



Cross Cultural Adaptation of Foreign Traders in a Kenyan Informal Market

A Study of Cross-Cultural Adaptation

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Background to the study

- Study founded in Social Cultural Tradition theory- people create culture, meanings, norms, values, beliefs,
- Culture-shared beliefs of a group of people
- Culture shapes communication and communication is culture bound
- Different cultures communicate differently
- Intercultural communication-term coined by Edward Hall, (1959)



Background to the study

- With globalization-no physical/geographical boundaries, hence intercultural communication is part of our daily life, (Neuliep, 2009) thus a necessary concern. -Kenya is home for diff. societies and cultures
- Studies have shown that adaptation in new cultural environments hindered by adjustment challenges such as culture shock (Oberg,1954), communication challenges
- There is need to address the adaptation challenges in order to enhance intercultural communication competence in the near reality era of globalization.



Statement of the problem

- When two people from different culture come together-culture clash. Important to find out how communication functions in adaptation of foreigners in a new cultural milieu and the environmental challenges that encompass adaptation process

Purpose of the study

- To investigate communication experiences of foreign traders in an Kenyan informal market and explore their experiences in their cross cultural adaptation process.



Research Questions

1. What kind of communication related challenges were experienced by the foreign traders in a Kenyan informal market?
2. What environmental challenges were experienced by the foreign traders?
3. What was the general feeling and experience of the foreign traders in the host cultural environment?



Scope of the study

- Geographical-one of the Kenyan informal market, Nairobi
- Foreign traders in the market
- Focus of the study- communication and adaptation experiences of foreign traders in a Kenyan informal market
- Qualitative approach
- **Limitations**-in scope, participants, Time



Significance of the study

- Provide insights on how effective intercultural communication competence can be achieved
- Useful to policy makers and various government ministries, organizations
- Add knowledge to field of communication
- Contribute towards development of intercultural communication models
- prompt other scholars to research in related areas



Theoretical Framework

1. Y.Y. Kim's (1988, 2001, 2005) Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory. –describes the adaptation process as it unfolds over time
2. It explains the structure of this process and it is based on 3 assumptions/principles (open systems): humans have inherent drive to adapt and grow, communication facilitates adaptation, adaptation is complex and dynamic process
3. Theory addresses two basic questions: *what is the essential nature of the adaptation process individual settlers undergo over time? why are some settlers more successful than others in attaining a level of fitness in the host environment?*



Quest 1

- Stress Adaptation Growth Dynamic-Change resistance, state of disequilibrium
- Stress is temporally, it leads to adaptation-strangers respond to host environment
- Growth-Stress Adaptation experiences leads to change and growth—(functional fitness, psychological health, intercultural identity achieved)
- Internal transformation—Intercultural transformation



Quest 2

- Structural model of cross cultural adaptation-Host communication competence, Host social communication, Ethnic social communication, Environment, Predisposition,
- Intercultural transformation—functional fitness, psychological health, Intercultural identity

Theory portrays cross cultural adaptation as a collaborative venture between a stranger and the environment and emphasizes that communication is key in the adaptation process



Research Methodology

- Qualitative research-is an explorative method, enquires about people's lives, done in a natural setting(Creswell, 2009)
- Allows in depth exploration of real life events in context-will give a better angle for investigating/exploring adaptation experiences of the study participants

Study population and sampling procedure

- Foreign traders in an informal market setting
- Snowball-chairman introduced researcher to representatives of foreigners' representative who then introduced researcher to individual participants.
- Purposive sampling of participants, site,
- voluntary participation



Data Generation Technique

- Pre testing the interviews before actual sessions was done
- Individual in depth interviews
- Group interview/Focus Group Discussion
- Narrative writing

Data Analysis

- Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)
- Transcribing, organizing, arranging and thorough reading in order to do:
- Pattern matching, identify recurring themes, categorical aggregation and direct interpretation, coding to generate emerging themes (only what corresponded to the Research Questions)
- Establish relationships –major themes were generated



Ethical Considerations

- Authorization for access
- Consent from gate keepers, participants, debriefing,
- Assurance of anonymity and confidentiality,
- Pseudonyms were used
- Compensation for time



Findings

- Communication challenges were encountered- language barrier, non verbal challenges, different dialects, connotations, pronunciation, accent, poor social relations, lack of politeness, social etiquette, harsh environment, harassment, tribalism



Discussions

- Findings correlate with previous findings on cross cultural adaptation-lack of host communication competence, unreceptive host environment exert stress to immigrants
- Communication is the vehicle that facilitates adaptation which then culminates to intercultural transformation
- Kims' theory is applicable for cross cultural adaptation studies



Conclusion

- Study unearthed adaptation experiences for the study participants
- The need to put in place strategies to ease adaptation process for foreigners joining new environments is paramount. Eg establishment of training programmes, social support networks. That done, would enhance globalization that is rapidly catching up.



Recommendation

- Further studies to use larger and wide range ethnic samples to examine cross cultural adaptation experiences,
- Put to test all the six dimensions to provide a comprehensive examination of the Kim (1988, 2001, and 2005) integrative theory of communication and cross cultural adaptation.

END

THANK YOU