

# **On Cultural Coexistence in an Age of Globalization**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Nowadays, ours is an age of globalization. Under the globalizing trend, many specific cultures and cultural diversity have been greatly influenced and threatened. There is no doubt that cultural coexistence in an age of globalization has become one of the hottest topics. Therefore, the author tries to analyze and discuss the relationships among culture, cultural diversity and cultural coexistence in an age of globalization and points out that globalization does not mean that all cultures and cultural diversity should become one in the end. Finally, the author puts forward his suggestions that peoples from different cultural backgrounds in the world would have awareness of cultural coexistence, that is to say, they would know not only how to self-consciously respect, appreciate and preserve the culture of their own, but also how to learn and appreciate, understand and meet other cultures which may very well have peculiar and equally proud advantages, so as to really share beautiful diverse cultures, nurture a commonality of all civilizations and identify their universally recognized characters in order to build up a peaceful and harmonious world of human coexistence.

Keywords: culture, cultural coexistence, globalization, cultural diversity, civilization, human coexistence

## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, ours is an age of globalization. Under the globalizing trend, many specific cultures and cultural diversity have been greatly influenced and threatened. There is no doubt that cultural coexistence in an age of globalization has become one of the hottest topics. Under the influence of globalization, the intercultural communication and cooperation between countries become more and more frequent. And the intercultural communication across cultures in which values, beliefs, standards, knowledge, moral, laws, and behaviors shared by individuals and societies should be taken into fully consideration and plays an important role in the world communication; trade business and the development of cooperation and friendship between countries( Akhtar, 2010). Therefore, the author tries to analyze and discuss the relationships among culture, cultural diversity and cultural coexistence in an age of globalization and points out that globalization does not mean that all cultures and cultural diversity should become one in the end. Finally, the author puts forward his suggestions that peoples from different cultural backgrounds in the world would have awareness of cultural coexistence, that is to say, they would know not only how to self-consciously respect, appreciate and preserve the culture of their own, but also how to learn and appreciate,

understand and meet other cultures which may very well have peculiar and equally proud advantages, so as to really share beautiful diverse cultures, nurture a commonality of all civilizations and identify their universally recognized characters in order to build up a peaceful and harmonious world of human coexistence.

## **2. Analysis and discussion on culture, cultural diversity and cultural coexistence**

### **2.1 Culture**

At the present time, there are many definitions of culture given by the different scholars in the world. Different scholars have different theories and opinions about the definitions of culture.

Culture is the total accumulation of beliefs, customs, values, behaviors, institutions and communication patterns that are shared, learned and passed down through the generations in an identifiable group of people (Davis, 2010).

' Culture is defined as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses, and material expressions, which, over time, express the continuities and discontinuities of social meaning of a life held in common.'(James, 2015).

Cambridge English Dictionary (2015) states that culture is, "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time."

Terror Management Theory posits that culture is a series of activities and worldviews that provide humans with the basis for perceiving themselves as "person[s] of worth within the world of meaning"—raising themselves above the merely physical aspects of existence, in order to deny the animal insignificance and death that Homo Sapiens became aware of when they acquired a larger brain (Greenberg, Koole and Pyszczynski, 2013).

Cultures provide people with ways of thinking—ways of seeing, hearing, and interpreting the world. Thus the same words can mean different things to people from different cultures, even when they speak the "same" language. When the languages are different, and translation has to be used to communicate, the potential for misunderstandings increases.

Linguists like Whorf, Sapir, and Hayakawa have connected both how we know something and how we think about something with language. So interconnected are communication and culture that some scholars have been led to use these terms interchangeably: "culture is communication" and "communication is culture." (Hall, 1959, Samovar, Porter, and Jain, 1981) Yet language is the tool we use to describe culture. Language is clearly inadequate as a means to help us understand cultures, especially our own. It is limited by its own structure and the patterns it imposes on thinking. When language is turned back upon itself and communication is the object of its inquiry as well as the means, then perhaps understanding communication can help us to understand culture. (Varner and Beamer, 1995) No doubt, Culture is a wide topic, different culture in different place, even in the same city, it must have the diversity of cultural in this city.

### **2.2 Cultural diversity**

As far as the culture be concerned, because of the communication. It's undeniable that people need communication, need expression and need the understanding of each other, so the diversity of culture is being more and more important. On a large scale, it's obvious that the diversity of culture

is different from countries. People should have the fundamental knowledge of cultural values, cultural dimensions, and something different in social customs.

Firstly, cultural value is the core of cultural diversity. Different cultural value clearly reflects social core value of one specific culture. At the same time, different cultural value is also one of the main difficulties that people from different cultural background in their intercultural communication. For example, differences between Chinese values and Western values are reflected clearly that culture diversity is impact of our communication. This is a part of cultural diversity, just in conception of the individualism and collectivism. It's obvious that we can't try to balance this phenomenon, but we can try to accommodate to each other, that's may be the first thing to balance the cultural diversity.

Secondly, cultural dimensions deeply influence in different cultures and include power distance, masculinity and femininity, uncertainty avoidance and so on, as with the uncertainty avoidance, cultures of low uncertainty avoidance have less concern about ambiguity and uncertainty and have more tolerance for a variety of opinions, but in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance have low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. Thus, people may find there is so many different things in the world, in the colorful world, never mind their behavior, it's not modifiable cultural dimensions, that's the second thing to balance the cultural diversity.

Thirdly, social customs are an important thing about the social life. Different societies have different social customs. Social custom have great impact of our communication. We may take punctuality as an example. Americans tend to place more emphasis on punctuality than people in many other places do, but in Spain or India, an hour later or even two hours later is common, nobody thinks anything of it. That's a deeply gap between Americans and Spanish. Different people in different countries have different culture, we must treat with different ways. As an American want to meet an Indian in seven o'clock, he/she may asks this Indian arrived in half past five o'clock.

In general, cultural diversity may be a problem between countries, but accommodation with each other can boost the cultural integration, so many cultures in one world, so colorful world we live in.

### **3.3 Cultural coexistence**

With the development of globalization, especially the increase of global trade, it is unavoidable that different cultures will meet, conflict, and blend together. People from different culture find it is difficult to communicate not only due to language barriers, but also are affected by culture styles.

The world is now a colorful landscape of different languages, skin colors, and different cultures. It is important to develop an appreciation for different cultures in order to become well-rounded who is sensitive to the unique qualities of others. In essence, each of us is raised in a belief system that, when we're least suspecting, sneaks up from behind and makes us see things its way. We, like other members of our culture, come to share a common idea of what's appropriate and inappropriate. In most international settings for that matter, we meet people who were most likely raised with a considerably different set of values from our own. The new culture may take all we have ever learned about what's good and bad, just and unjust, beautiful and ugly, and stand it on its head.( Cai and Dong,2011)

Today, there are literally thousands of cultures on the earth, contributing to global diversity. One

reason for the existence of such various cultures is that there are many ways that the people on the earth are culturally different. Specifically a culture consists of numerous cultural components that vary from one culture to another.

The world is becoming more like a village, as its residents we want it to be a place we feel comfortable living in. These are some of the challenges of living in a global village. To meet those challenges people everywhere need to learn about other cultures. They need to know their neighbors. They need to do more than know about them. They need to know how to get along with them and how to solve problems that inevitably arise. To do this it is necessary to learn how to communicate across cultures. That means global villagers need to learn to think, feel and behave in new ways. The reality of the global village challenges all its residents to develop a broader worldview, a more global psychology, and the cultural skills necessary for building relationships and solving problems across cultures.(Gao,2009) Therefore, people should understand the connotations of cultural coexistence which absorb cultural fruits of various cultures from different countries and assimilate excellent cultural achievements, and promote the cultural development and civilization of human beings, and further explores how to preserve the cultural heritages and traditions from various cultures and to develop its own cultural advantages in an age of globalization.

### **3. Suggestions**

From the above analysis and discussion, we should have known that cultural coexistence is based on existence of various cultures in an age of globalization. Every culture has its own cultural influence and everyone should respect the cultural diversity. The people with different cultures in the world only understand it and then may conduct intercultural communication with other from different cultures. It's incredible that every culture should be respected. Respect is just basic for cultural coexistence. It will build harmonious relationship among peoples with different cultures. Furthermore, the respect for different cultures is vital to people when they talk with other, work with other, even live with other in the same world. Now, it's necessary for us to discuss how to respect different cultures in an age of globalization.

#### **3.1 Learn some basic knowledge about another culture.**

No matter what your culture is, it's important to learn from other people with different cultural background and can express that sense of wonder and awe in countless ways. Thus, people should learn some basic knowledge about different cultures in the world, especially about different world major cultures, their cultural systems and values. In this way, people with different communicative styles reflect deeper philosophies and world views which are the foundation of their culture. And then people should know or understand that every culture has its followers to be good because people are innately good. In general, people are supposed to live peacefully with others, showing generosity to those who are less fortunate. Lies, stealing, killing and sexual misconduct should be avoided. If a person properly followed his /her culture as taught originally, the world would be much more peaceful. It is ignorance which causes hatred between faiths and study of other faiths helps to understand and respect other culture. Hence, learning about different ways that people with different cultures communicate with can enhance people's intercultural communication in an age of globalization.

### **. 3.2 Maintain an attitude of respect**

Look for similarities not differences. Set aside the notion that your culture is "advantage" and another culture is automatically "disadvantage". This means suspending judgment and being diplomatic to show respect for people of other cultures. Treat the people you encounter as you would want to be treated if someone of another culture. It is very important for people to keep this in mind when they are in a dialogue or when they are communicating with others with different religious beliefs. Especially, when they are dealing with any intercultural conflict, they should be mindful that people may differ in what they feel comfortable revealing, because the variation among different cultures even different interpretations in respective attitude toward different cultures is also something to consider before they communicate with people from different cultures.

### **2.3 Tolerate different cultures**

Tolerance is a very minimalist attitude whereas respect involves something more active and positive. Tolerance is a good cornerstone on which to build human relationships. When one views the slaughter and suffering caused by cultural intolerance down all the history of Man and into modern times, one can see that intolerance is a very non-survival activity. Cultural tolerance does not mean one cannot express his own opinions. It does mean that seeking to undermine or attack the culture and cultural values of another has always been a short road to trouble. People from one culture should have tolerance awareness of other cultures. Cultural diversity does not have to divide us from each other. It does not have to paralyze us either, for fear of not saying that "right thing". In fact, becoming more aware of cultural differences, as well as exploring their similarities, can help us communicate with each other more effectively. Recognizing where cultural differences are in intercultural communication is the first step toward understanding and respecting each other.

In sum, people should be open to learning some things from different cultures, have an active attitude toward different cultures and then have tolerance for different cultures. In this way, the people will really respect different cultures, so as to realize cultural coexistence in an age of globalization.

### **4. Conclusion**

Cultures are a part of human civilization, have an important influence on social development and intercultural communication in the world. People with different cultural background should respect each other. And it is vital for any people to remember that globalization is not conducted in prejudice, stereotype and ethnocentrism, especially in respecting cultural diversity. Therefore, people should be aware of the cultural differences, show understanding and respect to different cultures and most importantly, build bridges across misunderstanding among different cultures.

And then people should really understand the connotations of cultural coexistence which absorb cultural fruits of various cultures from different countries and assimilate excellent cultural achievements, and promote the cultural development and civilization of human beings, and further explores how to preserve the cultural heritages and traditions from various cultures and to develop its own cultural advantages in an age of globalization.

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