CULTURAL VARIABLES THAT AFFECT COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN SOUTHERN AFRICANS AND AMERICANS.

by

Rashid Zulu

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Committee member

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to determine cultural variables that affect communication encounters between Southern African and American entrepreneurs. Cultural variables, as cited by Dodd (1977), include attitudes, social organization, thought patterns, world view, concept of time, and role prescription, have also been noted by authorities in cross-cultural communication such as Asuncion-Lande (1989), Harris and Moran (1987), and Samovar & Porter (1976). These variables are considered to be the primary factors that contribute to miscommunication between people of different cultural backgrounds.

Fifteen business persons were interviewed for this study, ten from Southern Africa (Tanzania and Zambia) and five from America. Each subject was interviewed for approximately forty to sixty minutes. The interview was designed to elicit information concerning their business communication experiences. A content analysis of the data was applied.

This study found that there are cultural barriers that impinge on effective communication between the Southern African and American entrepreneurs. The study

suggests that entrepreneurs who intend to engage in international business in Southern Africa stand to benefit by learning the other's cultural backgrounds. By doing so, it may enhance their perceptions of each other and lead to more effective communication between them.

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First, I wish to extend my appreciation to the participants in this study for their positive cooperation by availing their precious time despite their tight schedules so that I could interview them. Their honest responses were invaluable.

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CHAPTER ONE

One who does not know you does not value you.

Swahili proverb.

"Bridging the cultural gap requires understanding and forbearance, and it is important that all members of the partnership team know what is entailed, how the partner make decisions, how it plans and measures performance, where the limits of authority lie, and how to behave socially and in business in order to avoid giving offense and causing misunderstanding."

(Dorrley & Thomas 1991)

The above quotes show how important cross-cultural understanding is when people from different cultural backgrounds encounter each other. There is no exception to the rule when it comes to encounters between Africans and Americans as both hail from distinct cultural backgrounds.

In order to take advantage of potential trade between Africans and Americans, entrepreneurs need to know about cultural variables related to international business. Lack of effective cross cultural communication can cause ventures to break down and missed business opportunities.

Although neglected for a long time as a trading
partner by the west, Africa possesses an immense amount
of natural wealth and population, enabling it to engage
in mutual trade relationships with the west. It is
hoped that the changes in economic and political
structures going on in Africa will improve business
relationships, and thus pave the way for increase in
trade. Therefore, it is imperative that each knows
about the other's culture. Unfortunately there is lack
of literature on African culture pertaining to business
behaviors.

Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to determine the
cultural factors that affect communication between
Southern African and American business persons.

Recognized intercultural communication variables
were utilized to determine cultural communication
differences between Americans and Southern Africans.

Harris and Moran (1987) noted that "intercultural
communication variables influence one's perception,
which in turn influences the meaning one attributes to
behavior" (p. 41). The importance of intercultural

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communication variables has been attested to by
scholars in intercultural communication, such as
Asuncion-Lande (1980), Dodd (1977), Harris and Moran
(1987), and Samovar and Porter (1976). All of them
noted that differences in variables between cultures
affect effective communication.

Porter (1972) listed eight variables such as: (1)
attitudes; (2) social organization; (3) patterns of
thought; (4) roles and role prescriptions; (5)
language; (6) use and organization of space; (7) time
conceptualization; and (8) kinesics (such as eye
contact, space, time, artifacts like body ardonment).

The variables will serve as a framework for this
study. Specifically the principal research question is:
1-Are the cultural factors usually mentioned by
communication scholars as affecting intercultural
communication in general, applicable in business
encounters between Southern African and American
business persons?

Support questions following the principal question
are: (1) How important are attitudes? Give some
examples.

(2) How important are interpersonal

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relationships? Give some examples.

(3) How important is time conceptualization?
Give some example.

(4) How important are gift giving? Give some
examples.

(5) How important is language? Give some
examples.

(6) How important are role and role
prescriptions. Give some examples.

(7) How important are formalities? Give some
example.

The results of this study may be used as a guide
for the preparation of a communication handbook for
entrepreneurs. The handbook will be an attempt to
provide some guidelines to facilitate effective
interactions that could lead to a favorable atmosphere
conducive to business between the Southern Africans and
Americans.

A review of research literature indicated a lack
of materials on intercultural communication between
Southern Africans and Americans. Therefore this
particular study should prove useful.

For a long time Africa as a whole has had to

endure economic stagnation and isolation from Western entrepreneurs and governments. Two major reasons may partly explain this situation. One reason is internal problems, such as physical conditions and policies caused by: poor climatic conditions; poor health system; poor communication infrastructure; government control over the pricing of goods instead of letting the market determine the price; dependence on only a few exportable products which no longer have strong foreign exchange earning capabilities; neglect of diversification in industries like agriculture; manufacturing and service; ill conceived economic policies; a weak education system and overpopulation; just to name a few. External problems include conditions and policies caused by forces outside the continent, such as lack of infusion of capital/investment from international firms, an extremely lopsided balance of trade, import dependence and high import prices causing huge foreign debts due to lack of foreign currencies, collapse of prices on the few exportable crops from the continent to the world market, political and economic isolation from the industrialized nations, and tough policies from world financial bodies.

Currently these internal and external problems are being rectified in accordance with, and in conjunction with the international financial institutions such as

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the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
These institutions and respective governments in the
Southern African region have created conditions
conducive to both domestic and international business
entrepreneurs.

The Southern African region has ample
opportunities for investment by American entrepreneurs.
The region is striving to achieve economic development,
but it cannot achieve this development without the
infusion of foreign capital and technology into the
region. Southern Africa can also provide natural
resources to the West. According to the U.S.
Department of Commerce, American entrepreneurs stand to
benefit in the Southern African region in industries
such as: consulting and management, tourism, promotion,
hospitality, agriculture, fishing, mining,
transportation, communication, energy, and in both
light and heavy manufacturing.

Significance of Study

There are two important reasons for embarking on a
study of this nature: namely the importance of cross-
cultural understanding, and foster economic development
in Southern Africa.

A number of issues need to be considered prior to
entering into international business ventures. One is
the need to pay extra attention to the culture of a

host country, because even if political and economic infrastructures are sound, differences in cultures can cause complications in conducting business abroad. Tuller (1991), noted that, "gaining a familiarity with a host country's cultural idiosyncrasies also helps smooth over the rough spots when entering its markets. Little things, such as taking the time to learn how to greet people, how to dress for business meetings, how to negotiate, when to give gifts, and when they graciously receive favors, along with many other acceptable customs can smooth a company's entrance into a foreign market" (p. 22).

Harris and Moran (1987), and Tuller (1991), also observed that intercultural understanding is needed for effective communication between and among people of diverse cultural backgrounds, and that lack of intercultural consideration can cause poor judgment, mistrust and failure of business in a foreign cultural environment. Glover (1990), too, observes the cultural aspects of international business such as knowledge of a foreign culture is imperative to effectively communicate and conduct international trade in a fruitful and mutually trusting atmosphere with the host nation and its peoples.

Drawing from the works of Asuncion-Lande (1980, 1981, 1989), Berger (1987), Carrol (1987), Collins

(1991), Harris and Moran (1987), Glover (1990), Tuller (1991), it can be concluded that knowledge of other cultures enables people to more accurately predict meanings from verbal and nonverbal communication. It is culture that cultivates and shapes beliefs and attitudes of people in a given society. Since each society has its own unique culture, therefore, what seems appropriate in one society might seem offensive in another.

The vast opportunities for American entrepreneurs to conduct business in Southern Africa have been noted by the African section of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation based in Washington D.C, and also by the former ambassador to South Africa, Mr. Edward J. Perkins in his address on the 11th Africare Day, he stated that, "Africa's economic potential and the American market makes us an ideal match for pursuing a mutually beneficial economic relationship." The Southern African region, like all other least industrialized countries, cannot achieve its economic development without an external infusion of capital and technical knowledge. What makes the Southern African region viable for business by American entrepreneurs is its vast population and its rich untapped natural resources which are highly needed in the Western world. According to the Overseas Private Investment

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Corporation based in Washington D.C., the Southern
African region boosts over 200 million consumers with
over $50 billion in GDP.   There are ample amounts of
strategic minerals from the Southern African region
which can be utilized by the West.(1993).

CHAPTER TWO

In order to facilitate a greater comprehension of the importance of the study, the intercultural communication variables which have been identified by various scholars will be reviewed.

Other themes which have relevance to the objectives of this study will also be covered. These include the relationship between culture and communication, the impact of culture on international business, and the "majority" African culture.

CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

Different disciplines have assigned different definitions to the term culture. According to Porter (1972), culture is the," cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, meanings, beliefs, values, attitudes, religions, concepts of self, the universe, and self-universe relationship, hierarchies of status, expectations, spatial relations, and time concepts acquired by a large group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. Culture manifests itself both in patterns of language and thought and in forms of activity and behavior" (3).

Culture is not biologically transmitted from one generation to another. It is transmitted through teaching by the older generation and learning by the younger generation. It is through communication that this process of teaching and learning takes place. Thus culture and communication are totally integrated with each other, never separable. It is through communication that we learn about culture, and it is culture that shapes the way we communicate with each other. Smith (1966) sums up well the relationship between culture and communication when he states that:

> Our perception is behavior that is learned and shared, and it is mediated by symbols. Culture is a code we learn and share, and learning and sharing require communication. And communication requires coding and symbols, which must be learned and shared. Communication and culture are inseparable. (p. 7).

Dodd (1977) amplifies the meaning of culture, its variables and its relationship with communication. He listed nine observations:

1) Culture is not genetic.
2) Culture is not learned by individual experience alone, but socially.
3) Culture incorporates tradition handed down

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intergenerationally.

4) Culture involves symbols and code systems which are mediated by man's thought, perceived reality, senses, and social relationships.

5) Language is the means of transmission.

6) Communication is a concomitant part of culture.

7) Communication is both an antecedent and necessary process for intracultural and intercultural relationships.

8) Communication involves both message content with its linguistic components and its symbolic relations and the networks of social transmission of information.

9) Cultural communication differentially involves configurations linear, and configurational linear modes of thought (pp. 10-12).

It is clear from these statements that our behaviors and attitudes are shaped by our cultural upbringing, and that each society has its own distinct culture. Since America and Southern Africa have distinct cultures, one can foresee several communication problems unless cultural differences are exposed and greater intercultural communication understanding develops.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND ITS VARIABLES

Harris and Moran (1987), Skinner (1964), Tuller (1991), and Glover (1990) have described the process of intercultural communication as communication between or among people of diverse cultural backgrounds and achievement of their common goals due to knowledge of each other's cultural backgrounds. Knowledge of intercultural communication is an imperative element in facilitating the conducting of business overseas.

THE VARIABLES

It is through the cultural variables that one can learn about one's own and other people's cultures.

Samovar and Porter (1976, 1991) list a number of cultural variables that are important for communication. These include:

(1) Attitudes: These are psychological states that predispose us to act in certain ways when we encounter various social events or objects in our environment. Ethnocentrism causes us to judge others by using our cultural values as a rod of measurement. World view gives us our frame of reference on events we encounter. Absolute values are culturally derived notions one has of right and wrong, and they also influence one's social perception by providing one with a set of basic

precepts from which one judges the behavior and beliefs of others. <u>Stereotypes</u> are attitudinal sets in which one assigns attributes to another person solely on the basis of the class or category to which that person belongs, while prejudices are attitudinal sets that predispose one to behave in certain ways toward people solely on the basis of their membership in some group.

2) Social organization helps maintain certain attitudes toward categories of persons and toward various behaviors in their cultures. For example, attitudes toward age and generation, family concepts, sex roles, ancestry, social interest and voluntary association are all products of social organization. Different cultures have different attitudes toward the items mentioned above. Michael Flack (1966) noted two societal compositions, namely: (a) The geographic society made up of a nation, tribe, or religious sect, and (b) The role society, which acts within or transcends geographic cultures. It is made up of members of a profession, elite, or ideological, racial, or religious co-fraternity.

3) Patterns of thought are the means from which one derives a sense of reasoning. Social infrastructure determines how one formulates one's

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logic. There are two known systems which provide a sense of reasoning in different societies. These are the Aristotelian mode, which is prevalent in the Western culture, and the Non-Aristotelian mode, which is prevalent in non-Western cultures.

4) Roles and role prescriptions: One's role assignment in the society is due to one's culture. Each culture views role prescription of its members differently.

5) Language: Language and culture go hand in hand, since what and how one thinks are determined by one's culture. Two problems arise when communicating interculturally due to cultural differences, namely: (1) word connotation, and (2) denotative meanings, where meanings of the same thing or event differ from one society to another.

6) Use and organization of space: Each society utilizes and organizes space differently. Each society assigns different distances when communicating with others. Not heeding the distance could be viewed as insulting.

7) Time conceptualization: The concept of time and norms concerning time vary from one culture to another. In the West time is conceptualized in terms of linear-spatial terms, that is, the

awareness of a past, a present and a future whereby strong emphasis on time is placed as an aspect of history rather than as an aspect of immediate experience. Other societies are more concerned with immediacy, sometimes called felt time. The appropriate speed of response is influenced by culture.

8) Nonverbal expression: Emotional or gestures expressions are determined by culture.

A comparison of these variables between cultures can help one learn about similarities and differences that might exist. By so doing one may learn to cope with these differences. This is especially true in Africa, a continent with vast and differing cultural societies scattered over a large area. Little written material exists on African culture pertaining to international business. Some authors provide insights into communication variables of the African culture.

One should note that while Africa has various cultural groups, what is presented here is a "majority" culture that can be observed in most of the African societies. However, it should not be viewed as a blanket explanation for all African societies. Just as in America, cultural differences among various ethnic

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groups within the same country exist on the African continent.

THE AFRICAN (MAJORITY) CULTURE.

Although Africa is comprised of many distinct cultures, there are general cultural characteristics which can be found in most of the African societies. Solanke (1982), has made the following observations that an African society is an oral traditional one, passing knowledge orally from one generation to another. Solanke (1982), further notes that:

> The African views history as a continuum consisting of a past, a present and a future-all inseparably linked together. The sequence is crucial in that the past has a significant role to play in the evolution of the present, and in turn the present can affect the turns and twisting of the future. This historical consciousness recognizes continuity and change, order and purpose within the framework of his environment, man and the gods, man and his ancestors. (p. 2).

In an African society collectiveness supersedes individuality. Solanke states that in Africa, "an individual is subordinate to the group." The strength

of social groups in an African culture can be observed when there is a conflict. Although western style court systems are available, most people in the rural areas prefer social groups chaired by the elders to resolve their conflicts. This approach helps to maintain harmony between and among individuals in a given group. The social groups also provide a buffer zone for members who might experience stress. According to Solanke, when a member of a group is wronged by an outsider the group and the outsider's group take responsibilities in making sure that justice is served. He notes that:

> serious crimes against a group member may result in a fine or even banishment for the criminal. Religious beliefs are intricately bound up with attitudes and behavior toward social transgressions. It is believed that the miscreant will fall victim of illness, bad luck, or some other misfortune as a result of his bad behavior. Having offended not only the group, but also its ancestral spirits, the guilty persons will be punished by them. These beliefs act as a strong deterrent to crime and immorality. (p. 35).

Another authority on African culture is Mbiti (1982), who explains the African view of the universe.

He notes that, "the African view of the world is profoundly religious and that man is the centre of the universe of all created things, man is the most important and the most privileged" (p. 194). Through his work, one learns that, "many of African societies believe that there are two parts which form the universe, one is the visible and the other is invisible; and that the universe is the form of a three-tier creation namely: the heavens, the earth and the underworld. Man must create harmony with the universe" (p. 194), and that, "the universe is orderly. As long as this order is not upset there is harmony" (p. 196).

According to Mbiti, there are four levels in which the order of the universe functions. Summing up his work, here are the four levels and their functions as noted by him:

1- There is order in the laws of nature which gives a sense of security and certainty to the universe. If they were completely unpredictable and changed at random, there would be chaos in the world which would endanger the existence of both life and the universe itself.

2- There is moral order at work among people. It is believed by African peoples that God gave a moral order to people so that they might live

happily and in harmony with one another. Through
this moral order, customs and institutions have
arisen in all societies, to safeguard the life
of the individual and the community of which he
is part. Moral order helps men to work out and
know among themselves what is good and evil,
right and wrong, truthful and false, and
beautiful and ugly, and what people's rights and
duties are. Each society is able to formulate
its values because there is moral order in the
universe. These values deal with relationships
among people, and between people and God and
other spiritual beings; and man's relationship
with the world of nature.

3-There is religious order in the universe. The
Africans believe that the universe is created
and sustained by God, and they interpret their
life's experiences from that starting-point. The
laws of nature are regarded as being controlled
by God directly or through his servants. The
moral and institutions of the society are
thought to have been given by God, or sanctioned
ultimately by him. Therefore any breach of such
morals is an offence against the departed
members of the family, and against God or the
spirits, even if it is the people themselves who

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may suffer from such a breach and who may take
action to punish the offender. There are,
therefore, taboos which strengthen the keeping
of the moral and religious order.

4-There is a mystical power which enables those
who have access to perform wonders, but if it is
used harmfully it is regarded as evil magic.

Harris and Moran (1987) point out six important
cultural characteristics of African society, namely:

1) Family	This is comprised of nuclear and extended families. The family is the most important thing in an African society.
2) Trust and Friendship	In Africa, friendship is highly valued. Business continues during socialization time. Interpersonal relationships are based on sincerity. The door is open for friends anytime.

3) Time   Time is flexible.
                           People are more
                           relaxed and don't rush
                           into business right
                           away. But when foreign
                           visitors are present,
                           Africans tend to
                           accommodate their
                           time preferences.

4) Corruption   It is viewed as due to
                           financial burdens
                           shouldered by family's
                           obligation to take
                           care of each other.

5) Task orientation   It is interpreted
                           in terms of
                           the host nation as
                           having a colonial
                           mentality if a task is
                           not well explained by
                           expatriates giving
                           orders.

6) Respect for   The older one is, the

Authority   more one gets respect.

                             Still, if a younger

                             person shows sincerity

                             and respect he/she will

                             be respected and

                             welcomed kindly.

Albert Koopman (1991), also provides some insights
on African culture. He sums up the African culture by
noting that:

    Africans show a strong reverence for ancestors

    and other departed relatives who are believed to

    be able to affect the living; attaches great

    importance to group life and social harmony;

    sees that the principle of age is an important

    source of wisdom; places a high value on

    ceremony and ritual in many aspects of social

    life; places a consensus in group endeavors; can

    forgive and forget readily because of its great

    capacity for reconciliation even after the

    bitterest conflict; regards correctness of

    speech and beauty as prerequisites for a high

    social standing; is extremely social through

    its spontaneity of self-expression and ease of

    communication. (pp. 60-61).

THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Understanding and heeding cultural variables is critical to success in international business. Lack of familiarity with the business practices, social customs, and etiquette of the country can weaken a company's position in market and prevent it from accomplishing its objectives. U.S firms must pay close attention to different styles of doing business and the degree of importance placed on developing business relationships. Many nationalities value the personal relationship in business more than most American do. Attitudes toward punctuality vary greatly from one culture to another. When crossing cultural lines, something as simple as a greeting can be misunderstood.

Anonymous

(source: Business America vol:112 Iss:2 1991 p.p: 26-27)

As noted above, cultural differences have tremendous implications on international trade. Cultural barriers not only can derail effective communication in a foreign environment but also bring

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animosity and cause mismanagement and collapse
production. The importance of cultural factors on
international ventures was also observed by Skinner
(1964), who listed, four cultural factors and their
impact on production management overseas. He listed
these factors as: (1) Assumptions and attitudes; (2)
Personal beliefs and aspirations; (3) Interpersonal
relationships; and (4) Social structure. Skinner
(1964), provided numerous examples of cultural factors,
and their implications on production in overseas
ventures. He noted that cultural barriers create
frictions not only on human relations but also on
technical, as well as on the management of an
organization abroad.

Skinner (1964), provides an illustration of the
effects of Culture on production management. According
to him,

A. Assumptions and attitudes that shape peoples
perceptions include:

1. Time=local workers might feel that time is
   flexible not as strict as in America. This
   in turn affects manufacturing management on
   choosing approaches towards production control,
   scheduling and purchasing.

2. One's purpose in life=local workers might put
   emphasis on enjoying life each day. This might

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affect how well they meet schedules and
deadlines. It will affect manufacturing
management approaches towards management
development.

3. The future=local workers might feel that their
   future is in the hands of almighty God. This
   will affect manufacturing management approaches
   towards short and long term planning.

4. This life vs. hereafter=local workers might feel
   that life and death are ordained and
   predetermined. This will affect manufacturing
   management on safety programs.

5. Duty and responsibility=local workers might feel
   that their jobs are completed once they give
   orders to subordinates. This will affect
   manufacturing management approaches towards
   executives' techniques of delegation and follow-
   up.

B. Personal beliefs and aspirations determine people's
perceptions on issues such as:

1. What is right and wrong= instead of giving the
   right inventory counts, workers might give
   inventory counts which they feel will
   please the boss. This will affect
   manufacturing management approaches toward

inventory control system.

2. Source of pride= workers might feel that a college degree puts them higher in social standing for life. Therefore in manufacturing management this will affect approaches in the selection of supervisors.

4. Source of fear and concern= workers might feel that jobs are hard to get for a worker who is laid off, regardless of the cause of layoff. This will affect manufacturing management approaches in layoff policy.

5. Extent of one's hopes= workers might feel that if they don't have the right education and social class they wouldn't advance in the workplace. This will affect manufacturing management approaches in incentives motivations.

6. The individual vs. society= the worker's want and needs must be subordinated to the whole group. This will affect manufacturing management approaches on labor relations.

C. Interpersonal relationships provide people with perceptions toward:

1. The source of authority= if the worker perceive that his/her people don't like the new process then it won't work. This will affect

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manufacturing management approaches toward quality control.

2. Care or empathy for others= a worker would rather give her/his salary raise to my foreperson that have to tell her/him is not to receive one. This will affect manufacturing management approaches toward merit reviews.

3. Importance of family obligations= worker will place primary obligation to tend for a sick family member. This will affect manufacturing management approaches toward absenteeism.

4. Objects of loyalty= workers might feel that friendship is more important than business. This affects manufacturing management approaches toward work-group relationships

5. Tolerance for personal differences= a worker might feel that if he/she disagrees with the boss the boss would feel insulted. This will affect manufacturing management approaches toward making decision-making process.

D. Social structure affect people's behaviors/perceptions on:

1. Interclass nobility= a worker might feel it is demeaning to work for someone without a trade school certificate. This affects manufacturing

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management approaches toward promotion from within.

2. Class or caste systems= a worker might feel that it is demeaning for worker of her/his standing to lift heavy object such as typewriters. This affects manufacturing management approaches toward job descriptions, flexibility of job assignments.

3. Urban-village-farm origins= The company must take the place of the village in caring for its people. This affects manufacturing management approaches toward fringe benefit programs.

4. Determinants of status=It is felt that elderly people have wisdom, therefore they deserve the most important jobs on big machines. This affects manufacturing management approaches toward equipment selection.

Globerman (1986), also illustrates the importance of culture in international business. His work on the Fundamentals of International Business Management, covers a wide spectrum of elements of international business. Globerman's work enables international entrepreneurs to understand the implications of international business. Although a number of issues are discussed in the Globerman's book, this review will focus on the segment dealing with scanning the socio

cultural environment.

Globerman noted that, <u>social values and cultural</u> <u>institutions</u>, influence the behaviors of the firm, its employees, its customers, and the host government. In providing the meaning of value, he cited Geert Hofstede who defined value as "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others." He further quoted Hofstede on the definition of culture as "the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment." It is important to note the relationship between culture and value. Globerman noted that "personal value systems provide a framework that influence the general nature of an individual's behavior, while the aggregate of these personal values defines a society or a culture" (p. 141). By understanding the meanings of culture and value, it should not be a surprise that people with different cultural upbringing can misunderstand each other.

Globerman also provides examples of how culture affect international business, to prove that what works well in one society might not do as well in another. He notes that in Japan people tend to purchase fresh food on a daily basis within walking distance and that business is based on personal ties. Globerman also mentions cultural conflicts that arose during a trip to

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Japan by Canadians engaging in joint ventures. Due to differences in their cultural upbringing the Canadians and the Japanese respective negotiation styles differed, causing frictions between the parties. The Canadians were used to quick negotiations, unlike the Japanese. The Japanese place less emphasis on written contracts and high emphasis on mutual understanding and personal agreements. He also noted that there were differing objectives between the two parties. The Japanese are oriented towards growth of sales volume and market shares while the Canadians are geared toward profit maximization. The Canadians felt that the Japanese were too humble and timid in selling, while the Japanese felt that the Canadians were too aggressive. In the final analysis all these problems could have been avoided had the parties involved learned about each other's culture.

To further stress the importance of culture on international business and its effect on management, Robert A. Friday (1989) provides cultural contrasts between American and German managers. He notes that due to cultural differences these managers have different expectations, necessitating a cross-cultural study to alleviate problems.

Summing up his study on <u>Contrasts In Discussion Behaviors Of German And American Managers</u>, Friday

demonstrates cultural contrasts between the two:

> The American manager regards business as
> impersonal whereby the German counterpart regards
> business as being personal. That the primary
> aspect of his or her motivation to cooperate or
> not to cooperate is the need to be liked while the
> Germans stress credibility and position in the
> hierarchy. Americans tend to be informal while the
> Germans are very formal and a rushed informality
> may be perceived as being impolite. Germans have
> strong sense of history, tradition, family, and
> life-long friendships, make   friendship slowly,
> and keep them longer than Americans. Americans
> have a sense of assertiveness, believe in direct
> confrontation, and fair play while the Germans
> share the assertiveness and direct confrontation
> but they tend to have a sense of

sophistication. (p.p 429-445).

Currently more international entrepreneurs are
heeding the warning that in order to effectively engage
in international business close attention must be paid
to the host country's cultural practices relating to
business ventures.

The importance of understanding intercultural
communication variables when engaging in international
ventures is nothing new, as attested by Walle (1989) in

his article in the <u>Management Decision Journal</u>:

> The South American and Central American
> excursions of German scholar Alexander Von
> Humboldt demonstrate that, even in the 18th
> century, sophisticated decision makers understood
> that healthy and equitable economic relationships
> were inevitably based on knowledge,
> understanding, and cultural relativity, and not
> merely on short-term sales tactics.(p.p. 14-20)

The impact of culture on international business
can also be felt in advertisements for products for
foreign markets. Advertisers are warned that when
targeting a foreign market they should be careful with
how the same message could be translated in other
cultures, as Barbara Mueller (1991), discovered in her
study on print and television advertisements for U.S
products targeted in the U.S, Germany, and Japan during
the period of 1985-1987. She observed that unless the
advertisers change the way they provide the message,
they stand to defeat their purposes since consumers
from different cultures tend most of the time to regard
the same message to contain differing amounts of
information.

Gift giving is another area which could prove
problematic in the international business arena. Each

society has its own ways on how to give and receive gifts. In his article about international gift giving presented in Sales and Marketing Management, Remington (1990) advised Canadian business persons to be fully aware on what gifts would be appropriate to their counterparts abroad. If they do not pay attention to the advice they stand to offend or embarrass the recipient. He further noted that "in some countries, it would be considered exceedingly impolite not to take a gift; in others, to ask what is proper would be considered not only rude, but dishonorable as well."

Katherine Glover (1990), also provides insights on the effects of cultural variables on international business including gift giving. In her article in the Business America journal, she details the reasons why it is important to pay attention to cultural variables when engaging in international business ventures. She warns American entrepreneurs that:

> Customs vary widely from one country to
> another. Something with one meaning in one
> area may mean the opposite somewhere else.
> Some of the cultural distinctions that U.S.
> firms most often face include differences in
> business styles, attitudes towards
> development of business relationships,
> attitudes towards punctuality, negotiating

styles, gift-giving customs, greetings,

significance of gestures, meanings of colors

and numbers, and customs regarding titles.

(p. 3).

And to solidify her argument on these cultural

complexities of international business, she provides

examples of differences in customs from Asia, Europe,

and Africa. In summary Glover noted

that:

It is improper to touch a Thai's head or pass an

object over it since the head is regarded as

sacred; one must not cross one's legs when

sitting or point the bottoms of one's feet

towards another person; triangular shapes are

negatively regarded in Hong Kong, Korea, and

Taiwan; number seven is bad luck in Kenya but in

Czechoslovakia it is good luck; red symbolizes

death in many parts of Africa but in Denmark it

is looked upon as positive; in Bulgaria a nod

means no while shaking the head from side to side

means yes.(p.p 2-6)

Glover, further noted that in some societies,

prior to commencing a business relationship one must

first establish a personal relationship based on mutual

trust. Since global trade vary from domestic trade in

terms of approaches, Glover indicated that " there is

much more to business in many parts of the world. Socializing, friendships, etiquette, grace, patience, and protocol are integral parts of business. Jumping right into business discussions before a get-acquainted interlude can be a bad mistake" (p. 3).

The work of Tuller (1991), sums up the impact of culture on international business. An international business person is bound to fail if he/she avoids learning differences in cultural variables that have an impact on international business. The importance of culture can not be underestimated, according to Tuller who stated that, "Cultural barriers tend to dissuade entrance to global markets" (p. 4). He vividly exposes the difficulties to be encountered by the American business person. The American business style, which he terms as, hard-nosed negotiations, blunt remarks, discourteous actions, sloppy demeanor, and rapid business decisions, will not work in other parts of the world. Therefore, he notes that courtesy, understanding, and patience will assist a business person to succeed abroad.

Tuller discusses important variables that an American business person should know. Americans must distinguish people relationships as different societies have distinct relationships among their members. For example, roles of men and women vary in different

societies. A firm grasp of business protocol need to be known prior to entering into a business transaction. Therefore, Southern African culture elements which could impinge on business relations need to be fully understood by Americans.

Scholars in international business ventures have proven through examples, that differences in cultures can hamper communication and derail international business ventures. It is therefore important that entrepreneurs who intend to engage in ventures abroad, incorporate intercultural sensitivity in their international business operations. In short, in order to succeed one must learn international business protocol and apply them appropriately.

Given the reasons above, the researcher strongly feels that, it is essential that Americans as well as Africans need to learn about each other's cultural factors which will make communication easier.

CHAPTER THREE

The Southern African region in question covers mainly the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and black South Africa.

Tanzanian and Zambian subjects were selected as the representative samples for the southern African region. Since the Southern African region is Bantu speaking, there are cultural similarities among them. Furthermore, these countries share similar colonial experiences. The Southern African region has also established various economic institutions to provide a regional common market. Another important reason for selecting the subjects from these countries was their accessibility to the researcher.

Sample Population

The interview questions were centered around cross-cultural implications between the American and Southern African entrepreneurs. Fifteen people were interviewed. Five were from the U.S.A., five from Tanzania and five from Zambia. Accessibility to the

African nationals were through the Tanzanian and
Zambian embassies in Washington, D.C, U.S.A., while the
American nationals were through the American embassy in
Lusaka Zambia and through individuals associated in
international business in both regions. The embassies
provided lists and addresses of individuals and firms
engaged in international ventures. Upon receiving the
lists, the researcher then contacted the individuals to
ascertain their willingness to participate in the
study. Once they confirmed their willingness to
participate, the researcher then proceeded to arrange
the interviews with the respective subjects.

The interviews took place in America, Tanzania, and
Zambia both by phone and in person. Six Africans were
interviewed in person and four by phone. Three
Americans were interviewed in person, and two by phone.
All responses were recorded with the knowledge of the
interviewees. The recorded interviews were conducted in
the manner that suited the interviewees' time and
location.

Prior to the interviews, the subjects were given
an explanation about the nature and the scope of the
study. The interviewees were guaranteed anonymity and
all were over forty years of age.

Interviewees' work role were as follows:Americans-
two are engaged in mining, one is engaged in tourism,

two are engaged in financial investment. With the Africans-two are former bankers (government) and now are in the private sector, two are miners, and six are in general trading.

The interview format consisted of the following questions:

1- Could you please describe in detail from start to finish how you conduct a business meeting.

2- How do you set up a business meeting in terms of the seating arrangements for your business counterpart, and are there any relevant issues to be considered when setting up the place for the meeting?

3- What are the appropriate ways of addressing a business counterpart? What are the appropriate ways of dressing for a business meeting?

4- Do you carry gifts when taking a trip to meet your business counterpart? If you do, what types of gifts are appropriate? Are the gifts so important? Why?

5- How would you approach a business counterpart who is of-

   a) higher status

   b) lower status

   c) same status

   d) opposite gender

6- Do you conduct business after office hours and outside the office environment?

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7- Do you engage in social interactions prior to formalizing business transaction? If you do, what is the significance of your social interaction before completing a business transaction?

8- What is your observation of American/African business persons and their way of doing business?

9- Could you describe in detail some of successful business encounters with Americans/Africans ? Could you provide specific examples? Why were they successful?

10- Could you also describe in detail some unsuccessful business encounters? Could you provide specific examples? Why were they not successful?

11-To what social activities do you prefer to take your business counterpart?

12- Are there things/issues which you deem and have observed to be inappropriate for your business counterpart to do or say?

13-Have you ever dealt with Africans/Americans who have upset you? What made you upset?

14- What advice would you give an American/ African who wishes to be effective in dealing with you?

15- What would you advise to be proper approaches/manners to be followed when conducting a business in you environment?

DATA ANALYSIS

General content analysis was utilized in order to discover some cultural variables affecting communication encounters between Southern Africans and Americans. To achieve that, first, the researcher sorted the responses according to the two regions. All the Southern African responses were analyzed to determine cultural characteristics of that region. The same was done for the U.S.A. subjects. After the analysis, the researcher compared and contrasted the two regions' cultural characteristics. Finally, the researcher sent the results to the interviewees in order to verify the data and also to check whether anything which needed to be included had been left out.

Each statement made by the interviewees was transcribed into 3 x 5 index cards. These cards were then given to two coders. The coders were instructed to place the statements into appropriate categories identified by the researcher. These include: attitudes, time conceptualization, interpersonal relationships, gift giving, role and role assignments, language, and formality. They were to code statements which did not fit any of the given categories under "miscellaneous." Any significant disagreements between the coders and the researcher were discussed, with the latter explaining to the former the meaning of each

category. The categories' definitions were adopted from the works of Samovar and Porter, Harris & Moran, and Glover. The definitions are as follows:

1) Attitudes: These are psychological states that predispose us to act in certain ways when we encounter various social events or objects in our environment. Ethnocentrism causes us to judge others by using our cultural values as a rod of measurement. World view gives us our frame of reference on events we encounter. Absolute values are culturally derived notions one has of right and wrong, and they also influence one's social perception by providing one with a set of basic precepts from which one judges the behavior and beliefs of others. Stereotypes are attitudinal sets in which one assigns attributes to another person solely on the basis of the class or category to which that person belongs, while prejudices are attitudinal sets that predispose one to behave in certain ways toward people solely on the basis of their membership in some group.

2) Roles and role prescriptions: One's role assignment in the society is due to one's culture. Each culture views role prescription of its members differently.

3) Language: Language and culture go hand in hand,

since what and how one thinks are determined by one's culture. Two problems arise when communicating interculturally due to cultural differences, namely: (1) word connotation, and (2) denotative meanings, where meanings of the same thing or event differ from one society to another.

4) Time conceptualization: The concept of time and norms concerning time vary from one culture to another. In the West time is conceptualized in terms of linear-spatial terms, that is, the awareness of a past, a present and a future whereby strong emphasis on time is placed as an aspect of history rather than as an aspect of immediate experience. Other societies are more concerned with immediacy, sometimes called felt time. The appropriate speed of response is influenced by culture.

5) Interpersonal relationships: refers to relationships which are personal and social in nature. For examples, engaging in social interactions outside working environments.

6) Gift giving: refers to the act whereby a person carries presents to one's counterpart.

7) Formality: refers to how one presents oneself to one's counterpart in terms of how one, dresses, and addresses one's counterpart.

8) Miscellaneous: Upon thorough categorization of

statements and one finds that a statement does

not fit categories given above then one must put

that statement in this category.

The initial coding process brought about 80% intercoder

reliability between the coders. This was attributed to

the ambiguity of some of the statements which one of

the coders felt could have been put under perception

although this category was not given. But when it was

explained to the coders that perception/image are

covered under attitude variables as defined by Samovar

and Porter (1976, 1991),the intercoder reliability was

98%.

CHAPTER FOUR

The personal interviews enabled the researcher to gather valuable quantitative data on cultural implication on trade between the Southern Africans and Americans. There is however less statistical analysis in this research due to the small number of interviewees and the structure of the research which was meant to allow the interviewees to shed light into what they considered to be problematic in their dealings with their counterparts. The results did bring out some of the cultural problems facing international entrepreneurs. For support eight categories of sample statements are reported.

BREAKDOWN OF STATEMENTS MADE BY INTERVIEWEES

Total statements made by all 15 interviewees=744

Total statements falling under cultural variables=704

The statements were made by 10 Africans and 5 Americans.

1.Attitudes: 205 statements. Africans 68%, Americans 32%.

Frequency: Africans=140   Americans=65   Total=205

Examples:

"If I reach a point where we do not have a complete agreement, I would try to assume their perspective and their viewpoints as much as possible. On the other hand, if I feel it is something very strongly and they see it in a different way then I like to present several other dimensions or aspects. Maybe they will understand why I say we can't do it that way or I would not prefer to." (American)

"I wonder if Americans do take time to learn about their counterparts places of origin. That is not to say that I have not met some who are well versed into my country's background. There were times I felt that some of the questions and statements were somewhat demeaning to my society." (African)

"Although I have met wonderful American entrepreneurs, I still feel that a number of them feel that they need to have an upper hand in business ventures other than looking for ventures of mutual benefits." (African)

"I have come across individuals whom I feel believe in the Tarzan movies and it shows when the negotiate with you. Maybe that's why we have not seen too many Americans back home investing." (African)

"Americans have the best communication systems infact I would say they are the media giants of the world, and one would expect that majority of them to be well informed but to the contrary. I wonder if they really would like to venture outside their environment. The Americans either by choice or otherwise I feel are well meaning people but lack proper information and interest about us." (African)

" I do not think they regard Africans as intelligent beings. I was astounded to hear one of the entrepreneurs commenting that I was very smart for an African. Maybe he meant as a complement, Who knows?"(African)

" The Americans seem to be to pushy and demanding" (African)

" They (Americans) tend to press others too much but if someone else does the same to them they react negatively."(African)

"they (Americans) tend to expect things to materialize promptly, they seem to be in a hurry and lack patience, they have problems understanding that we do things differently."(African)

" Americans look for quick results and if that does not happen they get very frustrated and cancel the proposed projects."(African)

" The problems I have with Africans is that they take to long on implementation of projects."(American)

" I do not understand why there seem to be a great deal of delays when dealing with Africans."(American)

" Africans take too much time socializing when all I want is to conduct business and go home."(American)

" Americans tend to be forceful and straightforward in their business dealings"(African)

"I have noticed that Africans tend to react negatively if you shout or when you talk to them in a high tone at them. They as I was told regard that as being disrespectful"(American)

"It seems that kickbacks are a way of life in Africa if you want to speed up things or get things done."(American)

"Africans are lazy. You need to put an expatriate

if you want things done properly."(American"

2.Role and role prescription: 37 statements. Africans 86%, Americans 14%.

Frequency: Africans=32   Americans=5 Total=37

Examples:

"people of the opposite gender, I try to keep the business atmosphere. I try not to become too familiar with the opposite gender."(African)

"In my excursions in Africa I rarely see women engaging in international business. But I have seen a number if them conducting within their vicinities"

(American)

3. Language: 54 statements. Africans 82%, Americans 19%.

Frequency: Africans=44   Americans=10   Total=54

Examples:

"Although I can not recall the exact phrases, there are times I find some difficulties in following a conversation with the Americans whenever they use what I felt were American jargons."(African)

"Sometimes I think Americans take for granted that everybody understands American sports terminologies, so they tend to use them freely in a conversation without realizing that some of us who have not been exposed to that form of language feel lost and can not follow the conversation." (African)

"I can speak standard English fairly well but during some of my meeting with my American associates, I felt as if they were speaking another language other than English. I could not follow the jokes though they were uttered in English." (African)

"Sometimes the Accent throws me off. But you get used to it after a while." (American)

"I sometimes find my American counterparts to be very loose with words." (African)

4. Time conceptualization: 108 statements. Africans 58%, Americans 42%.

Frequency: Africans=63   Americans=45   Total=108

Examples:

"I try when meeting with business people from Africa, I try not to rush things. And give them plenty

of time to feel comfortable to think what they want to say."(American)

"My observation of American business persons and their ways of doing business is that they are time conscious, and that they want to get to the bottom line which is how can they make a profit fast out of whatever is being discussed and if it is a safe investment."(African)

"You know sometimes in the U.S.A. and even I as an individual we want to rush things."(American)

5. Interpersonal relationships: 184 statements. Africans 84%, Americans 16%.
Frequency: Africans=154 Americans=30   Total=184

Examples:
"I usually don't jump right into the business, but I try to find out a bit about them and I usually ask them about their families, what they have been doing, what are their hobbies, and last I get into the business."(African)

"-trying to know their families, and get their families to meet my family so that we know each other."

(African)

"I do engage in social interaction prior to formalizing a business interaction. This is mainly to make the person more relaxed and get to know them much better."(African)

"...they have to be personable, what sells a product is whether you can get along with the person."
(African)

"On the setting, most of the time it would be more of a relaxed setting like in a hotel where we could talk over a meal or a drink."(African)

"That goes back to the first question about how do I conduct a meeting, that's when we generally talk about something in common. Something that both of us can relate to. I consider that socializing. That's to make them feel comfortable and establish a rapport so to speak."(American)

6. Formality: 55 statements. Africans 73%, Americans 27%.

Frequency: Africans=40   Americans=15   Total=55

<u>Examples:</u>

"I usually address my business counterparts by
their surnames and titles. I use a formal way of
addressing them. I also dress formal."(African)

"Always I approach my counterpart who is of higher
status by addressing him/her by whatever title the
person is carrying."(African)

"If I'm dealing with the people strictly in
tourism, then I would wear my dress safari suit.
However, if I was meeting the Minister of Tourism, then
I would wear a western business suit. So I would try to
dress appropriately in that regard."(American)

"On addressing the individuals, if I'm meeting
them for the first time here in America, although
informal, I would be very formal. But I would encourage
them to call me by my first name."(American)

"If I'm addressing a person I know well then I
would probably use the first name even though this may
be a business meeting. That shows that we have worked
for a long time and that we know each other."(American)

<u>7. Gift giving: 61 statements. Africans 67%, Americans</u>

33%.

Frequency: Africans=41 Americans=20 Total=61

Examples:

"I carry ethnic products from my area. The gifts are important because they show your warmth and a reminder of sincerity. It shows that you appreciate them."(African)

"If I'm meeting with people in Africa, yes I do like carry gifts. Gifts are important to show the sign of respect to give something to someone even though it might not have a lot of monetary value."(American)

"Gift giving is a touchy subject in the States therefore I tend not to take gifts until I'm sure that there are no laws being broken."(American)

8.Miscellaneous: 40 statements. Africans 75%, Americans 25%.

Frequency: Africans=30   Americans=10   Total=40

Content Analysis Categories in Frequency Order

1. Attitudes................... 205 statements- 28%

2. Interpersonal relationships. 184 statements- 25%

3. Time conceptualization...... 108 statements- 15%

4. Gift giving................. 61 statements- 8%

5. Formality..................... 55 statements-   7%

6. Language..................... 54 statements-   7%

7. Miscellaneous................ 40 statements   5%

8. Role & Role prescription..... 37 statements-   5%

TABLE 1

Graphic results of the study

8 categories with the number of statements made
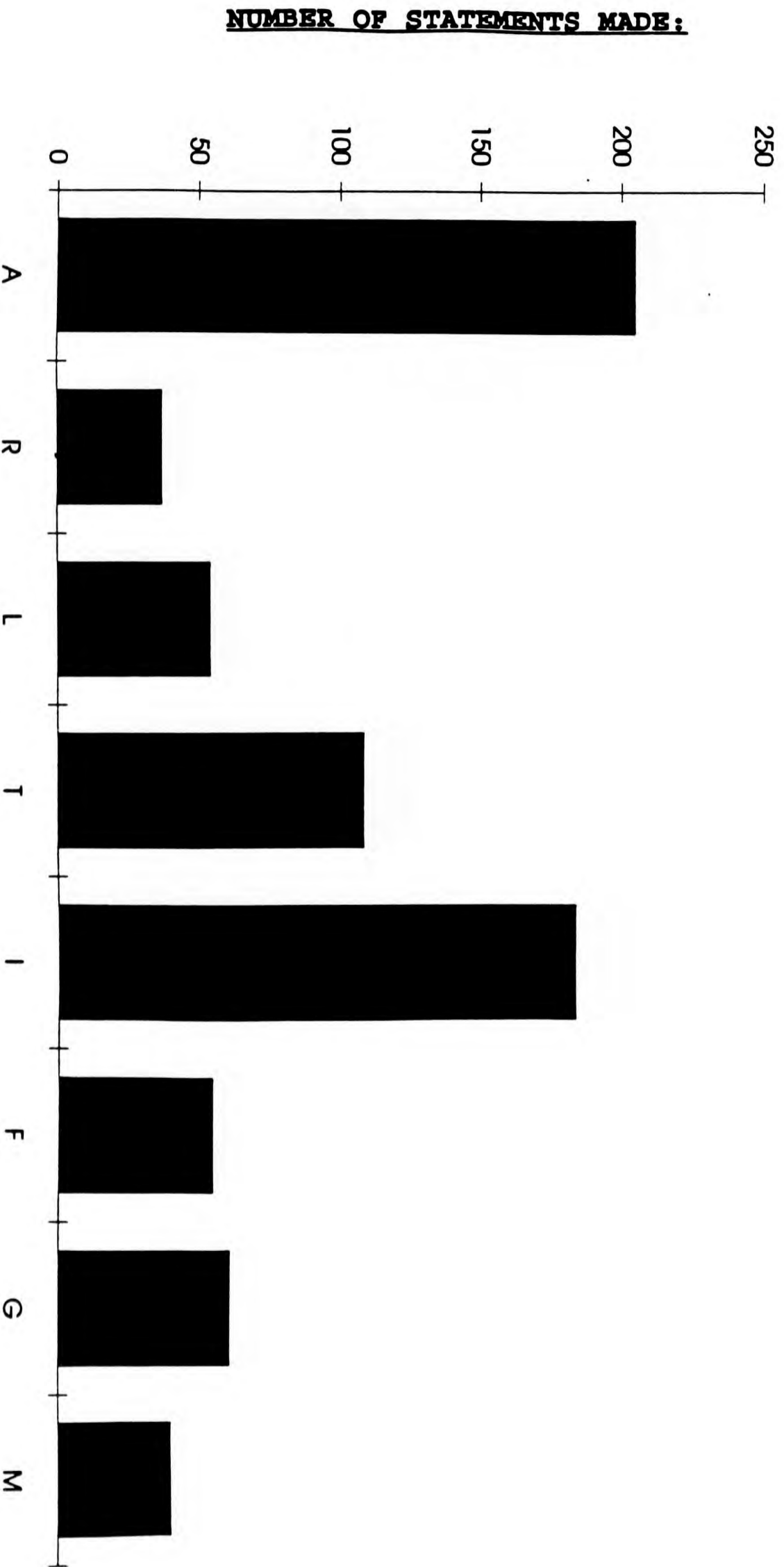
NUMBER OF STATEMENTS MADE:

THE CATEGORIES

KEY: A=ATTITUDES, R=ROLE AND ROLE PRESCRIPTIONS,

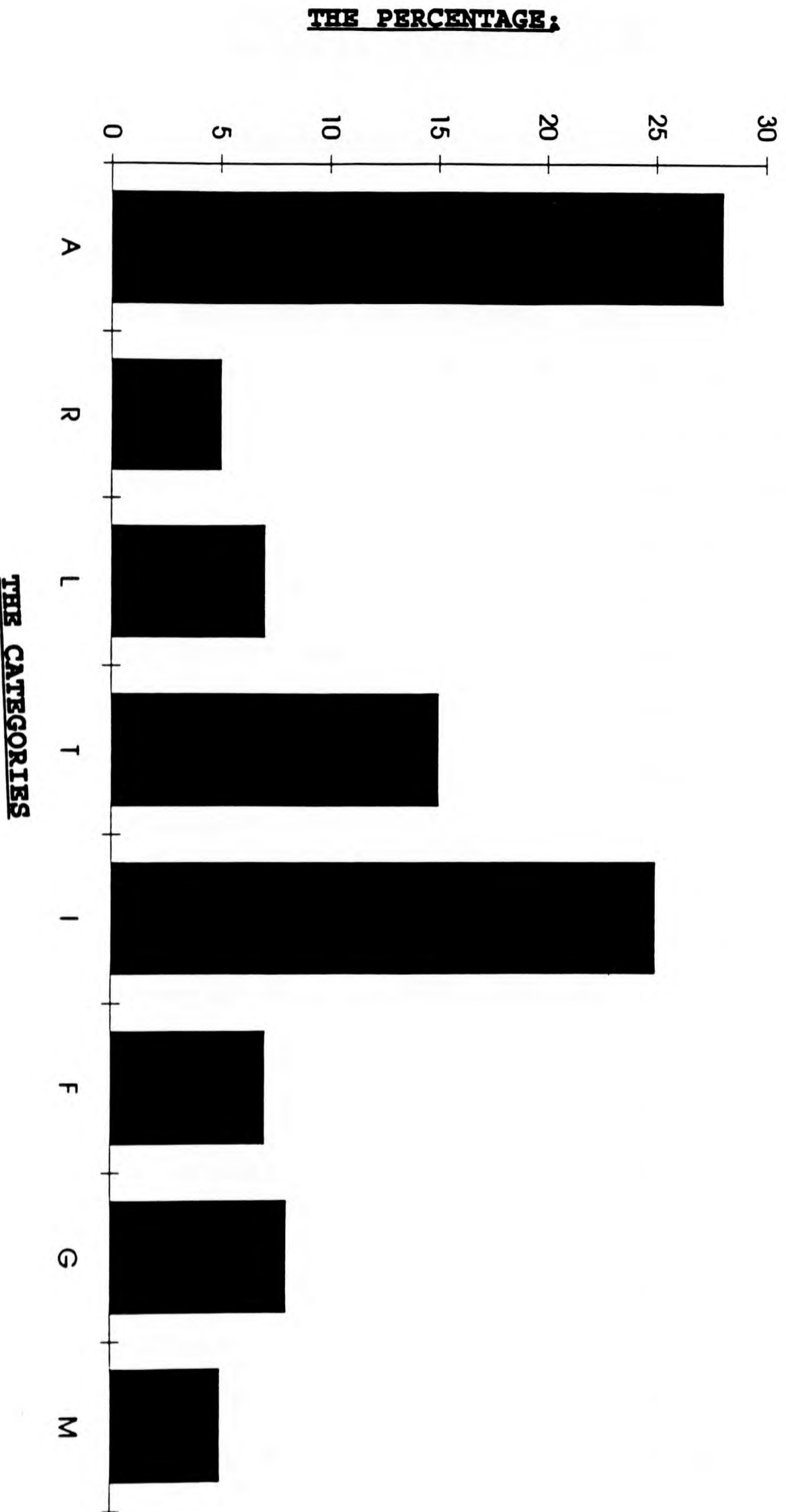L=LANGUAGE, T=TIME CONCEPTUALIZATION, I=INTERPERSONAL

RELATIONSHIPS, F=FORMALITY, G=GIFT GIVING, M=MISCELLANEOUS

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TABLE 11

Graphic Results of the Study

8 categories with their percentages

THE PERCENTAGE:

THE CATEGORIES

KEY: A=ATTITUDES, R=ROLE AND ROLE PRESCRIPTIONS,

L=LANGUAGE, T=TIME CONCEPTUALIZATION, I=INTERPERSONAL

RELATIONSHIPS, F=FORMALITY, G=GIFT GIVING,

M=MISCELLANEOUS

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

There are various implications pertaining to
international business ventures such as economic,
social, and political environments, and image problems
were discovered, but the primary focus of this study
was to determine what cultural variables affected
communication breakdowns during encounters between
Southern Africans and American entrepreneurs.

It should be noted that entrepreneurs from both
regions had little exposure to the cultural behaviors
of their counterparts. This can be attributed to the
lack of business and political relationships between
the two regions.

The study identified the cultural differences
which significantly affected the intercultural
communication between the American and Southern African
business persons. But there were also similarities.
Some of the similarities observed include:
1-Business meeting arrangements were similar to
American meeting arrangements.
2-Dress codes were as formal between them, but these
varied according to the occasions.

Overall, the entrepreneurs' experiences which had
cultural implications, and which were categorized

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according to the cross cultural variables mentioned earlier provided significant differences.

Some of the variables were stated more often than others and they seemed to be more problematic to the entrepreneurs. The three variables stated most often were attitudes (205 statements- 28%), interpersonal relationships (184 statements- 25%), and time conceptualization (108 statements- 15%). Some of the entrepreneurs had fewer difficulties compared to others. This chapter will present a discussion of the entrepreneurs' experiences and their implications towards ventures between the two regions. It will also provide recommendations for future study.

THE ENTREPRENEURS' EXPERIENCES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

A few years ago the opportunities for interactions between the Southern African and American entrepreneurs were almost non-existent. This was due to the fact that in the past most of the Southern African nations had centralized systems whereby the governments controlled the means of production and had fixed prices which were not dictated by the market economy. Furthermore, the political infrastructures were incompatible with those of the American government. This made it hard for both domestic and foreign investors to do business in the

Southern African countries.

But in recent years these Southern African countries have changed their economic and political systems to accommodate a form of market economy. The governments are now vigorously encouraging both domestic and foreign entrepreneurs to participate in revamping their stagnant economies. To achieve that, the governments have instituted policies to safeguard private investments and have put forth investment incentive codes which are very attractive to businesses. Due to these new developments, Southern African and American entrepreneurs have begun contact each other at a greater number.

During these business encounters, entrepreneurs from both regions experienced some form of communication problems. These problems as indicated in this study can be attributed to cultural differences between the two regions.

Their experiences during their interactions with their counterparts enforced the belief that culture is an integral part of one's life and that when two cultures meet without prior preparation there are bound to be collisions which can be detrimental to international ventures. But as one is exposed to another culture for a reasonable amount of time, one learns what to expect from one's counterpart. It is

imperative that all the entrepreneurs concerned first learn about their own cultures and then about their counterparts' cultures. By doing so, varying cultural elements that affect communication will be brought into light and accommodated accordingly. The work of Redfields (1947) illuminates this cultural dilemma. He noted that:

> "The alien culture at first appears to us as a mask, enigmatic or repugnant. On closer acquaintance we see it as a garment for the spirit; we understand its harmonies and appreciate them. Finally, as acquaintance goes deeper still, we do not see, or for a time forget, the culture, but look only to the common humanity of the men and women beneath." (p.262)

One of the most prevalent and difficult variables encountered by both the Southern African and American entrepreneurs was the clash of varying attitudes (28%) between the Southern African and American regions. Attitudes as noted by Samovar and Porter(1976) are peoples' state of minds that shape peoples' behaviors and that the tendency of judging other people according to one's standard is part of attitudes. The ethnocentrism and stereotypes held and shown by both Africans and Americans are parts of attitudes. Each

society has its own set of attitudes which are distinct from other societies. Therefore it is to no surprise that during this initial encounters, the entrepreneurs from both regions encountered communication misunderstandings. Lack of cross cultural communication by the entrepreneurs is due to the fact that they failed to acknowledge that people have dissimilar cultural attitudes which are neither bad or good. So in order to judge people one needs to understand what cultural backgrounds other people have.

This variable (attitudes) caused a lot of frustration among the entrepreneurs from both sides. The Southern Africans felt that their American counterparts were playing a big brother role. The Americans showed a sense of superiority and that the Africans felt they were not getting equal regard by the Americans who were looking for a win-lose situation not a win-win one. On the other hand Americans felt that the Southern Africans were not businesslike in an American sense.

Role and role assignments were not as problematic. This could be due to the fact that both African and American entrepreneurs were males and almost all of them were over forty. But it was expressed that the Africans felt the younger Americans seemed to lack respect for the elders.

Language, although English was spoken, was found to be one of the problems by the Southern Africans. The Southern Africans felt that a number of their American counterparts used very informal language which was embarrassing to them. Such words such as damn it, sob, shit, lazy ass, get their butt up, and colored just to name a few light ones, which are generally accepted in America are taboo in Africa. They also had problems following up conversations on numerous occasions because the Americans used jargon or sports terminology such as curve ball, time out, and innings which were unfamiliar to the Africans. The Americans at the same time felt that the Africans' accent at times made it difficult for them to be well understood and that they were too formal with the language.

The concept of time was another major problem. The Southern Africans felt they were rushed by the Americans and that everything in America is measured according to time. They felt that Americans have assigned a monetary sign to every minute instead of enjoying time. The Americans felt that Africans did not value time and they wasted too much time socializing rather than accomplishing a task.

Interpersonal relationships was also one of the most important areas of concern. For the Southern Africans it is imperative that prior to engaging in any

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serious business relations, one has to establish a
personal relationship with one's counterpart, in order
to reach mutual trust which in turn creates a strong
social and business bond between the two. Therefore
they spend a lot of time trying to get to know each
other. To them business is an interpersonal matter.
They feel very uncomfortable to just jump into business
without first establishing an interpersonal
relationship with their counterparts. While the
Americans treat business as a separate entity from
interpersonal relationships, it is to no surprise that
they felt that the Southern Africans were wasting time
on social issues other than getting down to business.
Americans cherish their privacy unlike their Southern
African counterparts.

Formality was another variable raised by the
entrepreneurs. The Southern Africans felt at times very
uncomfortable with the Americans due to their level of
informality in a business setting. But informality is
accepted by the Africans upon establishing mutual
relationships, but not prior to that.

Gift giving also caused concern. In the Southern
African region, gift giving between and among business
persons is the norm. It is regarded as a form of
acknowledgement, appreciation, and friendship. In
America it is a very touchy issue as it may be

construed as bribery.

The general impressions the researcher got from the study are that all the people involved in the research were very forthcoming and helpful. They were very honest and availed their precious time to contribute to the research. One problem encountered by the researcher is that the interviewees evaded giving specific examples of some of the problems they encountered. This dilemma could be expected with Africans as it is in their culture not to wash dirty linen in public. The interviewees were very flexible whenever there were obstacles in timing. They returned long distance calls at their own expense.

The entrepreneurs' experiences conclusively indicate that cross cultural communication variables greatly affected communication effectiveness between the Southern African and American entrepreneurs.

Therefore, it is of primary concern that in order to effectively facilitate business encounters between the two regions, it is essential that entrepreneurs and institutions engaged in promoting trade between the two regions must vigorously prepare for cross-cultural interactions. By doing so, it will help minimize communication frictions and enable the entrepreneurs to engage in business details without misreading their counterparts.

One way to achieve this is to provide seminars and to develop training materials pertaining to cultural differences on how to effectively communicate cross culturally. This must be done in ample time prior to the interactions between the business persons.

Finally, although some variables on verbal communication were brought up, it is felt that an in-depth study of non-verbal communication elements could not be accomplished due to the inability of the researcher to observe the interviewees. Most of the interviews were conducted by telephone. Since non verbal communication is also shaped by cultural upbringing, it is important that these elements should be investigated.

Field observation is warranted in the Southern African region as it will enable an investigator to observe the important cultural elements which have implications to business transactions. This will also provide insights on cultural issues which might have been omitted consciously or unconsciously by the interviewees but are relevant to international trade.

Given the immense economic opportunities available for both Southern Africans and Americans, it is imperative that cross cultural difficulties need to be well understood. It is hoped that future studies include the social, political and economic implications

in relation to the cultural environment.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCHER'S PERSPECTIVE

Global interdependence has a special meaning
for the Asia-Pacific region with its many
very diverse races, religions, cultures,
ideologies and histories. Peaceful
coexistence, economic cooperation and
progress will not only require a great deal
more mutual understanding of each other's
legitimate interests and aspirations that
exist at present, but will also require a
deeper understanding of, and sensibility to
all the religions, cultures, worldviews,
values, and customs in the region.

Soejatmoko

The above quote not only is applicable within
Africa and America, but also between Africa and
America. Africa and America are both populated with
people of diverse races and cultural upbringing making
it a necessity for one to learn about others if one
wants to effectively interact with others.

These entrepreneurs must expect challenges when
embarking on ventures in Africa. These challenges could
easily frustrate them and make them give up on vast
opportunities available in the African continent.

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Having been exposed to both African and American environments for over ten years, this researcher intends to share his perspective on the matter. In the course of these years the researcher has tried to facilitate interactions between Americans and Africans. This has allowed him to observe difficulties faced by both Americans and Africans in their business interactions.

The researcher acknowledges the realities of the global village whereby American entrepreneurs can access information and communicate around the world in a matter of seconds. They can learn what cultural implications on business that exist in numerous countries in Asia, Latin America and Europe and therefore prepare themselves to the challenges well in advance. Unfortunately this is not readily so when it comes to the African continent.

In the eyes of American entrepreneurs, Africa is the land of misery. It has an image crisis due to lack of balance in covering news from Africa. This has created a negative perception about Africa. For a long time American entrepreneurs have been bombarded with news not conducive to business, making them wary in venturing into the continent. Negative and unbalanced reporting by the media on Africa has hurt the continent's marketability to the American

entrepreneurs. This bias is somewhat being corrected
however. For example, the atlas has been revised to
show the accurate size of Africa in comparison to North
America. In the past, North America was shown to be
bigger than Africa while in truth Africa is almost
three times bigger than North America.

It is imperative that American entrepreneurs gain
new perspective and perception about Africa so that
they can make intelligent decisions on African business
environments.

Africa is such a vast continent with both its
fortunes and misfortunes. Not until the late fifties
did some of the African countries begin to attain their
independence. During colonialism, African civilization
and culture was suppressed by the colonialists. Upon
gaining their independence African countries began the
formidable tasks of restructuring their economies,
societies and cultures. In the fights against colonial
rule, nationalism transcended ethnic boundaries. But
the colonial system of divide and conquer by using
ethnicity had already taken its toll on Africa and in
some areas Africa is still paying the price.

When American entrepreneurs land in Africa they
will encounter physical environments such as climate,
business infrastructures, beliefs and values very much
different from their own. Understanding and adapting to

the African environment will facilitate success to the entrepreneurs.

The African continent being one of the least industrialized continents, the American entrepreneurs must be aware that they will find the least advanced communication systems. Dependence on public transportation should be approached with caution. Information flows very slow. Planning for housing must be done well in advance. Majority of consumer goods readily available in the States most likely will be in short supply, expensive and even at times non existence. If they are taking their families, adequate preparation for school need to be addressed as most likely the education system will be different and spaces hard to find. The health system is not up to par, therefore one must prepare for emergencies well in advance. Airports are not as modern as in America. It must be realized that these problems are part of business opportunities awaiting to be developed.

In addition to some physical difficulties mentioned above, American entrepreneurs will also encounter other problems other than those cultural barriers which were the subject of this study. American entrepreneurs must be ready to deal with different managerial styles whereby saving face and non-confrontational attitudes are the norms. Fatalism

prevails in Africa. Cumbersome bureaucracy is to be expected. Delays are frequent. Loyalty and familyhood are very strong elements in Africa, therefore American entrepreneurs should not be surprised to see people hiring their own. No matter how right one is on any given issue or event presenting one's case must be done with respect, otherwise one will not achieve one's desired goals. American entrepreneurs must realize that on various occasions they will be encountering Africans who profess to different religious beliefs such as Islamic or Animistic beliefs. Although one would find corruption in high places an entrepreneur is urged not to participate in it as future repercussions might outweigh immediate benefits.

When giving gifts to government officials American entrepreneurs must be very careful in choosing what to give. An acceptable gift to give is one which symbolizes one's venture. If one gives a gift with extremely high monetary value it might be construed as bribery and land them both in trouble. This is not to say that people do not get away with these activities and on occasions may expedite their ventures faster. But it is a very high risk to take. Unless the American entrepreneur has established a very strong relationship, one must avoid engaging in deep discussions on internal politics. When an African

counterpart has extended an invitation one must accept. Refusing the invitation could be translated as rebuking one's hospitality and not accepting one's friendship which is highly valued in Africa.

The researcher believes that cross-cultural training on both the Americans and Africans will facilitate cultural understanding and increase chances of business success. All entities both in Africa and America governmental and non-governmental, engaged in international trade/relations must be involved in facilitating training and seminars on cultural aspects to be observed by their subjects when embarking on international trade.

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INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The Department of Communication Studies at the
University of Kansas support the practice of protection
for human subjects participating in research. The
following information is provided for you to decide
whether you wish to participate. You should be aware
that even if you agree to participate, you are free to
withdraw at any time without penalty.

The purpose of this study is to learn what culture
factors that affect communication between Southern
African and American business persons.

I will interview you for up to an hour about your
business dealings with Americans/Africans.

Your participation is solicited although strictly
voluntary. I assure you that your name will not be
associated in any way with the research findings.

If you would like additional information concerning
this study before or after it is complete, please feel
free to contact me by phone or mail. You will be given
a copy of the research results.

sincerely,

Rashid Zulu

Principal Investigator

3090 Wescoe hall

University of Kansas

Lawrence Ks 66045

913 864 3633

Signature of interviewee

With my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years

of age and have received a copy of consent form to

keep.

Name:.............................

Address:..............................

        ....

        ....

        ....

Age:............................

Gender:...................

Nationality:.........................

Profession:....................

How long have you been in the States?

....

Religion:......................

If you are an African answer part (a) and if you are an
American Answer part (b).

(a) How many business meetings have you had with Americans?....

Have you been familiarized with America prior to having an encounter with people from that region? yes....no....

(b) How many business meetings have you had with Africans?.....

Have you been familiarized with Africa prior to having encounter with people from that region? yes...no....