

**Exploring Intercultural Communication as a Means to Promote Inclusivity  
in Diverse Organisations: A Study in a South African University**

Maria Mushaathoni  
Tshwane University of Technology  
South Africa

### **Abstract**

The paper aimed at exploring intercultural communication as a means to promote inclusivity in diverse organisations. The study adopted a case study design with qualitative data. A semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions was utilised as the main data collection tool from a sample of ten purposively selected professionals from the departments responsible for transformation, employment equity, and diversity; human resources development, corporate affairs, and marketing. The study's findings showed that the university lacked a well-thought-out action plan for taking a deliberate approach to intercultural communication as a means to promote inclusivity. In particular, the staff felt that there was no deliberate attempt to guarantee that intercultural communication was handled uniformly throughout the university and that communication strategy documents did not offer direction regarding how successful intercultural communication could take place. The university's current practices in relation to cultural awareness and training initiatives only focus on cultural diversity and should be amplified to include raising awareness of how intercultural communication can unify people who differ culturally towards a common purpose. Furthermore, the university should consider expanding its current cultural diversity training programmes to include training on intercultural communication dimensions. Cultural awareness campaigns in the form of information fliers, cultural events, and cultural training sessions should form an integral part of intercultural communication enhancement initiatives.

*Keywords:* culture, diversity, inclusivity, cultural diversity, intercultural communication, intercultural communication competence, intercultural communication enhancement, internal communication

Cultural diversity has an impact on many aspects of an employee's work environment, including how well they get along with co-workers who are different from them (Hellriegel et al., 2013; Smit et al., 2011). Organisational managers and executives must acknowledge that their workforce comprises culturally diverse groups and that employee cultures affect communication. People's behaviour is influenced by their diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perceptions, which are evident in how they interact and communicate with each other (Penceliah, 2008; Nyathi-Saleshando, 2011).

Therefore, differences in cultures can lead to misunderstandings and consequently ineffective communication. According to Roy and colleagues (2016), misunderstandings occur in intercultural communication simply because people have different perceptions and interpretations of the same information. According to Green and colleagues (2018), perception is more of a process in which each individual creates mental images. Green and colleagues (2018) further explain that perceptions drive communication decisions and understanding this process helps us to avoid common perceptual problems. Roy and colleagues (2016) argue that individual perceptions and cross-cultural communication are crucially shaped by culture. In particular, they are shaped by culturally ingrained and infused beliefs, values, media, worldviews, and language.

Since participants in intercultural communication come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, cooperation is necessary for communication to be effective between all employees (Penceliah, 2008; Sadri & Flammia, 2011). Therefore, the significance of successful intercultural communication inside organisations should not be understated because it influences the organisation's goals and significantly affects how well it functions. Culturally diverse organisations may struggle to function properly without effective communication. (Flammia, 2011). This emphasises the significance of a strategic and continuous effort to enhance intercultural communication.

Organisations should foster a culture where work-related plans, work instructions, issues, opinions, thoughts, and ideas are shared through effective communication in light of the knowledge that employees use communication to carry out their jobs. (Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014; Hellriegel et al., 2013). It is of this view that an effective intercultural communication approach is important if everyone involved understands the goals and desired outcomes and can work towards the successful execution of plans and tasks.

Organisations that manage intercultural communication benefit from such an approach. Managing intercultural communication, including the understanding that cultural diversity has a communicative purpose, helps culturally diverse organisations to improve intercultural communication competence, which is a requirement for employees from various cultural backgrounds to work together to achieve a common purpose (Gudykunst, 2005; Sadri & Flammia, 2011). In order for organisations to respond to the challenges of intercultural communication, they must recognise the communication difficulties and needs of employees. Hence the recognition and appreciation of cultural differences is the departure point of working

towards enhancing intercultural communication thereby creating inclusivity within diverse organisations.

The university's existing strategy for dealing with intercultural communication challenges does not support the uniform, concentrated, and coordinated strengthening of intercultural communication skills. Turning our attention to barriers of intercultural communication, Sadri and Flammia (2011) show how encounter contexts can greatly impact whether or not the encounter results in the development of favourable attitudes towards people from different cultural backgrounds. A preliminary review of the university's strategic and policy documents, as reported reveals that the university seems to lack a uniform intercultural communication enhancement approach, which is necessary for its employees to clearly understand what the institutional strategic goals and desired outcomes are so that they can work to achieve them. It is maintained that effective intercultural communication facilitates the achievement of predetermined goals and desired outcomes. The perceived absence of a common approach to issues of intercultural communication is, for the purpose of this study, considered to be a less-than-ideal practice for the enhancement of intercultural communication to promote employees' inclusivity, and is unlikely to help the university strategically and continuously improve intercultural communication competence of its culturally diverse employees. The perceived gap in the university's current approach to intercultural communication issues calls for a different approach that could enhance intercultural communication so that employees from different cultural backgrounds could develop their intercultural communication skills and ultimately help the university succeed.

By using a strategy appropriate to the university's distinctive and culturally diverse environment, the discovered intercultural communication deficit might be addressed. To start closing the gap, it may be necessary to look into the presumptions driving suggestions for improving intercultural communication within an organisation with diverse employees. This study is therefore desirable to extend knowledge on how effective intercultural communication promotes inclusivity in the workplace. Consequently, the paper sought to find answers to the following research question, *How does effective intercultural communication promote inclusivity in the diverse organisation?*

## **Literature Review**

### **The Impact of Culture on the Intercultural Communication Environment**

Culture, as a whole, consists of a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour shared by members of a social unit. In the context of internal communication, it is assumed that each culture encourages a particular communication style, has the power to shape perception, and is regarded as the glue that bonds organisation members together (Hartnell, Ou, & Kinicki, 2011; Reisinger & Turner: 2012). As propounded, culture has an impact on behaviour and communication. Accordingly, culture and communication are inseparable, as culture is the foundation of communication this is more prevalent when communication occurs between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. When different cultures are involved,

communication practices vary. It is indispensable for individuals to understand cultural differences, as culture tells us how to interpret the behaviour of others, including how to communicate effectively with individuals from other cultural backgrounds (Schmitz, 2012).

It is important to mention that there are different levels of culture, namely, 1) *National culture*, the set of norms, behaviours, beliefs, and customs that exist among the population of a sovereign nation; 2) *Business culture*, which represents the working style, accepted norms, values, and beliefs of the sector within which an organisation operates; 3) *Organisational culture*, which is a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs, which govern how individuals behave in organisations; and 4) *Occupational culture*, which encompasses associated values, norms, and characteristics of members of a particular occupational group (Westaby, Fowler, & Philips, 2020). Whatever cultural environment surrounds people helps to shape and form their attitudes, behaviour and readiness to respond to intercultural encounters (see Samovar & Porter, 2007). The university, for instance, is characterised by values, norms, and characteristics that can be understood to be the foundation upon which its intercultural communication practices should be based.

In order to effectively improve intercultural communication, all university staff members must be sensitive to the values, conventions, and traits that are likely to affect the institution's communication style. When workers switch from one cultural context and communication style to another, they must comprehend the underlying meaning of culture (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009; Schmitz, 2012). Gill and Orgad (2015) assert that cultural aspects show how the group sees its own social system. In order to comprehend what dominant ideas, values, norms, and traits are being ingrained in the way communication occurs in a specific social situation, people must be able to recognise the factors that make up a particular culture.

Mushaathoni (2021) avers that though there might be more similarities than differences regarding cultural elements among the university employees, and despite the many common attributes employees share, there still exist cultural differences. As elucidated cultural differences also exist within a single race, language group, religious group, or nationality; people are also differentiated by age, gender, socio-economic status, education, and exposure to other cultures (ibid). Furthermore, (1) cultures have internal variations, and cultural awareness varies among individuals; (2) one's own sense of cultural identity is not always evident until you encounter another culture; (3) cultures continuously evolve; and (4) understanding another culture is a continuous process (Kagawa-Singer et al., 2010; Samovar & Porter, 2007). It is imperative that decision-makers at the university have a sense of these dynamics of culture, so that they ensure that appropriate measures that are aimed at enhancement of intercultural communication and improvement of intercultural communication competence are in place.

It is important to stress that each generation passes on its culture to the following one and that rituals, myths, and symbolism all serve to continually reinforce a particular culture. When it comes to organisations, culture has a tremendous impact on how people think, act, and most importantly, how they view others. Given the impact culture has on communication, it becomes

imperative for organisations to recognise that culture teaches significant rules, rituals, and procedures that are essential for interaction among employees.

### **The Process of Transformation to a Competent Intercultural Communicator**

Compelling intercultural communicators are individuals who are (1) motivated, (2) possess a wealth of knowledge to draw from, (3) have communication skills, and (4) have good moral character – qualities that set them apart from others in the field and help them choose the most suitable path. Based on the criteria used in this paper, these attributes rank as the most crucial fundamental prerequisites or facilitators of intercultural communication.

#### ***Motivation***

Motivation, as it relates to intercultural communication competence, means that, as a communicator, someone wants to interact with people from cultures different to their own, and for that to happen successfully, they must desire to improve their ability to communicate effectively across cultures. Feelings, intentions and actions are conditions that motivate or are more likely to lead to an attitude conducive to individuals having a desire to become competent intercultural communicators. *Feelings* are the emotional states that are experienced when communicating with someone from a different culture. *Intentions* guide choices in a particular intercultural interaction – the goals, plans, objectives and desires that focus and direct behaviour. *Actions* are the actual performance of behaviours that are regarded as appropriate and effective during intercultural communication encounters. If people allow feelings of anxiety, ethnocentrism and prejudice to control their actions, for example, they obviously lack the motivation necessary to be effective communicators. Instead, individuals need to be committed to the entire communication process. For employees in a culturally diverse organisation to become competent intercultural communicators, they need to have positive feelings about the process of personal transformation, and have intentions to transform and act in a manner that reflects the desire to transform. It can, therefore, be concluded that motivation plays an important role as an intercultural communication enabler for employees to become competent intercultural communicators (Kiss, 2008; Samovar et al., 2012).

#### ***Knowledge***

Knowledge relates to the cognitive aspect of intercultural communication competence advanced by Kim (2006). The *cognitive* aspect of intercultural communication competence refers to the process by which people acquire knowledge that allows them to function successfully and interact meaningfully with one another (Kim, 2002; Vevea, 2011). For someone to interact meaningfully across cultures requires a fund of knowledge about cultures – other people's and one's own culture – and the context and the norms of appropriateness that operate in specific cultures (Samovar et al., 2012). Without such knowledge, it is unlikely that people will be able to select behaviours that are appropriate and enable them to achieve intercultural communication objectives. Penceliah (2008) mentions that knowledge of culture and of fundamental principles of communication are essential propositions of intercultural

interactions. Therefore, if we would like to communicate effectively, it becomes necessary for us to know what culture is, how cultures vary and how culture affects behaviour. This highlights that the kinds of knowledge that are essential in intercultural communication include culture-general and culture-specific information (Kiss, 2008). For organisations, knowledge of different cultural perspectives gives employees a broader understanding that different cultures have different customs, standards, social norms and thought patterns, which is essential for people to become competent intercultural communicators. Knowledge about cultures is, therefore, considered an aspect that is likely to make employees more receptive to initiatives that are intended to make them become competent intercultural communicators.

### ***Skills***

Skills, in the context of this study, refer to skills required to communicate effectively with people of other cultures, which Kim (2006) refers to as the *behavioural* aspect of intercultural communication competence. Skills are displayed by intercultural effectiveness, which refers to the cultivation of communication skills to accomplish specific goals; this is the ability to recognise communication rules, meet the contextual requirements of those rules and recognise the rules in different contexts. The behavioural skills needed for reaching intercultural effectiveness include language ability, behavioural flexibility, interaction management, identity maintenance and relationship cultivation (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Skills are, therefore, the actual applications of specific acts that enable people to accomplish their intercultural communication competence goals; skills are goal directed, because they must be designed to accomplish something (Jandt, 2013; Samovar et al., 2012). Skills are needed to adapt to the rules of intercultural communication that are appropriate to organisational culture. Employees need to have the ability to recognise communication rules, meet the contextual requirements of those rules and recognise the rules in different contexts, as these are the skills needed for individuals to improve their intercultural communication competence (see Kim, 2006; Samovar et al., 2012). It is assumed that gaining skills in effective intercultural communication can minimise intercultural communication conflicts and make it possible for employees to become competent intercultural communicators.

### ***Character***

Character relates to the ability to understand, respect and appreciate cultural differences, and could be referred to as the sum total of a person's choices in an intercultural interaction, which Kim (2002) refers to as affective aspects of intercultural communication competence. The key is how someone acts out choices when they interact with people of other cultures, as these choices indicate character attributes, such as trustworthiness, integrity, honour, altruism, sincerity and goodwill. A valid measuring instrument of intercultural sensitivity, based on these elements, was developed by Littlejohn and Foss (2009). Littlejohn and Foss measure intercultural sensitivity by, amongst others, examining people's open-mindedness concerning the differences they encounter in other cultures, their flexibility concerning behaving in unfamiliar cultures, and understanding of different ways they can behave, depending on the environment in which they find themselves.

As far as intercultural communication in the context of an organisation is concerned, employees need to have the ability to be flexible and to speak the language/s of communication used in their respective organisations. As communication is interactive, an essential influence on its effectiveness is people's ability to understand, respect and appreciate culture varieties, including their relationships with others. Employees should continuously attempt to understand the ways communication varies across cultures, and apply these understandings to enhance relationships, despite differences (Samovar et al., 2012). So, managing cultural differences such that employees become aware of and become open-minded about character attributes that influence intercultural communication, has the likelihood of preparing employees to respond positively to endeavours that seek to improve their intercultural communication competences.

It is clear that the focus of the attributes advanced by both Kim (2006) and Samovar and colleagues (2012) can be referred to as intercultural communication enablers or co-requisites, which capture attributes employees require in order for them to improve their intercultural communication competence. Accordingly, the discussion in this section shows that employees in culturally diverse organisations require the following competences to become competent intercultural communicators and the ability to accommodate each other:

- The ability to understand, respect and appreciate cultural differences.
- The ability to change behaviour and act in a way consistent with the cultural environment in which people find themselves.
- Possession of requisite cognitive information about different cultures, including one's own.
- The desire to improve the ability to effectively communicate across cultures.

To sum up the discussion in this section, motivation, knowledge, skills and character are distinguished as intercultural communication competence enablers or co-requisites, which are important for employees in a culturally diverse organisation, to communicate meaningfully across cultures. Motivation is considered to be at the root of an employee's desire to improve intercultural communication competence. It is maintained by this study that, if an employee is not motivated to improve intercultural communication competence, the other three attributes do not really matter. The pivotal conclusion is that motivation and other enablers/co-requisites can improve intercultural communication competence, promote inclusivity and facilitate achievement of organisational success. Doing so requires culturally diverse organisations to invest in ensuring that employees are motivated to become competent intercultural communicators, and use motivation as the foundation upon which to base the other attributes.

### **Theories of Intercultural Communication Adaptation**

The guiding theories of adaptation are regarded as a guiding principle in relation to intercultural communication. The purpose of this section is to explain the meaning, nature, and challenges of intercultural communication adaptation, to help the researcher to understand and determine the importance of employees adapting to one another coming from different cultural



background and how this adaptation will assist them in promoting inclusivity amongst individuals.

### ***Intercultural Adaptation Contextualised***

It is essential to start by indicating that words, such as *assimilation*, *adjustment*, *acculturation*, and even *coping*, are used by different sources interchangeably to describe how individuals respond to their experiences of cultures other than their own, as all these terms refer to how people from one culture react to prolonged contact with those of another culture (Lustig, Koester, & Halualani, 2018). For Gudykunst (2005), intercultural adaptation is the process of change over time that takes place within individuals who have completed their primary socialisation process in one culture and then come into continuous and prolonged first-hand contact with another, unfamiliar culture. Intercultural adaptation is also considered as an expansion of one's worldview to include behaviour and values appropriate to the host or dominant culture (Bennett, 2005; Patel, Li, & Sooknanan, 2011). This perspective includes physical, biological and social changes in people who are in the process of adapting to a new environment. Lustig and colleagues (2018) and Kim (2006) define intercultural adaptation as the process by which people establish and maintain relatively stable, helpful and mutually shared relationships with others upon relocating to an unfamiliar setting.

Regarding how individuals adapt, Martin and Nakayama (2004) argue that characteristics, including age, gender, preparation level and expectations, can influence how well they adapt. Younger people may have an easier time adapting, because they are less fixed in their ideas, beliefs and identities. In comparison, older people may have more trouble adapting, because they are less flexible. In pursuit of assisting employees to respond to their experiences in cultures different to their own, organisations must do so with due consideration of the characteristics of all their employees, including recognising and acknowledging how each characteristic contributes to the manner in which individuals adapt to cultures that differ from their own.

The intercultural adaptation operational definition provided above was approached from a communication orientation, considering that enhancement of intercultural communication is the focus of the study. Consistent with the operational definition provided, and in spite of the culturally diverse nature of organisations, it is argued in this study that, from a communication point of reference, intercultural adaptation reduces cultural distance and increases intercultural communication competence. Central to the argument is acknowledging a need for employees in culturally diverse organisations to respond to their experiences in a manner conducive to them adapting to a new way of communicating and improve their intercultural communication competence.

### **Theories of Intercultural Communication Adaptation**

The section will now move on to the analysis and contextualisation of theories that explain adaptation in the context of intercultural communication, to describe the way individuals respond to their experiences in cultures other than their own.

The Communication Adaptation Theory (CAT), Intercultural Adaptation Theory (IAT) and Co-Cultural Theory (CCT) are, for the purpose of this study, considered to be theories that explain adaptation in the context of intercultural communication. Theories of intercultural communication adaptation provide a wide range of frameworks aimed at describing the way in which employees at an organisation respond to their experiences of cultures not similar to theirs.

### ***Communication Adaptation (Accommodation) Theory***

The CAT begins with the socio-historical context of the interaction, including the relations between the groups having contact, and the social norms. The theory elaborates that the social environment in which individuals interact also affects their communication behaviour, which is a reflection of the extent of the influence the socio-historical context has on intercultural communication. At its foundational level, the CAT emphasises the cognitive and effective processes that are fundamental to speech convergence or divergence, which are linguistic moves to increase or decrease communication distance respectively. In terms of intercultural communication, individuals communicating across cultures use convergence and divergence strategies to signal their attitudes towards each other and their respective social groups. Convergence is a process in which individuals tend to adapt the other person's communication characteristics to reduce the social differences; it involves adjusting one's communicative behaviours to be similar to another's. Divergence contradicts the method of adaptation and relates to the social and nonverbal differences between people participating in an intercultural interaction; it refers to adjusting one's communicative behaviours to be more dissimilar to another's (Dragojevic, Gasiorek, & Giles, 2015).

In the context of organisations, the patterns of convergence indicate that, regardless of people's differences, it is practicable to enhance intercultural communication and achieve a focused and common manner of communicating across cultures. Achieving this requires culturally diverse organisations to maintain a balance that normalises the process that helps to reduce the uncertainty that results when cultures collide (Ayoko, Hartel & Callan, 2002; MacIntyre, 2019; Wiseman, 1995). To guide successful enhancement of intercultural communication, it is, therefore, a requirement for a culturally diverse organisation to strategically and continuously ensure that intercultural communication competence is improved such that collision of cultures could be avoided.

This component of the CAT relates to cases where intercultural communication is influenced by the communicators' accommodative orientation and tendencies, as an illustration, interpersonal or intergroup dynamics or a combination of the two (Ayoko et al., 2002; Giles & Ogay, 2007). Accordingly, employees' accommodative orientation and tendencies motivate their desire to improve intercultural communication competence. Employees enter intercultural interactions with personal attitudes (interpersonal) and social (intergroup) identities as factors that shape intercultural communication. Moreover, the attitudes of individuals are determined more by their immediate surroundings (immediate situation) than by the society within which they find themselves. Therefore, recognition of the impact on the features of the immediate

situation of employees is regarded essential for understanding the context within which enhancement of intercultural communication could be successful, as the extent and nature of adaptation depends on the influences of the immediate surroundings of people participating in intercultural communication (Giles & Ogay, 2007).

Socio-psychological states signify communicators' interpersonal orientation and serve as motivational aspects for adapting to the context of intercultural communication. MacIntyre (2019) contends that the motivational component was expanded, firstly, to incorporate the initial socio-psychological states of speakers, or the extent to which speakers are motivated to move towards each other at the outset of an interaction. Secondly, speaker strategies were reconceptualised because of addressee focus, or the way in which one speaker pays attention to the behaviours of another and, accordingly, adjust their behaviour in order to fit into the communication style of the new cultural environment. Thirdly, MacIntyre (2019) expanded the conceptualisation of reactions to interactions to speaker behaviour. Finally, the latter part of the CAT model was expanded to include an evaluation that interlocutors take away with them, which influences their future orientation to both the other person and other members of that person's group (MacIntyre, 2019). To enhance intercultural communication, it is necessary for culturally diverse organisations to embark on improving intercultural communication effectiveness initiatives that are premeditated by interpersonal and intergroup attitudes of their employees. It is reasoned in this study that doing so could contribute to internal relationships and promotion of a sense of belonging, and is more likely to make employees accommodate each other and adopt a uniform style of communicating. That, during intercultural interactions, individuals use specific communication accommodative strategies, particularly convergence and divergence.

A convergence approach is, in this study, suggested as the communication accommodative strategy culturally diverse organisations should use to move colleagues of different cultures towards each other, considering that its patterns reflect that, regardless of differences, it is practicable to achieve a focused and common manner of communicating. Furthermore, for culturally diverse organisations to successfully enhance intercultural communication, their social and historical contexts, and the cultural dynamics of the environment within which the organisations concerned operate (immediate situation), should form the basis of their intercultural communication enhancement framework.

Unlike CAT, which elaborates that socio-historic context and immediate situations influence intercultural communication, the discussion to follow focuses on IAT, a theory designed to describe a complex, long-term adaptation process in which stress serves as the necessary drive for individuals to adapt their communication behaviours, specifically for working towards the achievement of a common purpose (purpose-related encounters).

### ***Intercultural Adaptation Theory***

From a communication perspective, the IAT suggests that, during intercultural interaction, participants who recognise themselves as being outside their environment will become

stressed, experience confusion, and as a result, practice ineffective communication. Through a long-term adaptation process, stress-adaptation and growth dynamic subside, as individuals achieve functional efficacy in interacting with the host environment. IAT holds that, in terms of communication, intercultural adaptation is a complex and long-term process, in which individuals go through a journey characterised by stress, before they become capable of communicating and functioning effectively in a culture other than the one they were originally socialised to. Some individuals struggle to cope with the feelings of inadequacy and frustration in the changed environment and this affects the way they communicate and function. When people enter an environment in which they no longer communicate and function effectively, they attempt to change through stress adaptation and growth. In this context, stress, then, serves as the necessary drive for people who find themselves in a new cultural environment, to adapt their original cultural habits. In the context of communication, IAT is, therefore, used to explain why stress serves as the necessary driver for individuals from different cultural backgrounds to adapt their communicative behaviours. From this perspective, stress serves as intercultural communication enabler or co-requisite, given that it motivates individuals who are strangers in a new cultural environment to improve their ability to effectively communicate across cultures (Haslberger; 2005; Kim, 2006).

Of central importance and relevance is that employees at the university communicate with each other for the purpose of working towards the achievement of a common vision and purpose guided by the slogan that the university is *A people's university that makes knowledge work*. University's vision is, therefore, a specific purpose that acts as the main guiding principle in relation to what the institution hopes to become. From the IAT point of reference, the university vision, therefore, serves as the specific purpose or main motive why all within the university, despite different cultural backgrounds, should adapt to one another in intercultural communication encounters.

In the context of this study, and consistent with the main insight acquired from this section, all people at the university, despite cultural differences, must adapt their behaviours such that they improve their intercultural communication competence and function effectively towards the achievement of that common vision and purpose.

The deduction from the discussion in this section is that, from the IAT standpoint, it is maintained that the degree of intercultural communication adaptation and effectiveness is achieved based on (1) the extent to which stress serves as the driver for employees to adapt their communicative behaviours and (2) a need for employees to adapt their communication behaviours with the aim of working towards the achievement of a particular common purpose. From the IAT standpoint, reduction of stress and unification of employees towards a common purpose should be utilised as intercultural communication enhancement contributing factors or intercultural communication competence enablers.

## Co-Cultural Theory

In the context of CCT, co-cultural group members are individuals who are members of traditionally marginalised groups, and the theory is specifically helpful for understanding the manner in which co-cultural group members are impacted, and the strategies they use, during everyday communication with members of the dominant group. CCT offers a practical framework for identifying and examining non-dominant-group members' communicative experiences, as it describes the communication process of those individuals traditionally marginalised within dominant social structures. In the context of organisations, the theory, therefore, holds that the degree of intercultural communication effectiveness that is achieved is based on the value and importance of how employees who are marginalised communicate with those who have direct access to power (Orbe, 2017).

Fundamentally, CCT provides a structure through which co-cultural group members negotiate attempts by others to render their voices muted within dominant societal structures. In the context of internal communication. The approach co-cultural members choose, therefore, determines the effectiveness of intercultural communication within an organisation (Orbe, 2017; Orbe & Roberts, 2012; Visagie, Linde, & Havenga, 2011).

An important aspect is the pursuit of enhanced intercultural communication, for which the institution needs an approach to communication that considers the perspective of protecting non-dominant groups from being marginalised by dominant groups. From a standpoint theory perspective, this can be achieved through inclusion of non-dominant-group members' cultural experiences in shaping the manner in which intercultural communication is enhanced such that intercultural communication is improved (as discussed in a paragraph above). This approach is more likely to contribute to internal relationships characterised by employee commitment – an imperative that was distinguished as one of goals and desired outcomes of internal communication.

To sum up the analysis and contextualisation of intercultural communication adaptation theories, namely, CAT, which is regarded as a communication accommodation theory and explains how socio-historic context influences intercultural communication; IAT, which explains how communicators from diverse cultural backgrounds adapt to each other in purpose-related communication encounters; and CCT, which emphasises intercultural communication interactions among underrepresented and dominant-group members of organisations. Overall, the analysis of intercultural communication adaptation theories assisted the researcher to gain a better understanding of how individuals respond to their experiences in other cultures during intercultural communication encounters; an understanding essential for organisations to have a grasp of how intercultural communication could be enhanced.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Approach and Design**

The study followed a qualitative approach and a case study design was used. Using a qualitative research approach allows researchers to describe, decode, translate, and come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in a social setting (Brynard, Hanekom, & Brynard, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015) and was preceded by the semi-structured interviews. For the purpose of this study, qualitative research is entailing the gathering and analysis of non-numerical data to comprehend ideas, viewpoints, or past observations. As a result, the qualitative method was applied to develop fresh study concepts or to obtain a thorough grasp of a problem (see Bhandari, 2020).

### **Instrument**

The data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is a type of qualitative research technique in which participants are given the chance to respond to a planned set of open-ended questions. The researcher was guided during the semi-structured interviews by a planned set of open-ended questions on an interview schedule based on theoretical concepts (see Maree, 2011:87). The pre-set questions served as a means of gathering data on the perspectives of experts in marketing, human resources development, employment equity, and diversity, as well as corporate affairs and transformation, with regard to methods of intercultural communication in the workplace. The goal of the semi-structured interviews was to get accurate and trustworthy information from the participants during discussions on the study's subject. The goal was always to gather detailed, descriptive data that would aid the researcher in comprehending the participants' social realities and level of expertise.

### **Participants**

Ten experts from the departments in charge of transformation, employment equality and diversity, human resources development, corporate affairs, and marketing were among the participants, who were carefully chosen. Purposive sampling, according to Flick (2013), is employed in unique circumstances when participants are chosen based on their level of expertise in a given topic. Because they had in-depth knowledge of the issues the researcher was trying to investigate, professionals from the aforementioned departments were thus the ones the researcher focused on. These individuals were chosen based on their deep knowledge and comprehension of diversity management, training, and development: the manager in charge of human resources development (a black woman), the officer in charge of transformation, employment equity, and diversity (a black man), and the manager in charge of transformation, employment equity, and diversity (a black woman). Expert knowledge and understanding of communication dynamics led to the selection of the university spokesperson (a black woman), university brand manager (a white woman), deputy director of corporate affairs and marketing (a black man) and four staff members (two black men and one white

man) in charge of writing electronic the university's journal articles. Each participant possesses the necessary qualifications or has a wealth of experience in institutional communication, diversity management, and human resources development.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative responses were analysed independently once all interviews had been conducted. Analysis was followed by interpretation of the responses sourced through semi-structured interviews for the purpose of arriving at informed conclusions. Consistent with Maree (2011:105), qualitative responses were analysed manually by transcribing all handwritten notes and audio-recorded interviews. Viewpoints provided by the ten sampled professionals regarding the university's approaches to intercultural communication were carefully read and constructs were identified accordingly.

### **Findings**

Below the findings are elaborated according to the themes focused on in the study, namely, intercultural communication enablers, cultural elements and the stages of adaptation.

#### **Intercultural Communication Enablers/Co-Requisites**

Competent intercultural communicators are individuals who possess the desire to improve their intercultural communication abilities, who are in possession of requisite information about different cultures, have the ability to change their behaviour and act in a consistent way in each cultural environment they find themselves in, and have the ability to understand and appreciate cultural differences. As a result, organisations need to invest greater efforts in ensuring that employees are empowered to become competent intercultural communicators, as doing so has the potential to facilitate effective functioning of organisations.

Comments made by purposively selected professionals indicate that they acknowledged that there are conditions that contribute as enabling factors for employees to improve intercultural communication competence to promote inclusivity.

As an illustration, Participant 4 suggested enablers or co-requisites that are important for employees to become competent intercultural communicators:

“One of the greatest weapons that you can give to employees is to make them feel that they matter; by so doing, you know that they will be motivated and encouraged. To make people feel welcome, make people feel that they matter, make people know that you have their back, and make people feel that they are recognised. All these aspects are essential to motivate and encourage people to become competent intercultural communicators”. [P4]

Participant 5 offered the following conditions, which are aligned with the enablers that were identified by the analysis of the literature:

“Employees should be empowered with skills to become competent intercultural communicators. People who know that they are skilled enough to communicate across cultures easily express themselves in all situations they find themselves. The university should also train employees regarding the primary language that is used for communication purposes.” [P5]

Participant 10 gave a statement that is slightly different from what is argued about intercultural communication enablers; this participant commented as follows from a cultural integration and awareness viewpoint:

“Cultural integration initiatives and awareness campaigns should also be conducted throughout the year. New employees should also be oriented to ensure that they understand that the institution they are joining is culturally diverse in nature and that there exists a need for them to familiarise themselves with the new ways of doing things. This approach could make them quickly form relationships and make social connections with ease. [P10]

The comments quoted above give substance to the theoretical argument that, for employees to become competent intercultural communicators, they require certain attributes and abilities. Motivation, encouragement, empowering people with skills, training employees, and presenting cultural integration initiatives and awareness campaigns are suggested as conditions that are likely to enable employees to improve intercultural communication competence. The conditions advanced by purposively selected professionals, specifically, motivation, skills, knowledge and character are aligned with the enablers as conditions that are likely to contribute to helping individuals become competent intercultural communicators. The above assertions are supported by (Kiss, 2008; Samovar et al., 2012), when they argue that motivation plays an important role as an intercultural communication enabler for employees to become competent intercultural communicators.

It is assumed that the submission regarding cultural integration initiatives and cultural awareness campaigns as intercultural communication enablers was triggered by an understanding that the two conditions are likely to equip employees with knowledge about different cultures that exist in the environment within which they operate, including their own culture.

To operationalise the findings related to intercultural communication enablers/co-requisites, managers at the university have the responsibility to distinguish enablers specific to the university, and to employ them in their purposeful endeavours to enhance intercultural communication.



## Cultural Elements

Literature review findings show that cultural elements are contributing factors for effective intercultural communication and that they direct the manner in which individuals communicate across cultures. This assumption suggests that cultural elements play an important role in shaping and informing intercultural communication and that culturally diverse organisations should be conscious of cultural elements that are likely to influence their communication styles.

Furthermore, literature states that elements such as norms, values, beliefs, cultural symbols and stories and rituals are core elements that guide and assist us to shape intercultural communication. Strategic Plan (2014–2019) analysis findings point out aspects, such as integrity, respect, inclusion, honesty and dignity, are features distinguished as fundamentally imperative for shaping intercultural communication at the university. These elements the university should use as contributing factors in its efforts to enhance intercultural communication and to improve intercultural communication competence.

The responses sourced from purposively selected professionals reflect a certain level of familiarity with cultural elements, which is reproduced in the literature and the university's strategic and policy documents, including an understanding of the values the university ascribes to.

For instance, Participant 10 mentioned,

“If you share beliefs, norms and values, chances are understanding each other during intercultural encounters is possible as these elements inform how people communicate. These elements make us to learn to understand each other during communication encounters. People who share beliefs, norms and values also tend to respect each other, maybe because it is a sign of belonging to same cultural background” [10].

Two other participants also indicated familiarity with the importance of cultural elements in shaping intercultural communication, and gave the following responses.

“I would say respect, language and honesty. These are the basics of intercultural communication. Be honest and truthful to yourself and others”. [P4]

“For me, I think language, traditions, attitude, values, respect, behaviour, habits and the way we perceive things are the main cultural elements that influence the way we interact. One of the challenges that we face is that people hold on to what they believe in and do not want to change that for anything, they have a sense of entitlement”. [P9]

The strategic and policy document analysis findings presented in Section 4.4 in relation to social culture being both a perceived and experienced reality point to a need for the university leadership to aggressively work to change the perspective to a reality that is experienced by all. Despite documented consciousness, strategic and policy document analysis findings and purposively selected professionals' responses overall demonstrate that cultural elements specific to the university are well documented and employees are familiar with the elements fundamentally necessary for shaping intercultural communication at the university. Beliefs, norms, language, values, respect, honesty, tradition, attitudes, habits and integrity are the aspects purposively selected professionals submitted as the elements they considered fundamentally necessary in intercultural encounters. Having a communication framework that is, amongst others, structured around the existing documented cultural elements that employees are familiar with, places the institution at an advantage, and makes it more likely the university will succeed in its efforts to improve intercultural communication effectiveness.

### **Stages of Adaptation**

Purposively selected professionals referred to the following stages they believed individuals go through before they adapt and become competent intercultural communicators. Participant 7 said,

“When employees find themselves within environments, they are not familiar with, at the beginning, they might find it strange not understanding what is required of them and might feel intimidated. Nevertheless, if the environment is conducive for them to adapt and there is a strategic way of integrating new employees to the new environment, overtime, they become more used to the new environment, accept the new situation, and no longer feel threatened by it. As soon as they accept that the situation is what it is, they eventually integrate and adapt to the new situation” [P7].

Participant 6 explained,

“Largely, as a new employee, you go through the normal and basic three stages of change. Firstly, finding yourself in a new working place make sort of being frustrated by not knowing what is expected of you by everyone around you. Then you go into a stage where you rather try to form friendship and relate to fellow colleagues. The last stage is asking yourself as to what you do with what you know. How you progress through these stages is dependent on the kind of support you get from the institution. It is important for the university to device ways and means of ensuring that employees are taken by hand for them to navigate through these stages with easy” [P6].

Participant 1 said,

“They start from a stage of fear and then they move on to a stage of slightly self-doubt. You fear and then you express your doubts, after which you are slightly self-actualised. Then, depending on the environment, you become comfortable and start

interacting with your colleagues. It is only after one start feeling comfortable that you slowly start feeling at home. This is then the stage at which you start adapting and get integrated in the new environment, including understanding the way the new colleagues communicate and do things in general” [P1].

Participant 8 said,

“I think they go through a whole lot of stages. Firstly, they become shocked because they do not know the environment. Depending on the attitudes of the individual employee, the second stage will be grouping, that is identifying yourself with specific individuals within the organisation. That is followed by acclimatising yourself with the way the group you identify with do things. Thereafter, you observe what other groups are like as compared to the group you identify with. Slowly you gel-in and start behaving exactly the same way as everyone else in general behaves, and that becomes the final stage where you then feel at home and start communication the way each employee is expected to” [P8].

Though there are differences regarding the specific stages identified in responses provided by purposively selected professionals, it is clear that they concur that employees go through different stages of adaptation before becoming competent intercultural communicators. Frustration, fear and self-doubt, finding it strange, feeling intimidated and feeling shocked are the experiences purposively selected professionals identified as those individuals go through during initial stages of their adaptation journey, namely, fascination and excitement, and anticipation stages of adaptation, and Lysgaard’s honeymoon stage. Forming friendship and relating, self-actualisation and grouping, acclimatisation, gelling-in and feeling at home are experiences that relate to Lysgaard’s recovery and integration stages, as are the acceptance, integration and adaptation stages.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Determining whether intercultural communication fosters inclusion in varied organisations was the paper’s goal. The results of the research thus demonstrated that the institution did not have a well-thought-out plan of action for intentionally promoting intercultural conversation. This was because the staff believed that there had been no systematic attempt to guarantee that intercultural communication was managed consistently and that the institution’s communication strategy documents provided no direction on how to facilitate effective intercultural communication. This result is consistent with the Strategic Plan (2014–2019), which did not identify cultural diversity as a strategic goal or even mention the need to set up controls to direct the application of managing cultural diversity through improved intercultural communication.

The elements that are stated under findings coincide with what the literature asserts as guiding aspects that are essential for assisting to shape effective intercultural communication. The aspects staff submitted as elements necessary for informing intercultural encounters, namely,

integrity, respect, inclusion, dignity, beliefs, language, norms values, honesty, tradition, attitudes and habits are the cultural aspects from which the university should choose what it considers most relevant, and use these elements as contributing factors in its efforts to enhance intercultural communication. The university should also take advantage of having employees who acknowledge the content of documents that guide its strategic orientation, and use that as a path in its efforts to improve intercultural communication competence and move employees of the institution towards inclusivity.

The findings also indicated that staff members thought management's goals for improving the efficacy of cross-cultural communication should be governed by a policy statement. They think that everyone at the university will be able to handle these challenges in a formal and consistent manner by embracing a formal and consistent approach to intercultural communication. According to the staff, the organisation needs an operational plan that outlines how intercultural communication can be used to unite staff members in pursuit of a single objective. The results of this study corroborate earlier research by Mmope (2016), who looked at the motivations behind a conceptual framework for integrated intercultural staff communication for line management of changed universities.

The findings of this paper also revealed that employees were of the view that the management of cultural diversity and communication are essential elements to enhance intercultural communication so as to assist the university to develop and implement intercultural communication such that employees from various cultural backgrounds could improve intercultural communication competence. This result is in line with Gumede's (2016) investigation into the existence of cultural diversity, whether it necessitates an organisational response, whether managing cultural diversity affects performance, and, ultimately, what approaches, techniques, and resources the Engen Refinery should employ to manage its culturally diverse workforce. Even though the study found no problems with intercultural communication, it did highlight the significance of initiating team-building exercises and social events to foster greater employee interaction, putting cultural diversity programmes and policies into place, and reorganising work teams to foster greater multiculturalism.

The study's conclusions also showed how important it is to recognise and comprehend the phases people go through while trying to adjust to a new work environment. This result is consistent with research conducted by Nhlapo (2013), who examined intercultural communication in information systems development teams across many businesses in the South African province of Gauteng. The study came to the conclusion that personality and culture could have an impact on how well people communicate. The study's conclusions also showed how important it is to recognise and comprehend the phases people go through while trying to adjust to a new work environment. This result is consistent with research conducted by Nhlapo (2013), who examined intercultural communication in information systems development teams across many businesses in the South African province of Gauteng. The study came to the conclusion that personality and culture could have an impact on how well people communicate. The study's conclusions also showed how important it is to recognise

and comprehend the phases people go through while trying to adjust to a new work environment.

The results demonstrate that the university values and acknowledges its cultural variety. As workplace diversity dimensions that reflect the shape and influence of the university as an institution of higher learning, the uniqueness of each individual, cultural diversity training, institutional culture recognition, inclusion culture creation, and multilingualism promotion are all acknowledged. For this reason, they have been prioritised in the aforementioned strategic and policy documents. The results align with the literature review's conclusion, which is that an organisation can begin to systematically improve intercultural communication by acknowledging and comprehending the culturally diverse nature of modern organisations thereby improving inclusivity amongst employees.

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this paper was to explore the extent to which intercultural communication contributes in promoting inclusivity in diverse organisations. The study suggests an intercultural communication strategy that could lead a culturally diverse organisation down a path of intercultural development that could ultimately lead to improved intercultural communication skills and a cohesive workforce. Complementary findings from multiple sources helped the researcher to draw holistic conclusions that are relevant for the development of the plan, which is intended to be used as a tool for the university and other similar organisations to become resilient in their pursuit of improving intercultural communication as a strategic and continuous priority.

The paper's findings also show that intercultural communication variables have positive relationships. This means that all staff members need to adjust to communication styles that improve intercultural communication as a whole if diverse organisations are to strategically and continuously enhance intercultural communication and improve intercultural communication competence. The finding that intercultural communication adaptation has a higher influence on other intercultural communication characteristics leads to the conclusion that intercultural communication adaptation is a factor that is essential for varied organisations to promote inclusion.

This study closed the gap and added to the volume of research that has been undertaken, and to the base of knowledge regarding enhancement of intercultural communication with the specific purpose of improving intercultural communication competence and the promotion of inclusivity, unifying employees towards a common purpose and achieving organisational success, as ultimate outcomes.

## References

- Abullahi, A. I., & Zainol, F. A. (2016). The impact of socio-cultural business environment on entrepreneurial intention: A conceptual approach. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 6(2), 201–320.  
<https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v6-i2/2013>
- Adu-Oppong, A. A., & Agyin-Birikong, E. (2014). Communication in the workplace: Guidelines for improving effectiveness. Global Institute for research & Education: Winneba-Ghana.
- Allwood, J. (2008). English translation of: “Tvärkulturell kommunikation” (1985). In J. Allwood, J. (ed.), *Tvärkulturell kommunikation*. Papers in Anthropological Linguistics 12, University of Göteborg, Department of Linguistics.
- Beerkens, R, Le Pichon-Vorstman, E, Supheert, R, Thije, J.T. (Eds) (2020). Enhancing intercultural in organisations: Project advisers. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003006794>
- Barna, L. M. (2009). How culture shock affects communication. Paper presented in the Distinguished Program at the Communication Association of the Pacific Annual Convention (Kobe, Japan, June 19–20).
- Bhandari, P. (2020). What Is Qualitative Research? Methods & Examples. Retrieved from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-research>
- Brynard, D. J., Hanekom, S. X., & Brynard, P. (2014). *Introduction to research*. Van Schaik.
- Brynard, P.A. & Hanekom, S.X. (2008). *Introduction to research in management-related fields*. (2nd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Cullen, J. B., & Parboteeah. (2008). *Multinational management: A strategic approach*. 4th edition. Thomson South-Western.
- Fabrizio, S. M., & Neill, J.T. (2005). Cultural adaptation in outdoor programming. *Australian Journal Outdoor Education*, 9(2), 44–56. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03400820>
- Fasset. (2013). *Cultural diversity in the workplace handbook*. Faranani Facilitating Service Pty Ltd.
- Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research*. 5th edition. London: SAGE Publications.
- Frank, J. (2013). Raising cultural awareness in the English language classroom. *Journal for Teaching Forum*, 5(1), 2–11.
- Green, K., Fairchild, R., Knudsen, B., & Lease-Gubrud, D. (2018). *Introduction to communication*. Retrieved from <https://socialci.libretexts.org>
- Gudykunst, W. B. (2003). *Cross-cultural and intercultural communication*. India: SAGE Publications.
- Gudykunst, W. B. (2005). *Theorizing about intercultural communication*. UK: SAGE Publications.
- Guirdham. L. (2005). *Communicating across cultures at work*. (2nd Ed.). USA: Inchor Business Books.
- Hall, B. J. (2017). *Among cultures*. (3rd Ed.). Wadsworth Thomson Learning.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315621173>

- Hammer, M. R., Wiseman, R. L., Rasmussen, J. L., & Brusckke, J.C. (1998). A test of anxiety/uncertainty management theory: The intercultural adaptation context. *Communication Quarterly*, 46(3):309–326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0146337909370104>
- Hartnell, C. A., Ou, A. Y., & Kinicki, A. (2011). Organizational culture and organizational effectiveness: a meta-analytic investigation of the competing values framework's theoretical suppositions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(4), 677. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021987>
- Hellriegel, D., Slocum, J., Jackson, S. E., Louw, L., Staude, G., Amos, T., & Zindiye, S. (2013). *Management*, 4th South African.
- Holmes, S. (1997). *Intercultural communication and dialogue competence: An attempt at synthesis through useful "fictions"*. Working paper of International Society for Diversity Management, 5(2). Retrieved from [https://www.idm-diversity.org/files/Working\\_paper2-Holmes.pdf](https://www.idm-diversity.org/files/Working_paper2-Holmes.pdf)
- Kagawa-Singer, M., Valdez Dadia, A., Yu, M. C., & Surbone, A. (2010). Cancer, culture, and health disparities: time to chart a new course?. *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, 60(1), 12–39. <https://doi.org/10.3322/caac.20051>
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2015). *Practical research*. Pearson. 10th edition. Canada: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Jandt, F. E. (2004). *Intercultural communication: A global reader*. UK: SAGE Publications.
- Jandt, F. E. (2017). *An introduction to intercultural communication: Identities in a global community*. Singapore: SAGE Publications.
- Kiss, G. (2008). A theoretical approach to intercultural communication. *Communication*, 7(3), 435–443.
- Littlejohn, S. W., & Foss, K.A. (2009). *Encyclopaedia of communication theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412959384>
- Maree, K. (2011). *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Martin, J. N, & Nakayama, T. K. (2013). *Intercultural communication in contexts*. (6th Ed.). USA: McGraw-Hill.
- Morse, J. M. (2008). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing Research*, 40(1), 120–123. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00006199-199103000-00014>
- Mushaathoni, M. 2021. Assumptions motivating a framework to enhance intercultural communication within a diverse organisation: The case of Tshwane University of Technology. South Africa: North-West University.
- Neuliep, J.W. (2006). *Intercultural communication: A contextual approach*. USA: SAGE Publications
- Nyathi-Saleshando, L. (2011). An advocacy project for multicultural education: the case of Shiyeyi language in Botswana. *International Review in Education*, 57, 567–582. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-011-9254-4>
- Gill, R., & Orgad, S. (2015). The confidence cult (ure). *Australian Feminist Studies*, 30(86), 324–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2016.1148001>

- Reisinger, Y., & Turner, L. (2012). *Cross-cultural behaviour in tourism*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780080490861>
- Penceliah, Y. (2008). Managing across cultures for organisational success. *Journal of Public Administration*, 61(3), 330–341.
- Roy, C.S., Samovar, L.A., McDaniel, E.R. and Porter, R. (2016). *Communication between cultures*, 9th edition. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net>
- Sadri, H.A., & Flammia, M. (2011). *Intercultural communication: A new approach to international relations and global challenges*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Samovar, L. A., & Porter, R. E. (2007). *Intercultural communication*. Wadsworth Thomson Learning.
- Samochowiec, J., & Florack, A. (2010). Intercultural contact under uncertainty: The impact of predictability and anxiety on the willingness to interact with a member from an unknown cultural group. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34(5), 507–515. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.05.003>
- Samovar, L. A., Porter, R.E., & McDaniel, L. M. (2012). *Intercultural communication*. Wadsworth Thomson Learning.
- Schmitz, L. (2012). Sociology: Brief edition. *Sociology and the Sociological Perspective*, 10(2), 109–131.
- Smit, P. J., Cronje, G. J., Brevis, T., & Vrba. (2011). *Management principles: A contemporary edition for Africa*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Surbone, A. 2007. Cultural aspects of communication in cancer care. *Support Cancer Care*, 16(3), 235–240. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00520-007-0366-0>
- TUT. 2005. Language policy. The Pretoria Tshwane University of Technology.
- TUT. 2006. Policy on unfair discrimination. Pretoria: Tshwane University of Technology.
- TUT. 2008. Strategic plan (2008–2012). Pretoria: Tshwane University of Technology.
- TUT. 2011. EE plan (2011-2015). Pretoria: Tshwane University of Technology.
- TUT. 2011. Employment equity plan (2011–2015). Pretoria: Tshwane University of Technology.
- TUT. 2011. Strategic plan (2014-2019). Pretoria: Tshwane University of Technology.
- TUT. 2014. Diversity training guide. Pretoria: Tshwane University of Technology.
- Udechukwu, G. I. (2019). The significance and use of cultural symbols in the contemporary African society: Igbo symbols as a paradigm. *Journal of African Studies*, 8(1), 110–116.
- Westaby, C., Fowler, A., & Philips, J. (2020). Managing emotion in probation practice: Display rules, values, and the performance of emotional labour. *International journal of law, crime, and justice*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlcj.2019.100362>
- Winkelman, M. (2010). *Cultural shock and adaptation*. Blackwell Publishing, British Academy of Management

**Corresponding author:** Maria Mushaathoni

**Email:** [mushaathonim1@tut.ac.za](mailto:mushaathonim1@tut.ac.za)