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EXPLORING APPROACHES TO IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF JOB SEEKERS FROM DIFFERENT CULTURAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract
The article examines theoretical and practical aspects of intercultural communication in the process of selecting and involving applicants from various cultural contexts. It analyzes the main barriers and challenges that arise during the interaction of representatives of different cultures, as well as modern effective approaches and methods for overcoming them. Practical cases of leading international and national companies that successfully implement multicultural strategies are presented. recruitment and adaptation of personnel. The results of the study may be useful for HR specialists, recruiters and managers working in multinational companies, as well as researchers in the field of intercultural communications and personnel management.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, multicultural recruiting , communication barriers, cultural models, personnel adaptation, international HR, intercultural management.

Introduction

The transformation of the modern labor market towards internationalization determines the growing need of organizations to attract and integrate specialists from various cultural contexts. At the same time, communication difficulties and differences in the cultural perception of roles, corporate values and communication styles can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the recruitment and adaptation processes of personnel. In this regard, the study and development of effective approaches to optimizing communication with potential employees is becoming highly relevant in both theoretical, methodological and practical aspects.

Intercultural communication, defined as the process of exchanging information between representatives of different cultural groups, involves taking into account not only linguistic aspects, but also the value system, behavioral norms and expectations inherent in each culture. The presence of intercultural differences potentially creates preconditions for misunderstanding, distortion of the semantic load of the transmitted information and, as a consequence, communication failures. In the context of recruiting processes aimed at attracting candidates from different countries and cultural environments, the importance of theoretical models that allow us to analyze and interpret the specifics of intercultural communication increases.

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One of the most influential theoretical constructs in this area is the model of cultural dimensions developed by G. Hofstede . Within the framework of this model, six key parameters are identified that allow us to differentiate cultures:

1. Power distance Distance Index : This parameter reflects the degree of acceptance of hierarchical inequality in society. Cultures with a high power distance are characterized by the recognition of hierarchical structure and authority, while cultures with a low power distance are oriented towards equality and participation.
2. Individualism vs. collectivism: This dimension describes the predominant orientation of a society toward individual or collective interests. Individualistic cultures emphasize independence and personal achievement, while collectivistic cultures emphasize group membership and solidarity.
3. Uncertainty Avoidance Avoidance Index): this parameter characterizes the degree of tolerance for uncertainty and risk. Cultures with a high level of uncertainty avoidance strive for stability, regulation , and avoid risky situations. Cultures with a low level, on the contrary, show flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity.
4. Masculinity – femininity : This dimension differentiates cultures according to the predominant orientation towards achievement, competition (masculinity) or towards quality of life, care and cooperation (femininity).
5. Long-term versus short-term orientation: This dimension reflects the influence of time orientation on individuals' strategic behavior. Long-term-oriented cultures value persistence, frugality, and long-term planning, while short-term-oriented cultures emphasize immediate achievements and quick results.
6. Indulgence vs. Restraint): This dimension reflects the degree to which the expression of emotions and the pursuit of pleasure are acceptable. Indulgent cultures are tolerant of the pursuit of pleasure and self-expression, while reserved cultures are more likely to restrict emotional expression [1].

In addition to the above-described model of cultural dimensions by G. Hofstede , it is necessary to note the significance of the concept of contextuality proposed by E. Hall, who differentiates cultures into high-context and low-context [2].

In high-context cultures, such as Korea, the Arab world, and Japan, implicit communication is prevalent, based on the use of nonverbal means of communication, subtexts, and traditional norms. The communication process is built on trusting relationships, and much information remains unspoken. In contrast, low-context cultures, such as the United States, Germany, and Switzerland, are characterized by the prevalence of clear and direct verbal messages.

It is also worth noting the significant contribution of F. Trompenaars and C. Hampden -Turner to the development of the theory of intercultural communication. They identified seven cultural dilemmas, including universalism versus particularism, neutrality versus emotionality, specificity versus diffusion and others, which allow for a deeper understanding of the behavioral characteristics of representatives of different cultures in the business and work environment [3].

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The theoretical foundations of intercultural communication form the basis for analyzing and interpreting differences in the expectations and behavioral strategies of job seekers from different cultural contexts. In particular, self-presentation style , perception of leadership, forms of expression of motivation, and expectations from the workplace can vary significantly depending on the cultural background of the individual. Therefore, for HR specialists operating in an international environment, possession of the knowledge and tools necessary for building effective intercultural interaction is critically important.

Communication with applicants representing different cultural groups is associated with a number of objective difficulties caused by differences in linguistic features, value orientations, communication styles and expectations regarding labor relations. These differences can act as significant obstacles in the processes of recruitment , adaptation and retention of personnel in an international and multicultural environment.

The main barriers to intercultural communication include:

1. Linguistic barrier. Despite the use of a common language (for example, English as the language of business communication), misunderstandings may arise due to differences in accents, idiomatic expressions, terminology and language proficiency.
2. Semantic and pragmatic differences. Lexical units may have different connotations in different cultures. For example, straightforwardness in communication may be interpreted as a manifestation of honesty in some cultures and as rudeness in others.
3. Nonverbal differences. Gestures, facial expressions, proxemics and eye contact can be interpreted differently in different cultures.
4. Differences in time perception. Monochronic cultures are characterized by a linear perception of time and an emphasis on punctuality, while polychronic cultures exhibit a more flexible attitude toward time [4].
5. Cultural differences in self-presentation . Job seekers from collectivist cultures may avoid overt self-promotion, considering it unethical, in contrast to representatives of individualistic societies.
6. Differences in understanding hierarchy and status. Some cultures have a strict hierarchical structure, which implies a formal style of communication, while in others a horizontal model of interaction prevails.
7. Psychological barriers. Stereotypes, prejudices, ethnocentrism and fear of making mistakes can limit open and productive communication.

To systematize the obstacles considered, we present a typology of key barriers in communication with multicultural applicants, their practical manifestations and potential consequences in Table 1.

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Table 1 - Typology of the main intercultural barriers in communication with applicants

Barrier category	Manifestations in hiring practices	Possible consequences
Language	Misunderstanding of instructions, difficulties during interviews	Decrease in the objectivity of candidate assessment
Semantic	Various interpretations of concepts, terms	Misinterpretation of motivation
Non-verbal	Misunderstood gestures, facial expressions, distance	Communication failures, discomfort
Temporal	Differences in approach to deadlines, punctuality	Conflicts in expectations
Cognitive -psychological	Stereotypes, fear of "doing it wrong"	Withdrawal, avoidance of dialogue
Cultural and value-based	Differences in expectations, norms of behavior and feedback	Dissatisfaction, staff turnover

Based on the data presented, it should be concluded that effective intercultural communication requires taking into account a wide range of factors, from linguistic nuances to deep value differences. These communication barriers are of particular importance in the context of personnel selection, since an incorrect interpretation of a candidate's behavior or statements can lead to the omission of a promising specialist or to an erroneous personnel decision.

The practical activities of specialists in the field of human resource management (HR) face the following challenges:

1. Standardization of processes without taking into account cultural specifics: the use of standardized procedures for the selection and assessment of personnel may be ineffective when working with candidates representing different cultures [5].
2. Insufficient intercultural competence of recruiters: the lack of specialized training in intercultural communication among specialists involved in recruitment can lead to a superficial assessment of candidates and the occurrence of communication errors.
3. soft skills skills) in candidates from different cultures: existing assessment methods may not be adapted to identify and assess competencies that are relevant in a multicultural context.
4. Unconscious biases (unconscious bias) in interviewers: subjective prejudices that exist at a subconscious level can influence decision making during the candidate selection process [6].

To ensure effective communication with candidates representing different cultures, it is necessary to take into account the cultural context, develop intercultural competence among employees involved in the selection process, and adapt assessment and interaction tools.

In the context of increasing ethnocultural diversity in the labor market, there is a growing need to develop and implement strategies aimed not only at ensuring correct communication with representatives of various cultural groups, but also at their active involvement in the organization's activities. Effective approaches are based on the principles of intercultural competence, inclusiveness and adaptability of personnel processes.

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1. Developing intercultural competence of recruiters and HR managers. Intercultural competence is defined as the ability to effectively and adequately interact with individuals representing different cultural systems. It includes cognitive (knowledge of cultures), affective (openness, tolerance) and behavioral (flexibility in communication) components. Practical measures: inclusion of modules on intercultural communication in corporate training programs; conducting trainings aimed at identifying and eliminating unconscious biases (bias-awareness) training).
2. Adapting recruitment processes to the cultural context. Successful international companies are implementing flexible recruitment practices, including the use of competency-based interviews taking into account cultural specifics, adapting the wording in job descriptions and interview scripts, and providing candidates with information about the corporate culture. Example: when hiring foreign specialists, Japanese corporations focus not only on professional skills, but also on readiness for teamwork and respect for hierarchy, which are important values of Japanese culture [7].
3. Inclusive communication strategies. The use of inclusive language, the use of visual and culturally neutral materials, and the provision of feedback in accessible language help to reduce cultural barriers and create a sense of inclusion among candidates [8]. Tools: multilingual interfaces in automated recruiting systems (ATS); online manuals with a detailed description of recruitment procedures; the institution of "cultural adapters" (mentors) for applicants [9].
4. Use technology and media platforms with cultural sensitivity. Modern technologies provide the ability to adapt communications to the specific cultures. For example, automated chatbots can use different language models and scripts depending on the user's cultural background. The HireVue platform uses adaptive interview design, changing the style of questions and the format of information presentation depending on the region and target audience.
5. Feedback and engagement at the selection stage. Providing transparent, timely and empathetic feedback at all stages of the selection process increases the candidate's level of trust in the company and demonstrates respect for his or her cultural identity [10]. Recommendation: conducting regular candidate surveys (candidate experience surveys) with subsequent analysis of the obtained data taking into account their cultural profile.

In order to successfully integrate multicultural staff, international and national companies develop their own communication and engagement strategies adapted to the cultural characteristics of the target audience. Below we will look at examples of organizations implementing effective models of interaction with candidates from various cultural contexts.

Google is demonstrating a systematic approach to building its recruiting processes with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). As part of this strategy , the following measures have been implemented: introducing training for all interviewers aimed at combating cognitive and cultural biases; using structured interviews and standardized assessment sheets to minimize the impact of cultural differences; launching the Google Hire ", where the interface and structure of information delivery are localized for specific regions. According to the results of Google's internal DEI report for 2021, these activities led to a 23% increase in the acceptance rate of job offers by candidates from Latin America and Asia.

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Nestlé has implemented an international internship program called “ Nestnship ,” which places interns from different countries in a cross-cultural environment. The program uses cultural adaptation tools such as assigning “cultural mentors” to help interns adapt to the norms of the host country, online modules on the basics of the host country’s business culture, and providing feedback based on differences in communication styles (direct/indirect, individualism/collectivism). According to Nestlé Global HR Report 2020, 89% of program participants noted an increase in motivation for long-term work in the company's international structure.

National holding " Samruk-Kazyna " (Kazakhstan) has introduced a trilingual recruitment system , providing the ability to interact in Kazakh, Russian and English, and also provided the opportunity to receive online consultations with an HR consultant in the selected language. Job descriptions are adapted to the cultural characteristics of the region, a feedback system is automated after each selection stage with an explanation of the reasons for refusal, and candidates are provided with an information booklet about the company's corporate culture. According to the holding's internal report for 2023, the implementation of these measures led to a 35% increase in the number of applications from representatives of ethnic and linguistic minorities.

Unilever uses a game-based approach to assessing candidates (gamified assessment) and video interviews using artificial intelligence (AI) for assessment, which include country/region adaptation settings. AI analyzes facial expressions, intonation and speech patterns within acceptable cultural parameters, and candidates undergo adaptation simulations that model typical situations that arise during work at the company. According to Unilever HR Analytics for 2022, the implementation of this approach increased the level of satisfaction with the selection process among international candidates to 92%.

KPMG is implementing the Global Mobility ”, within the framework of which mandatory intercultural trainings and adaptation sessions are organized during international rotation of employees, including online courses on the basics of business ethics and communication in the destination region, support through “ buddy system » (attachment of a mentor employee from the host country) and the application of the Hofstede methodology Insights for Building Communication Protocols. According to KPMG Diversity Report for 2021, the implementation of this program made it possible to reduce staff turnover among foreign employees by 18% in the first year.

The presented examples demonstrate that a comprehensive approach to building multicultural communication, including the use of technological solutions and cultural support mechanisms, can significantly increase the level of trust, motivation and involvement of applicants.

The development of intercultural communication in the field of human resource management is not just a current trend, but a necessary condition for ensuring the successful and sustainable development of companies operating in an international environment. The introduction of approaches that take into account cultural characteristics into recruiting processes helps to reduce staff turnover, increase staff engagement and create an inclusive corporate culture.

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