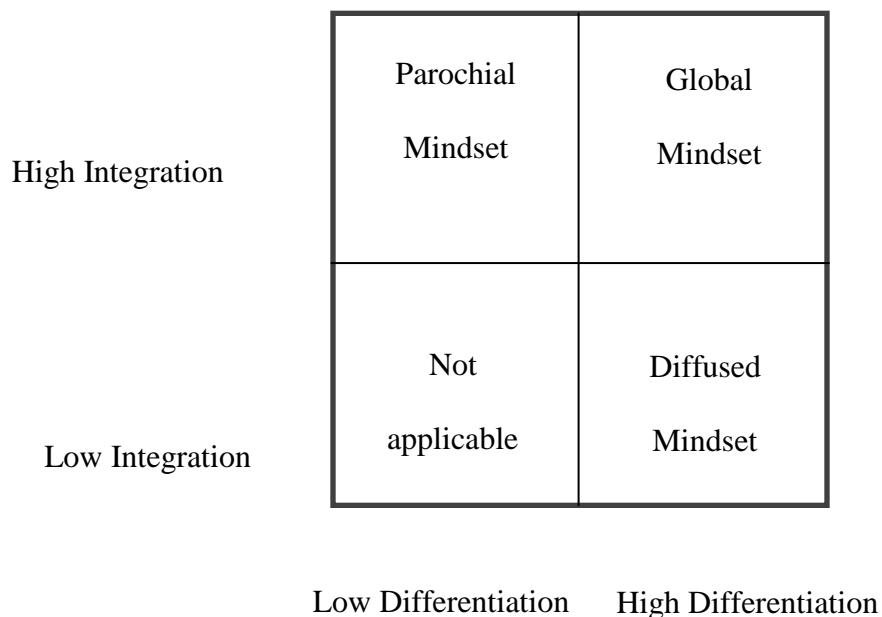
The value of having a global mindset is that it help managers to decide and act more quickly and accurately [58].

2.6 Communication in corporations

It is defined organization as including five critical features—namely, the existence of a social collectivity, organizational and individual goals, coordinating activity, organizational structure, and the embedding of the organization within an environment of other organizations.

When we think about the idea of "structure," we need to consider more than basic hierarchical structure or even more complex team structures. We also need to consider structures based on collective and communal relationships, structures that eschew hierarchy in favor of flat organizational forms, and structures that cross boundaries of time and space. When we think about the concept of "goals," we need to move far beyond the economic goals that are often assumed in discussions of the "bottom line." The goals that drive many organizations and individuals today involve changing the world in big and small ways or perhaps simply concern about "connection" itself.

"Organization" term is used increasingly in the operations of nonprofit organizations. For both profit and nonprofit organizations, more and more organizations can be characterized as service organizations rather than manufacturing organizations. Furthermore, It is increasingly common for individuals with similar needs and goals to come together in organizations known as cooperatives (co-ops) that are often motivated by a concern for democracy, social justice, and environmental and global responsibility. Another increasing kind of organizations are ones do without the "brick and mortar" physical location and operate as virtual organizations in Digital era [42].

life in organizations is complex enough! Thus, it is critical to complicate our thinking and discussion about "organization" and "communication" in ways advocated by recent scholars such as Tretheway and Ashcraft (2004) and Craig (1999). Robert Craig (1999) proposed a model of communication theory that helps sort out these various aspects of communication. In his constitutive model, communication is seen as a "process that produces and reproduces shared meaning" [42].

	Communication Theorized As:	Possible Use in the Organization Context:
Rhetorical	The practical art of discourse	Considering the communication strategies of organizational leaders during times of crisis
Semiotic	Intersubjective mediation by signs	Studying the way that organizations create and sustain identity through corporate symbolism
Phenomenological	Experience of otherness: Dialogue	Using dialogue to mediate conflict between two employees
Cybernetic	Information processing	Using knowledge about personality and interaction style to improve conflict management programs
Sociocultural	(Re)production of social order	Looking at the intersection of organizational, national and ethnic cultures in multinational organization
Critical	Discursive reflection	Confronting the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace through programs designed to shift beliefs about gender and power

Diagram 2-6 Approaches to the Concept of Communication [42]

Studies on the corporate communication dates back to 1999 conducted by Miller. Miller describes the culture in three schools of thought:

- Classical
- Human relations
- Human resources

Kreps describes communication in corporations the process in which employees gain intel on the changes and the events happening in an organization [59]. In general organizational communication have two main purposes

- Informing the employees and the work force about the company policies and their tasks
- Shaping communities within an organization

Communication can be affected by the structure and the layout in which a company is set, open spaces and open rooms help a better communication in organization as it makes employees make contact much easier.

Communication within a firm motivates employees to support the corporate strategy [54].

Chapter III. Research Methods and Techniques

3.1. Research Methodology

Research methodology plays an important role in providing the guidance of using the appropriate research methods. This chapter will provide a detailed introduction of methodology used in this research.

For the selection of a suitable research approach and research strategy, Saunders *et al.* (2009) presented a figure called "The Research Onion". This research onion is divided into six layers and the purpose is to describe each of these layers of research methodology. The first two layers of the research onion are research philosophy and research approach. These two layers and followed by research strategies, research choices and research time horizons. The research onion ends with data collection and data analysis in the center [60].
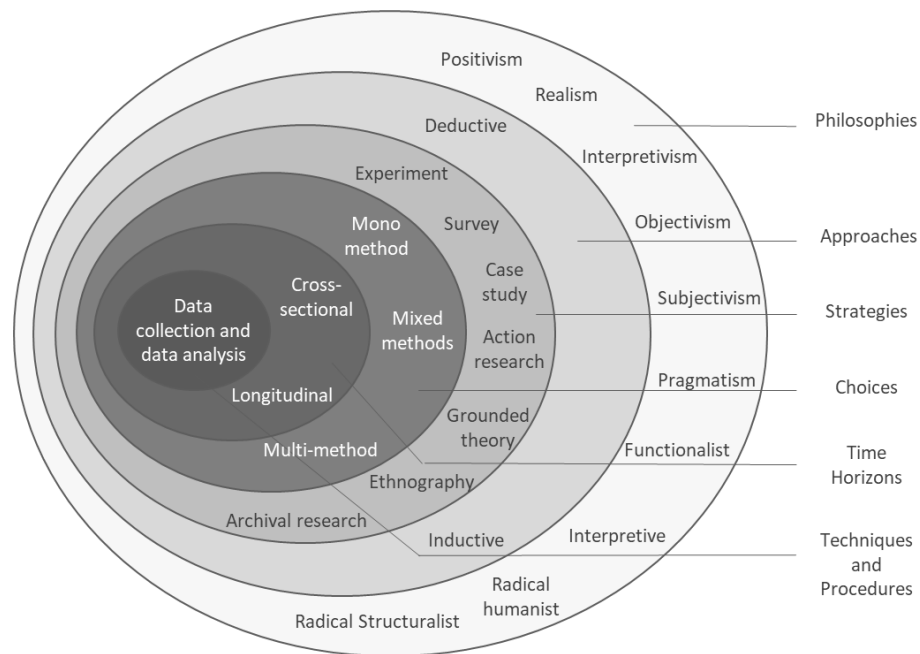
Diagram 3-1 The Research Onion [60]

The term research philosophy relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge [61]. According to Johnson & Clark ''as business and management researchers we need to be aware of the philosophical commitments we make through our choice of research strategy since this will have a significant impact not only on what we do but how we understand what it is we are investigating."

According to Saunders research approaches can be listed as induction or deduction.

A deductive approach is used when explaining relationship between variables, developing a theory and hypothesis which are based on existing facts and theories in a particular area. A deduction is mostly used in quantitative studies. While on the other hand, an inductive approach starts with data collection and theory is formulated as a result of the data analysis. Inductive approach is also applied in qualitative studies (Robson, 2002; Saunders et al., 2009).

It is also necessary to define whether it will be a choice between the two main research methods – quantitative and qualitative – and define mono, mixed or multi-application of these methods. Quantitative research is a scientific research that describe phenomena by using variables, measures and constructs and also interpret it through statistics. Conversely, the concept of qualitative research focuses on how individuals and groups inspect, understand and interpret the world without using statistical methods and techniques [62] [63].

Differences between mono, mixed or multi-application of quantitative and qualitative methods is related to data collection techniques and corresponding analysis procedure. In contrast to mono method which in data is collected in a way which uses just one technique, in multiple method, there is possibility to combine the data collection techniques and procedures, but only strictly either a quantitative or qualitative method. Finally mixed methods approach generally means that both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques are used in a research design [61].

The seven research strategies that can be done separately or in combination are experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. Use of strategies depends on the purpose of research, and their philosophy and approach.

Regarding the time limit identified two types of studies: cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies. Cross-sectional studies mean that "the study of a particular phenomenon (or phenomena) at a particular time". In longitudinal studies, the researcher has the opportunity to investigate if there is any change or development over a period of time [61].

For data collection there are two primary and secondary data resources. Secondary data will be collected from public sources such as books and journal articles to provide the relevant background and theoretical basis for the research. Primary data is newly collected data and it is collected exclusively for solving the current problem. It's usually common to use both data sources to conduct research.

In conclusion the philosophical point of view in this research is positivism as it takes theories such as Edward Hall's model as an accepted knowledge and tends to generalize a theory. The approach taken in this thesis is deductive which means the research questions are derived from a theory and the research sets out to answer the questions. The strategy used for data collection and analysis is the survey strategy as it is a very effective way of collecting large amounts of data suitable for a deductive research. The method used is mono method as quantitative data will be gathered using a questioner and analyzed statistically. As this research studies a phenomena in a single point of time, the time horizon would be cross sectional.

3.2. Sample

After deciding how the researcher will proceed in the research and what tools are used, the researcher must decide on a sample of respondents. In this regard, the target segment of the population and sample, the size of the set to obtain reliable results and procedure for selecting set must be defined. The method of the selecting individuals into the set of respondents is developed and everyone in the target population should have the same or an identifiable chance to be part of the sample [61].

The chosen sampling method is in line with what Shiu et al. (2009) would classify a probability sampling method. How each of the business persons selected is assumed to be simple random sampling (SRS). All potential respondents, in the population have a known and equal opportunity of being selected.

The research objects for this thesis are the employees of international companies, who communicate with people from all over the globe, often traveling the world and

meeting foreign colleagues in person while they do it. So survey data was recorded by identifying international business firms trough LinkedIn originally from Iran and Germany. Given the fact that all of the companies employees were not in contact with people from other firms, all of the companies employees were not part of the research's sample. Therefore, employees who were working in the sales and marketing or public relations department were considered as the researches sample. Three companies were chosen from Iran and three companies were chosen from Germany in order to be examined and surveyed for this research.

The selected companies, whose names will not be mentioned due to privacy statements, had the following personnel who were applicable to our research:

Companies based in Iran:

- Company A which is a management consulting firm: 2 persons

- Company B which exports sodium hydroxide: 5 persons

- Company C which manufactures post lamps: 4 persons

Companies based in Germany:

- Company D which produces paper sheets: 4 persons

- Company E which is a trading company: 5 persons

- Company F which manufactures vehicle tires: 7 persons

The link containing the survey link was then sent to the managers who had been inform about the research and agreed to cooperate. The mentioned managers were responsible for providing the number of employees how were part of our sample and then delivering the survey to the appropriate employees.

As the mentioned companies have the number of related employees of less than 10, all the samples needed to be studied in order to gain a reliable results.

3.3. Tools

There are two types of data, primary data and secondary data. In order to obtain primary data from the selected samples a survey has been crafted based on prior research. Also library research was used to obtain the secondary data used in the second chapter. Thanks to questionnaire flexibility, it is by far the most common tool that is used in data collection. When preparing the questionnaire, the researcher must carefully select the questions and their form, verbal form and a sequence. The form of the questions can affect the answers. Before the application, questionnaires must be carefully built up, tested and debugged in a large scale [64] [65]. Between the advantages of the questionnaire are mainly low time, financial demands and collecting data from a large number of the people.

The literature review revealed independent variables to test 3 elements of Hall's intercultural model in communication between different cultures [66]. Since there is former research done regarding how cultural differences affect email communications by 3 elements of Halls's model, questionnaire was made out of primary information and changing items for the purpose of this thesis. Questionnaire contained 19 questions where 15 questions were rated on 7-point Likert scale 1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree) as most fitted for the purpose of this thesis. The remaining 4 questions were nationality, age, position and gender identification questions which was placed at the start of the questionnaire.

Johns (2010) argues that the Likert options should reflect an underlying continuum and not a fixed number of attitudes and less than five or more than seven scale points gives significantly less accurate data [67].

The data collection process was self-administrative which mean the survey was filled by the interviewee.

3.3.1. Validity

Because of the importance of a research's validity and reliability, it matters to be discussed. Validity and reliability are two of the features of a good survey. Validity means if the survey is measuring what it intended to measure and reliability relates to if the survey is trustworthy, or possible to replicate.

Two of the most common types of validity are content and construct validity. Top content validity means that all dimensions of a concept is included in the scale measuring it, and Wilson (2006) continues by stating that the validity level can be reached by subject experts and hence have a subjectivity bias [67].

Because of this, and the other type of validity measure, construct validity is used to supplement content validity (Wilson, 2006). According to Shiu et al. (2009), construct validity concerns how thoroughly and accurately the concepts are identified before trying to find functional relationships.

As nearly the entire survey is based on previous research/literature the internal validity can be assumed as strong.

3.3.2. Reliability

To test tool's reliability, would the results be approximately the same if the survey was conducted one more time? If the answer to that question is yes, the reliability would be assumed as high (Jacobsen, 2005) [68]. Reliability gives an indication of how consistent and stable the results from rating scales are, and can be done in two kinds of tests, but only one is relevant in this thesis.

Making the research of the cross-sectional kind and the fact that the source of information is primary resources highlighted it's being reliable.

Also in this research the pilot-test was performed to check survey questionnaire validity when 10 people were chosen to do a pre-test of this questionnaire. Cronbach´s alphas as indicators of internal reliability were presented which where it is above 0.5 level show an acceptable reliability.

3.4. Statistical Analyses

This section will provide brief descriptions of the different statistical analyses to be conducted in chapter 4. In this study first results of the survey were measured by categories. There were six categories which representing the six dependent variables including high/low context, poly/mono-chronic and high/low space. Responses to the survey items were together for a composite score for each of all categories. Validity can be revealed through a correlation analysis. Every dimension includes several items to measure particular dimension by asking from sample. The scale used in this survey was a 7 point based Likert type survey with 1 for strongly disagree and 7 for strongly agree.

Table 3-1 Questionnaire

No.	Questionnaire	Alpha	Reference
Directness			
1	The most important point of the conversation should be stated in the beginning of the face to face conversation.		(Adair, 2003;
2	The messages in the face to face communication has to be clear and direct.	0.65	Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kapoor et al.,
3	Face to face communication should start in a way so that the receiver immediately knows what the conversation is about.		2003)
Formalness			
4	In face to face communication I prefer formal greetings.		(Thomas, 1998; Bello
5	If I engage in a conversation with an unfamiliar person, I expect to be addressed with my surname.	0.57	et al., 2006; Hall and Hall, 1990)

6	Titles must be respected and used in face to face communication		

Promptness

7	When someone ask me question, I prefer to take some time before answering so I can formulate an answer.		
8	I prefer to communicate my understanding of the question before answering it in face to face communication.	0.51	(Waller et al., 1999; Hayes and Kuchinskas, 2003)
9	I like to write down my answers and lines before communicating them.		

Preciseness

10	I dislike using of the jokes, sarcasm and abbreviations in face to face communications, as they could lead to misinterpretation.	0.52	(de Vries et al., 2009; Byron, 2008)
11	In face to face communications I try to be precise as possible.		

Task Relatedness

12	I like conversations which are short and to the point.		
13	When I engage in conversations I concentrate precisely on this activity and do not do other activities simultaneously.	0.65	(Morkes et al., 1999; Keeling et al., 2010)

Relationship Relatedness

14	In start of the conversations I always ask discuss the personal matters with my colleagues.		
15	If I don't know a person very well it's okay if the other person addresses me with my first name.	0.7	(Pee et al., 2008)

Independent variables also are context, time and space orientation. Hall (1976, 1990) indicates that they are closely inter-related, that means, high-context cultures are often polychronic and characterized by low-space orientation. In contrast low-context cultures have in most cases a monochronic time concept and high-space orientation. For purpose of this research cultures were classified as presented in the literature.

Table 3-2 Classification of cultures

High-Context/Polychronic/Low-Space	Low-Context/Monochronic/High-Space
Iran	Germany

3.4.1. Correlation analysis

The correlation analysis is a bivariate analysis existing to test the relationship between two variables, but only the amount of association between them, and not whether one variable is causing change in the other or not. With this subject covariance should also be mentioned. According to Shiu et al. (2009) perfect covariation shows that change in one variable consistently means change in another variable. The covariance can be displayed in a scatter diagram, that will portray whether the relationship is negative (decrease in one variable, means increase in another), positive (increase in one variable means increase in the other), curvilinear (increase in one variable, means increase in another until a certain point) or non-existing. The scatter diagram can reveal several tendencies of the relationship between variables, but Shiu et al. (2009) point out the Pearson correlation coefficient as a more precise tool for this purpose. This coefficient gives a numerical value illustrating the strength of the relationship between the variables. The value will range from -1 (perfect negative) to +1 (perfect positive), and any value +/- 0.6 is regarded as a strong relationship, where 0 indicates a nonexistent relationship.

In the context of this thesis the relationships up for testing are whether or not the independent variables are perceived as important, by the employees of Company X, for the intercultural internal communication in the company [68].

3.4.2 Regression Analysis

The equation of a straight line is what the regression analysis uses as basis for predicting an assumed, suggested or anticipated relationship between a dependent variable and one or several independent variables (Shiu, et al., 2009). The analysis tests to what degree the relationship deviates from the straight line, which independent variables contribute more or less to explaining the dependent variable, how significant that contribution is, plus the consequences of leaving different independent variables out of the equation. The above mentioned information can be drawn from different parts of the analysis. Two of the most important pieces of information are the R Square (R2) and the Adjusted R Square (Adjusted R2) values, where the proportion of the dependent variable's variance explained by the independent variables is measured (Hair, et al., 2014). The difference between the R2 and the Adjusted R2 is not necessarily much, but the Adjusted R2 can take into account if a dataset suffers from a small sample, and will provide a more conservative value. Both values run from 0 to 1, and the closer the value is to 1 the greater explanatory power the variable(s) have. This means that with an R2 at 0.5 the model (the independent variables) explains 50% of the variance in the dependent model, if significant which is expressed in an ANOVA table [68].
The regression analysis can also reveal multicollinearity, which means that the variables correlate too much and is revealed for instance through collinearity diagnostics provided by the analytical software. Outliers, respondents' values that differ a great deal from the rest of the dataset, can also cause trouble for the regression analysis, and according to Pallant (2007) there are several ways of both discover and handle them. She mentions the graphs Normal Probability Plot of

Regression Standardized Residuals and Scatterplot, where the actual outliers will be made visible. She also mentions numerical ways of discovering these outliers, such as the Mahalanobis distance and Cook's distance, where the values have to remain within a given range (Mahalanobis is dependent on the number of independent variables, Cook's should be less than 1.0). With the details of the methodology and the different statistical analyses presented, the next chapter will provide the results of the analyses performed on the data collected [69].

Chapter IV. Research Analytics

4.1. Descriptive analysis

26 employees received the questioner and answered the survey, as all the questions were mandatory the system prohibits the persons to leave a question unanswered.

From the respondents 11 persons were from Iran and 16 persons were from Germany (Diagram 4-1). As the questioner was simple and took little time to complete and also the managers were informed and in charge of filling all the surveys, we received a 100% response rate.

In order to code the nationalities and conduct analysis, the Iranian nationalities were coded into the number "1" and the German nationality was coded into the number "2"
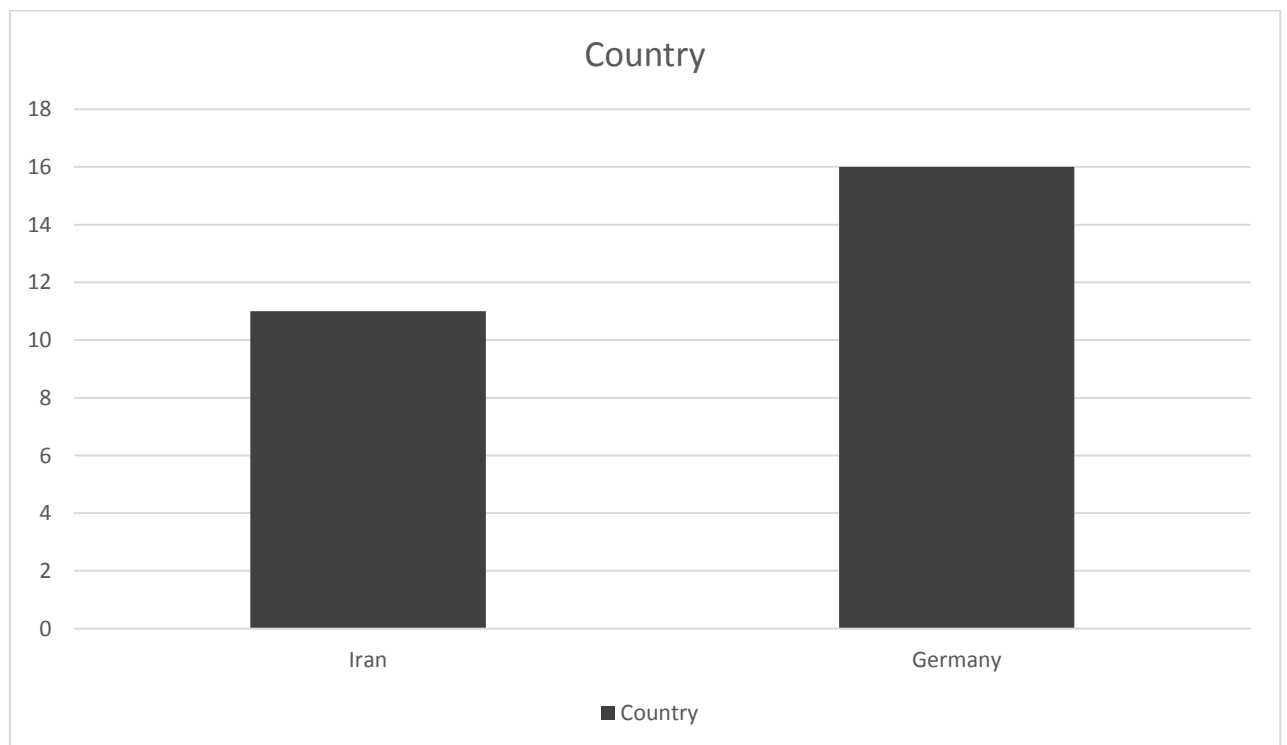
Diagram 4-1 Sample's nationality distribution

Sales

■ Male   ■ Female
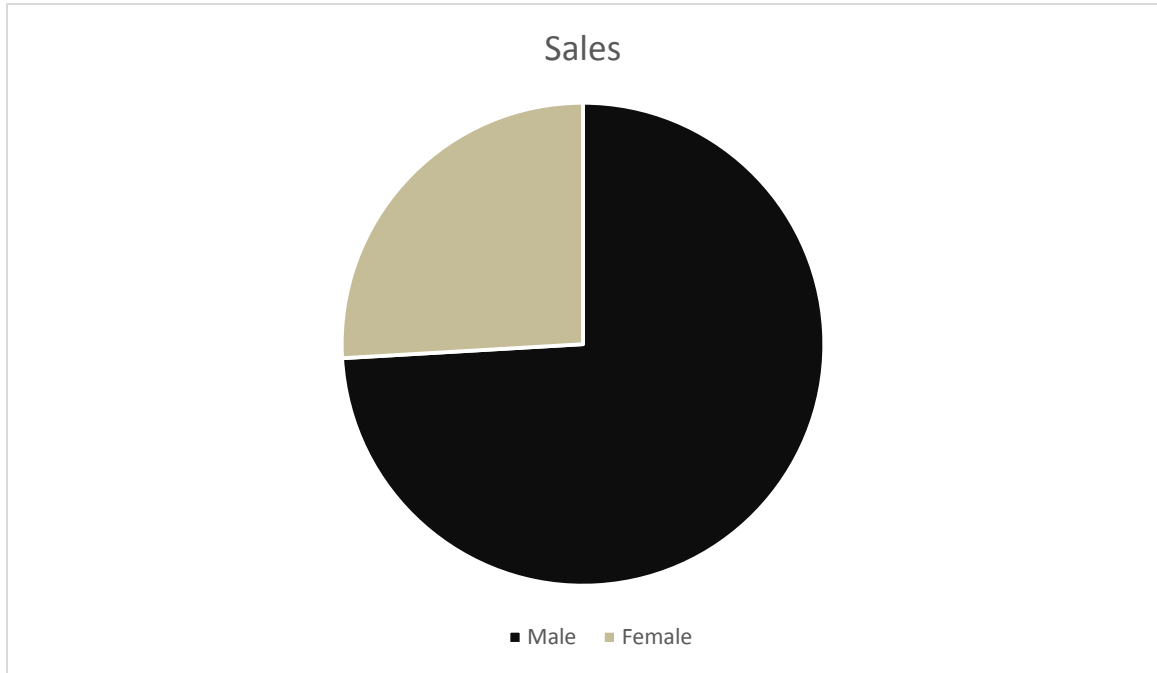
Diagram 4-2 Sample's gender distribution

The Table 4.1 shows a descriptive statistics – mean and standard deviation for each questions of 6 dimensions. The following table is the output of the SPSS software.

Table 4-1 Mean and standard deviation

No.	Questionnaire	Mean	Standard Deviation
Directness			
1	The most important point of the conversation should be stated in the beginning of the face to face conversation.	4.222222	1.571348
2	The messages in the face to face communication has to be clear and direct.	4.555556	1.594744
3	Face to face communication should start in a way so that the receiver immediately knows what the conversation is about.	4.481481	1.258169
Formalness			
4	In face to face communication I prefer formal greetings.	4.185185	1.187498
5	If I engage in a conversation with an unfamiliar person, I expect to be addressed with my surname.	4.333333	1.465656
6	Titles must be respected and used in face to face communication	3.777778	1.314684
Promptness			
7	When someone ask me question, I prefer to take some time before answering so I can formulate an answer.	3.925926	1.245018
8	I prefer to communicate my understanding of the question before answering it in face to face communication.	4.333333	1.30526

9	I like to write down my answers and lines before communicating them.	3.777778	1.547599

Preciseness

10	I dislike using of the jokes, sarcasm and abbreviations in face to face communications, as they could lead to misinterpretation.	3.851852	1.352739
11	In face to face communications I try to be precise as possible.	4.37037	1.681008

Task Relatedness

12	I like conversations which are short and to the point.	4.222222	1.594744
13	When I engage in conversations I concentrate precisely on this activity and do not do other activities simultaneously.	4.555556	1.396645

Relationship Relatedness

14	In start of the conversations I always ask discuss the personal matters with my colleagues.	4.666667	1.677741
15	If I don't know a person very well it's okay if the other person addresses me with my first name.	4.740741	1.755259

Table 4-2 Descriptive statistics output of SPSS software

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Nationality	1.59	.501	27
Gender	.74	.447	27
Directness	4.4198	1.33523	27
Formalness	4.0988	1.10483	27
Promptness	4.0123	1.21064	27
Perciseness	4.1111	1.45664	27
Task Related	4.3889	1.40967	27
Relationship Related	4.7037	1.67710	27

In this study the relationship between independent and dependent variables were measured by using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Correlation analysis measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship among variables.

A positive correlation (+1) means that changes in the independent item result in an identical change in the dependent item. However, if there is a negative correlation (-1) between two variables, it results in a change of opposite direction.

Diagram 4-2 include means, standard deviations and correlations between the variables which are presented. The table is the output of the SPSS software.

Table 4-3 Means, standard deviations and correlations between variables (SPSS output)

Correlations

		Nationality	Gender	Directness	Formalness	Promptness	Perciseness	Task Related	Relationship Related
Nationality	Pearson Correlation	1	.197	-.540**	-.689**	-.541**	-.305	-.121	-.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.323	.004	.000	.004	.122	.547	.953
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.197	1	.018	-.154	.030	.105	.105	.253
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.323		.931	.443	.882	.602	.601	.203
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
Directness	Pearson Correlation	-.540**	.018	1	.663**	.687**	.456*	.244	.161
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.931		.000	.000	.017	.221	.423
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
Formalness	Pearson Correlation	-.689**	-.154	.663**	1	.743**	.682**	.505**	.331
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.443	.000		.000	.000	.007	.091
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
Promptness	Pearson Correlation	-.541**	.030	.687**	.743**	1	.650**	.474*	.428*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.882	.000	.000		.000	.012	.026
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
Perciseness	Pearson Correlation	-.305	.105	.456*	.682**	.650**	1	.858**	.699**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.122	.602	.017	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
Task Related	Pearson Correlation	-.121	.105	.244	.505**	.474*	.858**	1	.787**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.547	.601	.221	.007	.012	.000		.000
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
Relationship Related	Pearson Correlation	-.012	.253	.161	.331	.428*	.699**	.787**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.953	.203	.423	.091	.026	.000	.000	
	N	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.2. Linear regression

A simple linear regression tests and explains relationship between dependent and independent variables. Hence, the linear regression is used in this research to measure the strength of the association between Hall´s concept includes context, time and space (independent variables) and dimensions of communication styles (dependent variables). The results of this analyses are proved by predictive analytics software SPSS - coefficient analyses.

Each relationship is identified based on the value of its significance when the significance is represented by p-value given it the following figures. A p-value which is lower than 0.05 denotes that there is a significant relationship. The significant relationship means that the independent variable has an effect on the dependent

variable. The Beta coefficient (β) indicates the strength of the contribution. It is also important to determine whether the direction of the significant relationship is positive or negative- A positive sign in front of the value indicates a positive way of contribution, whereas a negative sign means a negative contribution.

Hypothesis 1: Face to face communications tend to be more direct in high context cultures than low context cultures in international firms.

Table 4-4 Results of linear regression - directness

Variable	β	P
Culture (context, time, space)	-0.54	0.004

Table 4-3 does not confirms that hypothesis 1 is accepted, culture as it shows that there is a strong relation between directness and culture but the direction is opposite.

Therefore hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Face to face communications tend to be more formal in high context cultures than low context cultures in international firms

Table 4-5 Results of linear regression - formalness

Variable	β	P
Culture (context, time, space)	-0.689	0.00

Table 4-4 indicate that there is a significant relationship between culture and formalness but the direction is opposite.

Therefore hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: Polychronic cultures will show a higher preference for promptness in face to face communication than monochronic cultures.

Table 4-6 Results of linear regression - promptness

Variable	β	P
Culture (context, time, space)	-0.54	0.004

Results in Table 4-5 show that there is significant relationship between culture and promptness but the direction is negative.

Therefore hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Hypothesis 4: Face to face communications tend to be more precise in monochronic cultures than polychronic cultures in international firms.

Table 4-7 Results of linear regression - preciseness

Variable	β	P
Culture (context, time, space)	-0.305	0.012

Table 4-6 indicates that there is relation between culture and preciseness also the direction is correct which indicated that the German culture is more precise than Iranian culture.

Therefore hypothesis 4 is accepted.

Hypothesis 5: High-space cultures will show a higher preference for task-relatedness in face to face communication than low-space cultures.

Table 4-8 Results of linear regression – Task relatedness

Variable	β	P
Culture (context, time, space)	-0.15	0.054

Table 4.7 reveals that these two variables have small coefficiencies with the right direction which indicates that hypothesis 5 is accepted.

Hypothesis 6: Face to face communications tend to be more relationship oriented in low space cultures than high space cultures in international firms.

Table 4-9 Results of linear regression – Relationship relatedness

Variable	β	P
Culture (context, time, space)	-0.012	0.95

Results provided in Table 4-8 show that there is no significant relationship between culture and relationship relatedness.

Therefore hypothesis 6 cannot be accepted.

Performed linear regression shows that five dimensions are related to culture and relationship orientation is not related to culture.

Four out of six hypothesis were rejected because either there were no significant relationship or because the direction of the relationship did not validate the hypothesis.

Chapter V. Research Finding and Limitations

5.1. Conclusion

According to our analysis on different face to face communication dimensions such as the directness, formalness, promptness, preciseness, task relatedness and relationship based which had been derived from previous research can be linked to the Edward Hall's theory of cultural dimensions. Our findings confirmed that the five of the dimensions identified were related to culture and one of the dimensions (relationship based) was not proved to be cultural related.

Our study concluded that people from countries with low context culture tend to be more direct in their face to face communication also our studies showed that they prefer a more formal conversation; which surprisingly did not confirm the prior researches. Moreover, prior studies related low context cultures with a relationship related face to face communication but our study did not confirm the prior researches.

With the globalization of companies and the rising importance of the issue of intercultural communication this study provide an important contribution. The findings of this research can be contributed to the cultural adaption, as cultures communicate with one another they become more relevant. Studies also confirm that with the advancement of technology and globalization the cultural difference have been mitigated. So by comparing this study with the past studies we can conclude that cultural differences in communication has been mitigated.

Most importantly this study suggests that there are still some differences in the face to face communication methods within different cultures.

5.2. Limitations as future recommendations

Although the findings in this thesis were beneficiary but some limitations needs to be put into consideration such as:

1) The selected sample and cases were chosen from two countries, future research can use more countries as cultural representatives which can lead to a more generalized results.

2) The survey of this research was written in English which may have not been the mother language of the people who had filled the survey that can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding due to the poor understanding of the question, future studies can remove this risk by translating the survey questions for the receiving party.

3) In this research the studied samples cultures were perceived to be in accordance with the country of nationality whereas the cultural dimensions of the person who had filled the survey could have been different from his/her nationality.

Appendix 1.

Questioner

Dear Sir/Madam

The following survey was designed to measure the communication styles within international firms. Kindly find the time to answer the questions. Please note that all the fields are mandatory. This survey is only for research purpose and your identity will not be exposed. Please fill the questioner.

My Personal Best Regards,

Nationality:

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Position: Managerial Position ☐ Other than managerial position ☐

1) The most important point of the conversation should be stated in the beginning of the face to face conversation

⭕ ⭕ ⭕ ⭕ ⭕ ⭕ ⭕

Completely Agree   Completely Disagree

2) The messages in the face to face communication has to be clear and direct.

Completely Agree ⭕ ⭕ ⭕ ⭕ ⭕ ⭕ ⭕ Completely Disagree

3) Face to face communication should start in a way so that the receiver immediately knows what the conversation is about.

Completely Agree ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ Completely Disagree

4) In face to face communication I prefer formal greetings.

Completely Agree ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ Completely Disagree

5) If I engage in a conversation with an unfamiliar person, I expect to be addressed with my surname.

Completely Agree ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ Completely Disagree

6) Titles must be respected and used in face to face communication.

Completely Agree ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ Completely Disagree

7) When someone ask me question, I prefer to take some time before answering so I can formulate an answer.

Completely Agree ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ Completely Disagree

8) I prefer to communicate my understanding of the question before answering it in face to face communication.

Completely Agree ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ Completely Disagree

9) I like to write down my answers and lines before communicating them.

Completely Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Completely Disagree

10) I dislike using of the jokes, sarcasm and abbreviations in face to face communications, as they could lead to misinterpretation.

Completely Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Completely Disagree

11) In face to face communications I try to be precise as possible.

Completely Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Completely Disagree

12) I like conversations which are short and to the point.

Completely Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Completely Disagree

13) When I engage in conversations I concentrate precisely on this activity and do not do other activities simultaneously.

Completely Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Completely Disagree

14) In start of the conversations I always ask discuss the personal matters with my colleagues.

Completely Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Completely Disagree

15) If I don't know a person very well it's okay if the other person addresses me with my first name.

Completely Agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Completely Disagree

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