

2nd International Tourism CONFERENCE

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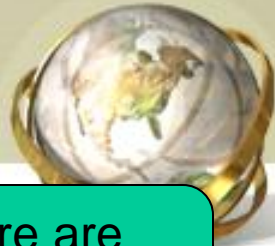


Missteps in the Dance of Differences:
Problems and Potentials
in Cross Cultural Job Interviews

Arlene M. Garrick

OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- Purpose
- Cross-cultural Awareness
- Cross-cultural differences
- Proposed Questions
- Significance
- Expected results
- Conclusion



Captain where are we headed?





*“In culture there is no
shortcut to the business
world”*

*~ Gert Jan Hofstede
Cultures and Organizations p20*

Purpose



- **Identify how cultural differences can influence the interview process within organizations.**
- **Highlight potential cross- cultural misunderstanding.**
- **Assist HR personnel refine their interviewing techniques in cross-cultural interviewing.**
- **Discoveries –uncovering hidden assumptions in self.**

Culture



Culture is an integrated pattern of human behavior which includes thought, communication, languages, beliefs, values, practices, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting, roles, relationships, and expected behaviors of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group; the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations.

~ National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC)

Introduction



- **Immigrants in Canadian society increasing**

- Immigrant professionals face unique challenges as they interview for jobs. Language and cultural differences can make it more difficult to understand these applicants.
 - **Knowledge of cultural differences is critical**
 - **Recruiting the right employee is essential**
 - **Poor interview practices stem from interviewers' bias, halo effect**
 - **Results in a complex, stressful and costly undertaking**

Cross-cultural awareness



- **The success of an organization depends to a great extent on its human capital.**
- **Therefore, recruiters need to be aware of the cultural forces at play during an interview.**
- **Without an understanding of cultural idiosyncrasies, managers are likely to experience difficulty in job interviewing.**

Cross-cultural differences



- **Factors affecting cross-cultural differences**
 - **Language**
 - **Environment & technology**
 - **Social organization**
 - **Contexting & face saving**
 - **Authority conception (Hofstede's Power Distance)**
 - **Nonverbal communication**
 - **Temporal concept**



Interviewer ask questions

Applicant responds



Both interviewer and applicant must demonstrate that they understand each other's **WORDS** and **MEANING**

Intonation



“Intonation is the music of the language. In English, we use tone to signal emotion, questioning, and parts of the sentence among many other things. It’s important to recognize the meaning behind the tones used in everyday speech, and to be able to use them so that there are no misunderstandings between the speaker and the listener. It is generally true that mistakes in pronunciation of sounds can be overlooked, but mistakes in intonation make a lasting impression.”

~Kristin Liljegren Maurice, Ph.D., Linguistics

http://www.communicationcoach.ca/pb/wp_6accab09.html?0.5

Scenario 1



A cross cultural interview is taking place between an English interviewer and a German interviewee. Early in the interview, the interviewer starts to make assumptions regarding the person's character, personality, and suitability for the post based on misperceptions of the German candidate appearance, behaviour, and communication style.

He is very rigid and inflexible. I don't think his character and personality are suitable for the post

If the interviewer had been more cross culturally aware, then such assumptions would not have been made.

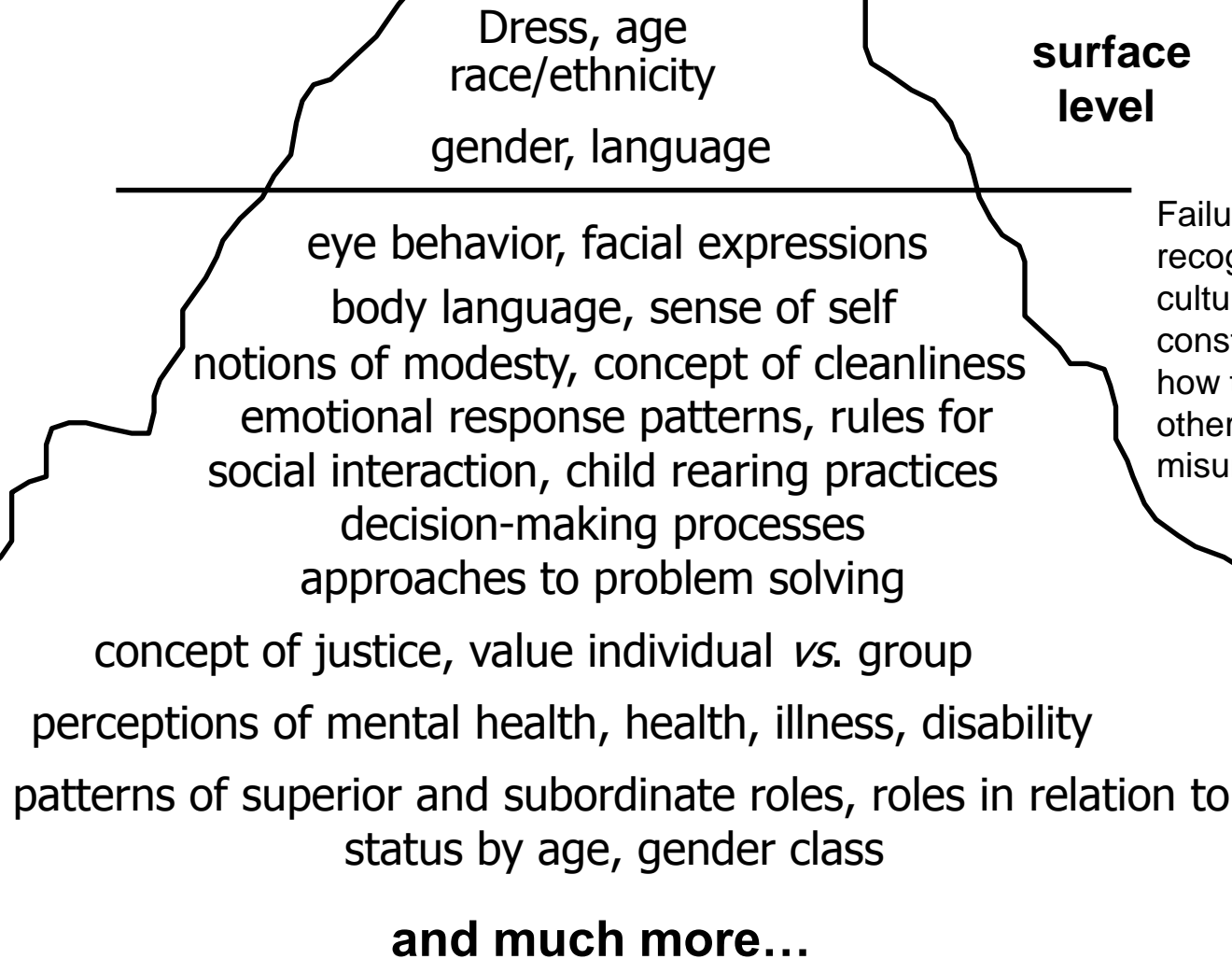
English interviewer



German interviewee

Very high-brow, blunt in conversation, formal and academic in demeanor

The Iceberg Concept of Culture



Failure to understand and recognise these parts of culture and the layers that constitute them, as well as how they influence each other is the main reason misunderstandings occur.

Areas of Cultural differences



"Typical" Canadian Corporate culture	Alternate culture	Impact of differences of Difference
Individual is valued; Independence and decision-making are important. Individual recognition is expected and appreciated. Privacy is honoured.	Group is considered more important than the effort or recognition of the individual.	Interviewee will often use "we" instead of "I" when discussing accomplishments. Interviewers are sometimes relaxed and ask the candidate about their specific role.
Informality is the norm; almost everyone uses first names. There is greater equality between societal levels, including government, organizations, and even within families. Cooperative interaction is reinforced across power levels and creates a more stable cultural environment.	Permission is needed to use first names; in some cases use of first names is not the norm or acceptable	Interviewee may be perceived as stiff, or not fun to be around. However, he or she may be a fun-loving person who believes it is important to be formal in interviews.
Each person is expected to have an opinion and express it freely. The right to challenge authority is highly valued. Corporate Value	Deference is given to persons in power or authority. Authority is highly respected and rarely challenged.	Interviewee may find it difficult to give examples of times that they challenged authority (particularly if to do so is not a part of the culture).
Direct communication is expected; saying what's on your mind is important.	Directness and open criticism are considered, offensive, and people often use intermediaries to approach others.	An interviewee's examples of criticizing or correcting others may not be in line with the directness generally expected in the Canadian workplace.
Competition and ambition stimulates high performance.	Harmony influences communication and personal ambition is frowned upon.	Interviewees come across as passive, relative to their Canadian counterparts. However, it is important to remember that the focus on harmony is likely to have a positive impact on team productivity and overall success.
People are measured by what they do.	People are measured by family and origin.	In other countries (especially European countries) applicants are used to being evaluated on their personal and professional qualities. Therefore, when questions are asked about accomplishments, personal accomplishments may be shared. Interviewers can specify that they are looking for professional examples.

Geert Hofstede™ Cultural Dimensions

http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_canada.shtml

Proposed Research Questions



- **Do the cultural values and expectations of HR managers influence their decisions in cross-cultural interviews?**
- **Are HR Managers able to identify or are aware of how culture can influence the interview process?**
- **Do HR managers recognize misunderstandings when they occur?**

Significance



- **Assist HR staff, management and interviewers in leisure and tourism organizations**
 - Go beyond cultural assumptions to ensure effective recruitment is taking place
- **Help readers understand the challenges faced in attracting desirable applicants;**
- **Highlight how cultural differences influence the effectiveness of recruitment practices in interviewing , and**
- **Help HR Personnel be aware of their personal biases and prejudices to gain greater objectivity**

EXPECTED RESULTS



- **Provoke awareness and understanding of cross-cultural difference**
- **Identify existing cultural misconceptions**
- **Create greater sensitivity to multiculturalism in recruitment and hiring practices**
- **Develop strategies to ameliorate misunderstandings/misconceptions of cultural differences in recruiting and hiring in the form of:**
 - **Provide sensitivity training (e.g. mock cross-cultural interviews and scenario team role playing)**
 - **Review recruitment procedures and issues of cultural profiling**

Conclusion



- **The job interview has become like a dance - a series of choreographed moves that interviewers know and expect interviewees involved with the process to know. Interviews can be likened to a conga line characterized by predictable questions, a selection of acceptable answers and an outcome based on how well the dance was performed. However, cultural differences surface when an interview applicant comes from a culture that only does the soca and has never seen a conga line.**



Culture is a thin but very important veneer that you must be careful not to scratch. People from different cultures are basically the same and respond in the same way. However, make sure that you understand their basic customs and show an interest and willingness to learn the differences between your cultures.

~ Mike Wills



Thank
You !

Questions



"Did you skip over the interesting parts of your talk on purpose?"

