

Social Constructionism and Cross-~~Cultural~~cultural Communication (USA and Germany)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION ..... 4

    The World is your oyster ..... 4

    Cultural differences..... 9

    Cultural differences on values dimensions ..... 14

    Additional means of understanding a culture ..... 15

    Communication and language..... 16

    Time and Time Consciousness ..... 17

    Sense of Self, Space and relationship ..... 17

    Attitudes towards taboos and beliefs ..... 17

    Dress, Appearance and Presence ..... 18

    Status of Age..... 18

    Mental Process and Learning..... 18

    Life cycles, familial roles and autonomy..... 19

    Gender roles ..... 19

    What is normal? ..... 21

METHODOLOGY ..... 22

    What Is Culture? ..... 22

    The Iceberg Model..... 25

    Surface level: Observable cultural aspects ..... 26

    The subsurface level: Intermediate cultural aspects ..... 27

    Deep level: the invisible cultural aspects..... 28

    The Onion Model..... 30

        Layers of onion model ..... 30

        Levels of onion model ..... 31

|  |    |
|--|----|
| National and Supra-National Cultures ..... | 34 |
| REFERENCES .....                           | 35 |

## -INTRODUCTION

### ~~The World is your Oyster~~ Oyster

**Comment [Editor1]:** Please keep all headings in title case. I have changed this one.

In the Stern Report (2012), *The World is Your Oyster* is a phrase, which can be associated with many events, practices, and cultures. Some people view this phrase as a way of fuelling evils in the society. Other people view it as a way of refining one's behaviors, practices, and cultures. This study will support the use of this phrase given that it helps people from different cultures realize what is acceptable and what is not, ~~acceptable~~ in other societies. However, the study denies the proposition that one can just do and achieve everything ~~he/she/one~~ needs on this earth. ~~Just like the way all~~ An oyster is known to easily absorb lethal substances and chemicals. ~~In a similar way, are absorbed by the Oyster is the same way~~—an individual from the American US culture should be ready to absorb bad and unacceptable cultural differences in communication.

**Comment [Editor2]:** Should this be rephrased as 'In a similar way....American culture is ready to absorb the bad and the unacceptable cultural differences in communication'?

Likewise, ~~when an individual from a~~ German culture comes to the US, he/she should be ready to understand and absorb all the unexpected aspects of cultural communication ~~aspects~~ that may not be practiced in ~~their~~ his/her culture. In the deeper context of this study, it can be seen that the *world* refers to a group of people with their own distinct cultures. Whenever one interacts with such people, both sides ~~of the people~~ needs to understand that cultural communication ~~is can~~ never be the same. ~~Therefore, thus~~ every individual must be ready and willing to absorb anything bad that may be witnessed, felt or experienced during their communication.

**Comment [Editor3]:** Do you mean to say 'when a German'?

Robert (2011) says that the phrase gives individuals the freedom to do and achieve what they desire without taking into account ~~its the~~ consequences. In this regard, it can be seen that this phrase ~~can has the potential to become~~ the root cause of many evils ~~as since~~ individuals will ~~be~~ committing the ~~evils~~ with the content knowledge that the world and its people will take care of ~~its the outcome consequences~~. In the context of cross-cultural communication, the phrase ~~can~~ may be held responsible for a good ~~portion deal~~ of the misunderstanding existent between the Americans and the Germans. It can also be said that the evils resulting from the scant due to light attention paid given to cultural differences can also tantamount to someone ~~make someone serve serving~~ a jail-prison sentence. Therefore, this study prohibits its exaggerated use. The only way to achieve this is to establish a communication synergy that is acceptable ~~by to~~ both sides.

**Comment [Editor4]:** Do you mean to say 'negative' or 'derogatory' or 'unacceptable'? Is this not a relative term? What may be acceptable to one culture may not be to another. Consider the recent eating with your hands controversy. In one part of the world, it is a perfectly natural thing to do but in another, it violates basic etiquette.

This study feels that *the world is your Oyster-oyster* has been wrongly perceived, and needs to be revamped. This is a proposition is based on Jebro (2012), who says that the 21<sup>st</sup> -century world needs people, who ~~can be~~ responsible for their own actions instead of assuming that the future will take care of itself. ~~Thus-Therefore,~~ instead of using the phrase ~~from-for~~ its literal meaning, Jebro proposes an improvement ~~on-to~~ its ~~useusage~~. -To bring out its literal meaning, the **author** refers to ~~Oyster-oysters~~ as ~~a foodiefood items~~, which ~~is-are~~ very delicious especially when ~~taken consumed~~ with brown bread and Guinness. ~~To-aFor~~ collectors, the author says that ~~an-Oyster-is~~ ~~oysters are~~ treasures that provides exquisite pearls and can be regarded as the mothers of beauty. ~~In-With~~ regard to cross-cultural communication, these are very positive perceptions on the use of the phrase. On this note, it can be perceived that the world is full of diverse and interesting cultural ~~nuances languages and cultures~~ that need to be explored ~~—and the freedom to-German and America are full of these cultural aspects that should be explored. Of course the freedom of exploration~~ explore, analysisanalyze, and achievements through these cultures ~~is-are~~ provided for in the saying. However, one question that we should ask ourselves is whether one can actually enjoy the beauty in a culture that is not their own. In most cases, it will be realized that individuals must adjust to be part of another culture.

**Comment [Editor5]:** Of this paper or Jebro? Please specify who is being referred to here.

Angelo (2012) considers Oysters ~~as-to be a~~ “keystone species.”: ~~This is a creature that is-They are~~ significant ~~for-to~~ the survival of many others. ~~They are likeIt is like the~~ key stones in an archway, which when taken away can ~~lead to a collapse of the make the-arch-to-collapse~~. The author argues that an Oyster being a large shellfish houses other creatures inside and around ~~themit~~. In this regard, it ~~can-may be said that be-argued that~~ culture is what holds a group of people together. People can ~~belong to-from~~ different parts of the world, which in this study ~~are refers to the~~ USA and Germany. However, culture will always create a common condition for all of them such that, they will always see themselves as ~~having~~ one identity. Therefore, being careless ~~of-with regard to whatwhat~~ one says or does during an interaction process ~~would-will~~ not be favorable. ~~In fact,~~ going by the proposition that the world is full of all the luxury that one would want, it is equally vital to understand that these good places to visit, in America or Germany, exists in a different cultural zone. ~~Therefore,as~~ a proper understanding of the cultures must be ~~acquiredhieved~~ for a peaceful and joyful experiences. For instance, ~~the world is your Oyster~~ is commonly used to refer to the luxury that one has when he/she tours the world. This

**Comment [Editor6]:** Why just the good places within these countries? Why not the countries themselves? Please check and clarify

**Comment [Editor7]:** Please italicize this throughout the document since it is a key phrase in the paper.

implies that such people will be serviced by a group of employees a majority of who can be from whose majority can be from a different cultures. Therefore, ~~there must~~ elements of cross-cultural communication must emerge through social constructionism. -This will show that the individual understands the central role that an 'Oyster' plays in holding the members of a particular community or culture together.

The Stern Report (2012) further says that huge Oyster beds are essential habitats for creatures like barnacles, mussels, and anemones among others. The fact that Oysters supports the life of other organisms by providing them with habitats implies that the world is really our Oyster oyster. This is due to the fact that all of us depend on the earth with all that it has in it and around it. Natural creations like the sun, the moon, the air, vegetation, rocks, soil, and human beings among others add to the beauty and luxury that the world brings to mankind. However, it should never be perceived that the world can act as the depository site for all mankind's activities. -It has been noted that the world is changing undergoing rapid change due to because of incessant human activity. The air, the sun, All the fresh air, the healthy sun's rays, and fresh and water water are affected by undergoing rapid pollution and this enlarges the prospect of the world coming to a standstill that in the near future, the world will be at a stand still. Life will be very threatened. On this note, individuals should never be encouraged to it should never be encouraged that individuals can just do things based on the freedom that the phrase gives accords them. Instead, there should be high level of accountability on every activity undertaken in a social setting. This will make our social settings be eco-friendly. It means that for this earth to continue giving us its ecosystem's services, man must stop inappropriate and misled use of the phrase the earth is your Oyster. Instead, we should view the earth as the mother of all survival, which if treated badly then we will finally have no place to stay in peace and enjoy life.

**Comment [Editor8]:** Please make oyster consistent in the text

With regard to cross cultural communication between the Germans and Americans, it is imperative to understand that the phrase the earth world is your Oyster-oyster allows enables mankind to live and enjoys its beauty everywhere. Thus, for a sustainable future, the Americans and, the Germans and s well as other nations must work towards a common goal of making the world be a nice place to be in. If this is not achieved, then, the glue that theor the 'Oyster-oyster' uses to holding all these elements then together would will no longer exist be there. Communication, like all natural creations should be attended to carefully just like natural

**Comment [Editor9]:** Repetitive intent

~~creations and features need attention and not careless use is the same way communication should be viewed.~~ It may be seen that global warming is a concern that affects all countries in the world today. For instance, it can be seen that there are certain common environmental concerns like ~~global warming that needs international approaches~~ (Dirany (-2012) maintains that it needs the international community to come together to phrase a solution. However, this must first start with ~~the bordering nations~~. In this study, these are America and Germany. For a common understanding on best practices to make the world ~~be a better good~~ place for all, there is a need to understand the cultural context and ~~the content of the language being used~~. Thus, when the saying is constructively used in this manner, both Americans and Germans as well other parts of the world will have a reason to smile.

**Comment [Editor10]:** Do you mean to say 'nations that share borders'?

**Comment [Editor11]:** America and Germany are on two different continents. How can they be bordering nations? Please clarify

**Comment [Editor12]:** Please check for clarity

~~Apart from providing a habitat to many sea creatures, the Oyster oyster acts as the a food for several large fish and mammals. For instance, sea otters and walrus feed on it. In addition, Oysters acts as the nature's free filtration systems. For instance, the Sshell fish, Molluscs molluscs, Mussels mussels, and Scallops scallops suck sea water through a siphon and extract food particles (Stern Report, 2012). In most cases, these are sewerage, or garbage that has been washed down to the sea. Anything that also remains floating is sacked by the Oyster, which thus making the sea water very clear and in turn cleans the sea water. Based on the fact that Oyster the oyster acts as food to for these organisms, we can also apply that the phrase was used to show how dependent much mankind is on depends on the earth for his food. Therefore, it can be reasoned that being careless on food resources based on the saying's freedom, majority of philosophers support, will be very guided in the achievement of ultimate luxury from the earth.~~

**Comment [Editor13]:** Do you mean to say sucked in?

**Comment [Editor14]:** Please check for clarity

**Comment [Editor15]:** This paragraph should be moved to lie below the part where it says that the oyster provides a habitat to many creatures.

~~While looking at the world, The Stern Report (2012) says maintains that we should all agree that familiarity yields breeds contempt. Thus, being familiar with what constitutes one's cultural setting and aspects is very significant. To some a little extent, familiarity may breeds complacency, and majority of the people on earth believe on in this proposition. The earth should can be treated as a unique jewel of life. This studyHis study focused on familiarizing people with good fortunes of earth that support life. The earth goes around the sun and surrounded by a number of planets that keeps it in its track. It is placed at precise distance from the sun, which gives heat and light. It travels at the right speed, not too slow or too fast. Based these facts about~~

**Comment [Editor16]:** Do you mean to say those aspects that support life?

**Comment [Editor17]:** The other planets have their own orbits, they do not surround the earth.

the earth, it can be seen that the phrase the world is your Oyster could be constructively be used to understand that the earth helps to shape up one's cultures and life. In his view, the aforementioned characteristics of the earth together with evolutionary features like water, air, and rocks formed firm base to support life. On this note it can be said that the phrase *the world is your oyster* was meant to be constructively applied for constructive application in understanding that similar to the ways in which the oyster beds offered the same way Oyster beds provide a strong base for other animals to live, the world would likewise provide is the same way the world should provide a strong base for man's man to survivesurvival. The essence of a strong base should would therefore, be perceived on in the context of life life-supporting features. Therefore, every mankind should would need to strive to answer whether his/her activities would strengthen or weaken the strong base that the world laid created to support life.

**Comment [Editor18]:** Please check for clarity

**Comment [Editor19]:** Do you mean to say these factors helped evolution?

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In a further study on the connection between similarities between the Oyster and the Earth, Robert (2011) says that the earth has a unique atmosphere, which protects us from the cosmic rays off from the sun. Similarly, This is the same way O the oyster protects organisms by providing them with secured habitats. However, the author's concerns revolve around the Therefore, the author's concern is the rapidly diminishing unique atmosphere rate at which the protection capacity of the unique atmosphere is diminishing and its capacity to protect. Thus h human beings as the only intelligent creatures need to understand that they will not go anywhere. Bearing this in mind, the saying *the world is your oyster* should will take on a different perception hue. Instead of viewing the earth as being there for us to grab, exploit, destroy, use, and trash, Angelo (2012) opines that is of the view that it should be treated as is a precious and fragile jewel. In the context of fragility, it can be said that cross-communication conflicts can may lead to unfriendly environments thus fuelling dangerous reactions that may just lower the value of the ecosystem's services. For instance, conflicts arising from cross-cultural misunderstandings can easily lead to explosive wars. Thus Therefore, it is imperative to there is need to employ the social constructionist approach in when dealing with such differences. With regard to the precious nature of Oyster the oyster, it can be reasoned that we should not destroy the precious face of our the earth. In fact, the author further asks why the earth should lose its precious features. In his view, people have a wrong understanding of the phrase got the wrong the implication of the world is your oyster, and this should be changed altered. To a majority of

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the people, the 'oyster' in the saying has been traditionally viewed as a food item and as a means of getting rich. Hence, people tend to perceive the earth as a source of resources to eat and get rich exploit for wealth. To me, this is a direct interpretation that should not solely be considered in the light of today's world. In fact, it can be reasoned that this is an outdated perception of the saying, which cannot be applied in a globalizing world apply with current trends of globalization, which is a phenomena that is the a major contributor to cross-cultural experiences. Therefore, the phrase should be used to imply we should advocate for the use of the saying as a way-medium through which social constructs can be understood and reconciled for a better future.

### Cultural Differences

In a globalized world, people from various cultural backgrounds come together for economic, educational, political, cultural, and social reasons. In the process, there is emergence of cross-cultural differences emerge. Cables (2009) says-maintains that cross-communication skills help to improve such global interactions. Based on this proposition, it can be seen that to facilitate our interactions with persons who do not share our values, assumptions, or learned ways of behaving requires new competencies and sensitivities. In this regard, the cultural differences form the resource base to enabling learning about the new cultures. This is where social constructionism offers a new and innovative way to integrate the differences that emerge in cross-cultural communication. With regard to social constructionism, I will make comparisons and analyze the cross-cultural communication patterns of-for the USA and Germany. This implies that I will not make any assumptions on-regarding these patterns unless I understand how, when, and why they may be used. I will look-at-examine the traditional ways of creating cultural synergy and then, look at creating cultural synergy from a social constructionist point of view. Many complexities of the communication process can be found in the following cross-cultural behaviors and factors: listening, attribution, foreign language skill levels, body language, and gestures (Cables, 2009). In listening, Ting-Toomey and Chung (2005) say that some cultures prefer that a second person listens while the one talks. In some cultures, this does not apply as listening is not treated as a good aspect of communication-cultures. However, for the purpose of this study, I will employ the

~~element of~~ maximum listening ~~during~~ when a group of Britons and Americans interact to accurately identify some of the cross-communication differences between the two cultures. Studies show that acknowledging a person while talking is common across various cultures. However, this depends on what is being acknowledged. In some cultures, ~~it is prohibited to givegiving~~ credit to ill-informed statements ~~is prohibited~~ while in ~~others, special conditions govern such instances.~~ ~~some cultures they are allowed but under special conditions.~~ Moreover, studies have established that the way in which one is acknowledged during communication varies ~~as some cultures prefer~~ ~~given preferences to~~ verbal ~~and~~ ~~means, some prefer~~ non-verbal means, ~~and some prefer~~ both. Therefore, based on these two concepts, I will focus on both, ~~the~~ content and ~~the~~ context of acknowledging a speaker in ~~both the~~ American and British cultures. ~~Once this note,~~ I ~~will~~ ~~shall~~ also employ this approach to encourage my speakers so as to get as much information as possible on cross-communication differences.

In a research like this, ~~a high level of knowledge of foreign languages is~~ ~~it is~~ very vital ~~to have good level of foreign language skill.~~ ~~This often helps~~ ~~Good knowledge level on a foreign language also helps~~ people from different cultural backgrounds communicate ~~to one another till they reach~~ and affect a common ground of understanding. In as much as this study will focus on how ~~the~~ Americans and ~~the~~ British ~~people~~ are ~~endowed by one another's language,~~ I will analyze how language incompetency has resulted in ~~differences in~~ cross-cultural communication ~~differences,~~ and how the concept of social constructionism can be used to improve their understanding during such communications.

-Cross-cultural communication behaviors or skills can be learned. The following skills have been identified by ~~Ruben's~~ research as being associated with effectiveness in a multicultural environment. Most of these ~~are common sense but~~ are often not demonstrated within one's own culture nor when dealing with a foreign culture ~~—~~ in this case, Germany and the USA. ~~Once Finally,~~ Holden (2001) ~~says-states~~ that body language and gestures have distinct meanings in different cultures. This means that a person should not use a gesture or any form of body language before he/she gets to understand ~~why, how, and why~~ it is being used. On this note, ~~the~~ studies further established ~~ed~~ that sign language and gestures are ~~gender-gender~~-sensitive in some cultures. Based on these facts, it is imperative for this study on cross-communication differences

**Comment [Editor21]:** Please check for clarity. Both use English which is different in intonation, words used etc. but how are they endowed by each other's linguistic abilities?

**Comment [Editor22]:** Please cite a year.

**Comment [Editor23]:** Please check for repetition and clarify if this should not be resorted to without understanding a foreign culture.

to understand the meaning of American and British gestures and other sign languages to enable me to bridge the gap that may arise from the social constructionist's point of view. Respect is part of effective cross-cultural communication. In his study, Holden (2001) notes that even if people from different cultures interact, they need to show respect towards ~~one's each other's~~ languages and cultures for continued interaction. The ~~respect~~-aspect of respect in this study is based on the fact that every culture has its rules and regulations, and each has aspects of respect this aspect incorporated in it. Usually, this aspect is achieved when involved parties ~~have made~~ make efforts to communicate and understand one another, ~~and have comes to terms~~. -In achieving this, the parties comprehend their ~~will understand their~~ cultural differences and decide to respect them, show tolerance ~~to such cultural differences~~ or ignore any negative outcome that may result from cross-cultural differences. In his view, Holden (2001) terms this a close-mindedness and tolerance to other people's cultures. -Based on these facts, I will consider respect as the paramount aspect for the success of this study. I acknowledge that my cultural background is not the same as the population being studied ~~study population~~. Hence, I need to ~~should~~ ~~show exercise~~ ~~much~~ tolerance towards certain ambiguities in the cross-communication analysis ~~on of~~ the study population. Ambiguities will be treated as normal occurrences especially when two people from different cultural backgrounds interact. This tolerance on cross-communication ambiguity will also be ~~done undertaken for~~ the study population to reveal ~~understand~~ their respective levels of tolerance.

Relating to people will be another aspect to be examined in the cross-communication differences. Starting with the researcher, I will first establish how each group of the population being studied ~~study population~~ relates to one another so that I don't deny this study an opportunity to achieve its goals and objectives. Hofstede (1977) says that different cultures have different ways of relating to people. In the process, various elements, such as gender, age, profession, setting, and language context and content are may be considered. The author establishes ~~ed~~ that some cultures in the world do not allow a man to interact with a woman who is not his wife while some others do not have such boundaries. In some cultures, it is required that relating to a person of opposite gender is strongly based on religious values. In some cultures, there is an acceptable way in which a younger individual is supposed to address the older person. Language content and context are also determined by one's gender but these differs across ~~various~~ cultures. Therefore,

Comment [Editor24]: Please check for clarity

prior understanding ~~on of~~ these elements in the context of this study will help me devise the best way of relating ~~with to the population I shall study, my study population.~~ As a result, this will help ~~the me to~~ focus on how the same aspects of relationships, established in ~~the past~~ previous studies, ~~differs~~ between the American and ~~the~~ German people given globalization that has contributed to cross border operation between the two nations.

Comment [Editor25]: Please for clarity

French and Bell (2003) say that high reliability and validity of research findings depends on the level ~~of of how the researcher remained non-judgmentality~~ in the entire session of the study. On this note, I will remain neutral ~~in when~~ assessing ~~the~~ cross-communication differences ~~that exist~~ between the American and ~~the~~ German people. This means that I will not personalize any observation but ~~use it~~ appropriately ~~use it~~ to develop a social constructionist view ~~on of~~ the differences. It also means that a study like this needs an open mind that treats observations in their real contexts without favoring one side. ~~It is a stage that does not require a researcher to be strongly determined to achieve what the research wanted to achieve but not empathies with the study population.~~

Comment [Editor26]: Ok?

Comment [Editor27]: Please check for clarity

To create opportunities for US-German understanding and collaboration, people must learn not only the customs, courtesies, and business protocols of their counterparts; they must also understand the national character, management philosophies, and mindsets of the people. I will refer to ~~make reference here to~~ Geert Hofstede who identified five important dimensions of national character/national culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, and ~~short short-term/long long-term~~ orientation (Hofstede, 2001). Hofstede's conclusions and contributions are significant as detailed below:

Comment [Editor28]: Please cite the year.

~~Power distance~~ **Distance Index**: This is an aspect of national culture that refers to the extent to which people ~~placed lower in the power hierarchy of lower power levels~~ in an organization or a family expect and accept unequal distribution of power (Hofstede, 2001). In some national cultures, ~~they endorse low power distance~~ in which people expect and accept democratic and consultative power relations. In such cultures, people relate to one another in a more equal manner regardless of their positions in social institutions or organizations. The less powered individuals always feel free to contribute and even criticize the decision making process without

Comment [Editor29]: Make this consistent across all points mentioned here.

Comment [Editor30]: Who endorses it? The culture?

any fear of those in higher positions. In contrast, high power distance nations, the subordinate people usually accept and expect paternalistic and autocratic power relations. Those in lower positions usually acknowledge the formal positions held by individuals in higher power hierarchies. Based on these two aspects of power distance, Hofstede says that the PDI (Power Distance Index) ~~does~~ not show an objective difference in how power is distributed among individuals but reflects ~~on~~ the way people perceive ~~such~~ power differences.

**-Individualism (IDV) Vs Collectivism-** This refers to “the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups” (Hofstede, 2001). Individualistic societies stress on individual rights and personal achievements. In such cultures, people are expected to stand up for themselves and their immediate members of the family and ~~to~~ select their own affiliations. In contrast to IDV, collectivist cultures expect individuals to act principally as members of a cohesive and lifelong organization ~~of or~~ group.

**Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)-:** This refers to the degree to which a society can tolerate ambiguities and ~~uncertainty~~ ~~uncertainties~~. Various cultures reflect different levels of coping ~~up~~ with anxiety by reducing the levels of uncertainty. Some cultures have **high uncertainty avoidance**, and people from such cultures tend to be very emotional ~~as in~~ an attempt ~~of to~~ ~~reducing~~ ~~reduce~~ the occurrence of unusual or unknown circumstances. They adopt stepwise and careful changes, which are planned and implemented through laws and regulations. On the other hand, people from **cultures endorsing** low uncertainty avoidance usually accept and feel much comfortable in changeable or unstructured conditions. Such people possibly attempt to have ~~some a~~ few rules, and exhibit pragmatic characters that help them to be more tolerant to change.

**Masculinity Vs Femininity-** This refers to how emotional roles are distributed between the genders (Hofstede, 2001). In masculine cultures, **a greater** ~~more~~ value is ~~given to~~ ~~assigned to~~ assertiveness, competitiveness, power, materialism, and ambition. In feminine cultures, ~~more~~ **greater** value is given to quality of life and relationships. Masculine cultures tend to have dramatic and less flexibility in gender roles as compared to feminine cultures in which, both women and men have the same value in terms of modesty and caring.

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**Comment [Editor31]:** Do these cultures endorse this?

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*Long-term orientation Vs Short term orientation*— Hofstede says that this was originally ~~called—termed~~ “Confucian dynamism”, which ~~reflects—reflected~~ the societies’ time horizons (Hofstede, 2001). In ~~the long—long~~-term oriented societies, ~~the focus is on the future~~ ~~more focus is put on the future~~. They always employ pragmatic values that are focused towards rewards, such as saving, capacity for adaptation, and persistence.— In contrast, ~~short term~~ oriented societies usually promote values that relate to the present and the past. These include values, such as ~~are—as~~ steadiness, preservation of one’s image, fulfilling social obligations, reciprocity, and respect for traditions.

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Comment [Editor32]: Which societies?

Comment [Editor33]: Hyphenate this consistently.

Comment [Editor34]: Please check for consistency in heading styles.

### Cultural differences on values dimensions

Studies ~~have been~~ based on Hofstede’s conclusions ~~on—regarding~~ national cultures ~~by—considering~~ national scores from ‘1,’ which is the lowest ~~to—and~~ ‘120,’ which is the highest. ~~This has yielded the findings of a comparative case study (research).~~ ~~In their case study, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) say that~~ ~~the power distance index score is very high among the~~ ~~Latin and Asian nations,~~ ~~the Arab world,~~ and Africa. In contrast, ~~the Germanic and~~ ~~Anglo nations~~ have low power distance ~~index scores but only for—except for~~ Denmark and Australia, which ~~has—have~~ 18 and 11, respectively. ~~The~~ USA has 40 on the cultural scale. Comparatively, Guatemala shows a high power distance ~~index~~ of 95 and Israel ~~having—has~~ a low value of 13. Thus, Hofstede finally concludes that ~~the~~ USA is in ~~the middle of—lies in the center of the~~ cultural scale. In Europe, Hofstede establishes that ~~the~~ power distance ~~index~~ is lower in the northern nations and higher in the eastern and southern nations. For instance, Romania has ~~a score of~~ 90; Spain, ~~57 when~~ compared to Sweden ~~whose score is~~ 31, and UK, 35.

Comment [Editor35]: Please check for clarity

Comment [Editor36]: Latin American?

Comment [Editor37]: Anglo Saxon?

Comment [Editor38]: Ok?

With regard to ~~the~~ individualism index, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) say that there is a distinct gap between the western and ~~the~~ developed nations and the eastern and ~~the~~ less developed nations. Thus, his study categorizes Europe and North America as individualistic nations compared to Asia, Latin ~~America~~, and Africa, which value collectivism. America also shows strong collectivism. In the context of ~~the~~ IDV index, ~~a~~ strong contrast emerges with Guatemala scoring 6 and ~~the~~ USA 91. However, the Arab world and Japan fall ~~right in the center of the scale. in the middle.~~

Hofstede and Minkov (2010) further assert that uncertainty avoidance (UAV) is said to be the highest in the nations of the Far Eastern and Southern Europe nations like Japan and Germany speaking nations. It is also high in the Latin American countries-nations. However, the Nordic, Anglo Saxon, and Chinese cultures have-secure a low value on this. -Based on the UAV scale, Germany secures a high UAV is in German with score of 65, while Belgium secures 94. Regardless of the proximity of these nations, these scores sharply contrast with Denmark's score of 23 and -and-Sweden's score of-that has 23 and 29-respectively.

**Comment [Editor39]:** Should this be in title case?

The Nordic countries show-display low masculinity with countries-like Sweden and Norway showing a-scores of 8 and 5 respectively. I in contrast, to Japan, which has the highest masculinity score of 95 on the scale, together with other European nations like Austria, Switzerland and Hungary, which are said to be influenced by the German culture (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). This means that Germany has a high-high-masculinity culture. In the Anglo Saxon world, masculinity seems to be low with the UK scoring 66 on the cultural scale. However, studies show that the Latin American nations havepresent a distinctive contrast contrasting levels with Venezuela and Chile scoring 73 and 28, respectively.

High scores in the long-long-term orientation are also noticed in the East Asia. China scores 118, Japan, 88, and Hong Kong scores 96. -The Western and Eastern European nations has-have moderate scores on-thishere, while Africa, the Arab world, Latin America, and the Anglo Saxon countries show low scores on long term orientation.

**Comment [Editor40]:** For the long term? Please clarify

### Additional means of understanding a culture

Culture though, is a complex issue and debatable, but the following categories can be used to enhance once-one's understanding on-of this concept. These are: Communication and Language, Time and Time Consciousness, Sense of Self, Space and relationshipRelationship, Attitudes towards taboos-Taboos and beliefsBeliefs, Dress, Appearance and Presence, Status of Age, Mental Process and Learning, Life eyesCycles, familial-Familial roles-Roles and autonomy, and Gender roles. -These can be regarded as elements in-of our cultural dimension in our day-to-day interactions. When these are brought together, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) say that they interact to generate specific patterns of behaviors that are shared among-thy the individuals.

**Comment [Editor41]:** Post a colon if the terms are to be capitalized, please make it consistent throughout the document.

These elements of culture also intersect ~~with~~ histories, one's experiences in life, and psychological patterns of every individual. Thus, sociologists argue that no individual can be pigeon-holed in his/her race, gender, or ethnicity.

### Communication and language

This ~~does~~ not only considers written and spoken words but also, ~~the~~ non-verbal ways of communication, like the use of eyes, body, and hands (Banks and Banks, 2004). In ~~the~~ USA, English is the dominant language. However, many others in this society use different levels of the language. Others also use other languages apart from English in their day-to-day interactions. Banks and Banks (2004) say that language can be ~~informal, technical, or technical~~ based on the people involved and ~~the~~ prevailing conditions. In most cases, it is ~~preferred-preferable~~ that we use technical language at work, informal language when addressing friends and family members, and formal language when speaking to the public. Instead of formal languages, some individuals feel comfortable ~~to use using~~ slang or dialects. Therefore, ~~different~~ cultures can be distinguished based on the rules they ~~put set~~ while speaking. For instance, some cultures prefer that every individual waits for his/her turn, which is signified by a pause initiated by the current speaker. In contrast, individuals in other cultures do not need to wait for their turn. Instead, they incorporate support or verbal explanations in the entire ~~period of~~ conversation~~-period~~. The manner in which stories are told is another aspect of language and culture. In some cultures, events are narrated in ~~a~~ very linear fashion while other cultures prefer such stories be told in sort of a circular manner ~~wherein which~~ some interesting comparisons and observations are interspersed. Body language, hand gestures, and eye contact are also influential aspects of understanding a given culture and language. Some cultures don't prefer eye contact since it is regarded as a sign of disrespect while other cultures values it as ~~assigns~~ of honesty. In some cultures, hands are kept close to the body while speaking and ~~in~~ others ~~prefer to~~ the use of hand gestures ~~is preferred~~ as a way of punctuating ~~their~~ conversations. Engholm (1994) once ~~carried-undertook~~ a study, which established that direct eye contact ~~is-was~~ viewed as an intimidation tactic and disobedience among the Chinese while Americans ~~preferred~~ it as a sign of full attention, mutual understanding, and trust. ~~The~~ National Technical ~~a~~ Assistance Centre (2004) and ~~the~~ National

**Comment [Editor42]:** Please check for repetition.



Technical ~~assistance~~-Assistance Centre (2006) also established that the Vietnamese culture ~~does~~ did not allow direct eye contact to be initiated when an individual ~~spoke to~~ talks to parents, a figure of -authority, or teachers.

### Time and Time Consciousness

This reflects ~~on the~~ cultural attitude towards time in terms of being late, ~~punctual~~ on time, or early. Cole (1996) says that different cultures have different orientations towards time. In some cultures, appointments and schedules are given priority while in others the preference is to ~~preferred to~~ concentrate on what is happening at the moment. Thus, the latter sets of cultures ~~gives offer~~ less priority to future events. Besides, some cultures value punctuality given that lateness shows disrespect. However, other cultures do not bother about whether ~~someone~~ is late or not, thus, the meeting time can be agreed ~~meeting time can be~~ approximated.

### Sense of Self, Space and relationship

The aspect of space is the acceptable proximity between individuals in a given culture. It reflects ~~on~~ the appropriateness of physical contact between two individuals (Dean, 1996). Some cultures view a shaking of hands as a personal action that should not be extended ~~to~~ p strangers. In contrast, other cultures view it as a customary and a good way of greeting peoples. Besides, in some cultures, hugging and kissing are interpreted as formal ways of greetings ~~and while in~~ others, there may be a distinct uneasiness at this ~~feel very uncomfortable with it~~. Moreover, the rules that are observed in various cultures on some form of physical contact being initiated can be based on one's gender or the kind of relationship existing between the parties involved. Moreover, such rules dictate how close people should stand when ~~in~~ holding a conversation.

### Attitudes towards taboos and beliefs

Various cultures have different attitudes towards doing things in contrast to the cultural standards. Some cultures have strong taboos against "telling on members of your group" to an outsider (Delpit, 2002). On this note, telling a complete stranger about ~~about~~ family issues, politics, sexuality, and religion ~~are may be treated as a~~ taboo. Another aspect is that of being direct. In some cultures, questions can never be asked in a ~~personally~~ personally-directed manner

**Comment [Editor43]:** So cultures and cultural standards are different?

while ~~in~~ some cultures ~~there may be a preference indicated for this~~ ~~prefer it~~. However, it is more ~~of~~ universal that people will ~~feel~~ ~~feel~~ very uncomfortable when one breaks standards in their cultural norms.

### Dress, Appearance and Presence

These grooming aspects reflect ~~on~~ one's behavior and ~~can~~ ~~may~~ be used to differentiate one culture from the other. This entails elements, such as voice quality, laughter, style of dress, smile, gait, hair style, kind of cosmetics, and poise (Delpit, 1995). ~~Presence entails eye contact and body posture.~~ In some cultures, an individual's place is determined by ~~whether or not his presence is acceptable~~ ~~his acceptable presence~~, and these acceptable standards changes with age ~~within~~ different cultural groups. Grooming styles also changes with one's culture. In as much as some cultures prefer good grooming as an appropriate way of life, it is also encouraged ~~to that they cover up~~ ~~over up~~ flaws. Besides, it is used to bring out ~~a~~ positive culture. However, others consider them inappropriate and bold.

**Comment [Editor44]:** Please check for clarity. Whose presence?

### Status of Age

Status of age explains how ~~an~~ individuals should behave in an acceptable manner towards ~~the their~~ peers, ~~those~~ younger ~~in age, and individuals and the~~ ~~those who are older groups than them~~ (Gay, 2000). In some cultures, respect is shown to all individuals regardless of age. In contrast, some cultures treat respect in a hierarchical fashion. On this note, the older ~~the person, the more respected he is compared to a younger person who needs to~~ ~~are more respected compared to the younger individuals who must~~ strive to earn ~~a~~ little respect from the older group.

### Mental Process and Learning

~~These are the aspects of~~ ~~In all cultures these are aspects of~~ education ~~in all cultures~~. Different cultures have different views on the purpose of education, favorable types of learning, and ~~the~~ approaches used to learn ~~in both, at the the~~ community and ~~at home levels~~ (Gormley, 1995). Some cultures view initial education as a way of preparing individuals for jobs while some views ~~it this~~ as a way of preparing them for college. Some cultures also view educating a child as ~~a the~~ sole responsibility of schools while some view ~~it this~~ as a collective responsibility, ~~both, of the of~~

~~both~~ school and the family. Moreover, some cultures view education as a transfer of knowledge from experienced individuals to learners while others approach it in a manner that creates an environment in which beginners learn from more experienced groups.

### Life cycles, familial roles and autonomy

This is a criterion that is used to define stages, transitions, and periods in an individual's life (Gay, 2000). It shows various levels of autonomy at different stages of life~~stages~~. Different cultures have different views towards children, especially when they can be charged with adults' responsibilities. In a majority of cultures, ~~the~~ adolescents are viewed as older individuals, who are mature enough to be responsible for themselves as well as other family members. This brings us to what is referred to as familial roles (Gormley, 1995), which ~~refers to~~is the belief about surrounding providing for and protecting the old, ~~and~~ the young. The age at which an individual is expected to show high standards of autonomy varies among cultures. Some cultures expect the mid- to late adolescents to move out of home ~~to~~and start caring for themselves while some cultures allow an individual to live with his or her parents ~~in for their~~the entire life span. Different cultures also show different standards in caring for the elderly family members. On this note, some cultures prefer old age homes and nursing institution to care for their elderly, while other take the elderly into their homes. ~~taking the old to their homes while in some cultures such elderly people are taken to care providers, i.e. nursing homes.~~

Comment [Editor45]: Please check for clarity

### Gender roles

This aspect refers to how an individual perceives, understands, and relates with the opposite gender. It reflects ~~on the behavior that is acceptable toward the~~ acceptable behaviors towards the opposite gender (Hearzth, 2008). In a majority of cultures, it is ~~a~~ common practice that there are distinct rules that governs the behaviors of boys and girls. In some cultures, these rules are easily noticed ~~can easily be noticed~~ while in others, some can ~~can~~ only be implicitly ~~be~~ learnt and understood ~~while when in~~ the a group. In many cultures, there is the belief that girls should be nice, reserved, and quiete while boys ~~are permitted to be~~ may be loud, aggressive, and assertive. Moreover, the expectations ~~of from~~ future roles can also influence the ~~the~~ behaviors of girls and

boys. For instance, girls in some cultures are made to know ~~beforehand~~~~in prior~~ that they will be married and remain at home to give birth to children while boys will go to school.

Based on the above~~mentioned~~ additional aspects of culture, it ~~can~~~~may~~ be reasoned that a person who is sensitive to cultural differences, appreciates a people's distinctiveness and seeks to make allowances for such factors when communicating with ~~the~~ representatives of that cultural group (Webb et al., 2001). He or she avoids trying to impose his/her cultural attitudes and approaches. Thus, by respecting the cultural differences of others, ~~we will not be labeled as ethnocentric.~~

Cultural sensitivity ~~teaches us that should teach us~~ that culture and behavior are relative, and that we should be more tentative, and less absolute, in human interactions. ~~The first step in managing cross-cultural communication differences~~ ~~effectively~~~~effectively~~ is increasing one's general cultural awareness. Further, we should appreciate the impact of our specific cultural backgrounds~~s~~ on our own mindsets~~s~~ and behaviors~~s~~, as well as those of colleagues and customers with whom we interact ~~in~~~~at~~ the workplace. This takes on ~~a~~ special significance within a more diverse business environment.

Human response to cultural change and contact with differences, ~~as the late Herman Kahn~~ reminds us, can be constructive or pathological, non~~violent~~ or violent, ~~and~~ rational or irrational.

Cultural exchange, ~~Octavio Paz~~ observed, requires experiencing the other and that is the essence of change. It alters our psyche, our outlook, and causes some loss of our own cultural beliefs.

The paradox is that it may also stimulate a gain or an enlargement of ~~one's own~~s perceptions and performance in the adoption of new cultural patterns. Culture, like biological ~~evolution~~ demands adaptations~~s~~ for survival and development. Culture is a human product subject to alteration and improvement. We are therefore ~~discovering~~ innovative ways to improve our performance. As we continue to unravel who we really are and to become more comfortable with our "selves," ~~then~~—our performance increases and our potential begins to be realized.

In the last few decades, an ever-increasing number of people find themselves moving between and among several or more cultures within a life span (Helms and Katsiyannis, 2002). They must continually update and broaden their understanding of culture and its impact on our lives.

Reflecting on what is reality, what is the self ~~and~~ what is good offers an effective way to

**Comment [Editor46]:** Who is referred to as 'we'?

**Comment [Editor47]:** Please cite the year

**Comment [Editor48]:** Please cite the year

integrate cultural differences. Despite the cultural differences in communication patterns, social constructionism is a way to produce true cultural synergy.

As societies become more pluralistic, and cultures become more “open,” people become more aware of both, the dissimilarities and similarities between themselves and others (French and Bell, 2003). They also demand the freedom to be themselves, regardless of the cultural context. Minorities of all types seek acceptance and tolerance, rather than discrimination and prejudice. Becoming more ~~culturally~~-culturally-sensitive fosters a living environment in which internal dignity, as well as equity of treatment can co-exist. A sense of one's separateness, one's uniqueness, one's ethnic or racial background need not hamper an individual from becoming a multicultural cosmopolitan. Rather, it may enhance the contribution of a new infusion of diversity toward a common culture.

### What is normal?

Rogoff (2003) says that cultural approaches to normality imply that the expectations and standards of a society ~~is-are~~ met and observed. These include societal aspects that are associated with economy, social factors, and politics. In simple ~~definition~~terms, what is normal ~~implies is~~ doing, saying, or thinking in a manner that honors the norms in that society. Thus, based on the ~~above~~ discussions of various cultural aspects specified above, it can be said that what is normal in the US-American culture is not what is normal in the German culture. This condition will require that an individual moving from one cultural setting to the other must exhibit much patience to learn the norms in that land else it can lead to a gross misunderstanding and poor relationships.

We should never assume any aspect of culture (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). Instead, a deeper analysis should be ~~done~~-undertaken to establish their implications and roles. ~~By assuming any~~ cultural aspect, even this study will not achieve its goal. Thus, it can be seen that what is normal in my own culture may be quite abnormal in another culture. This necessitates a neutral approach in which a social researcher does not take sides or hasten to show his own cultural aspects. I will first establish what is normal within the two cultures ~~of-mentioned in~~ the study. On this note, I can appropriately and correctly know what is normal in another culture by exhausting all aspects

Comment [Editor49]: Please check for clarity

Comment [Editor50]: Please check for clarity

of cultures as discussed above. It means that a close analysis is ~~needed-necessary~~ not only ~~in-of~~ the explicit features of ~~the~~ cultures but also their implicit ones. With regard to the implicit cultural aspects, sociologists must first immerse themselves in such cultures, interact with ~~its~~ their people, and keenly extracts the normal aspects of their cultural norms.

## METHODOLOGY

### What Is Culture?

Literally, there are a number of definitions that ~~ties-to~~ try to bring out the meaning of culture. Minkov (2007) says that cultures comprise language, beliefs, ideas, taboos, values, codes, techniques, ~~-,~~ rituals, and the world of arts, tools, symbols, and ceremonies, which ~~has-has~~ played a critical role in the evolution of human beings. In this sense, a culture is what allows human beings to adapt to a particular environment, to their respective purposes instead of relying on natural selection mechanisms to attain adaptive success. Thus, a culture has no ~~one-single~~

definition ~~as~~ since every group of people adapts to such environments differently. However, it is a general composition of values, norms, and artifacts. Values can be regarded as ideas that should be considered important in life. Artifacts refer to things or materials in a given society, and norms are just expectations that people have in different situations.

Hofstede and Minkov (2010) ~~views~~ cultures as unseen forces behind communication behaviors yet a majority of people thinks that ~~it~~ this is what influences our perceptions and exhibits communication behaviors. ~~we perceive and exhibit communication behaviors.~~ An individual's culture is what constitutes ~~to~~ his self-identity, which unconsciously improves his ~~pr~~ or her interpretation ~~on~~ of events thus enabling decision making without making decisions without much struggle with one's inner-inner-self's feelings. Culture is not some-thing that one is born with but it is something that one learns and adapts to. -In most cases, it is passed on to other people through friends, teachers, the church, parents, schools, and work environments. This means that it is something that one acquires when he or she interacts with other people or with another environment.

Comment [Editor51]: Ok?

According to Hofstede (1984), cultural norms are being influenced by values, traditions, and beliefs. This author also notes that a value is something that people ~~have~~ believe in. The belief can be a "wrong" one or a "right" one. When brought together with beliefs and traditions, it yields cultural norms, which refers to what we regard as "bad" and "good." The authors agree with the view ~~In the same view of this author, that~~ culture should be understood ~~due~~ in terms of its ~~to its~~ critical role in education. This is because the orientation of individual cultures must be experienced in every interaction. Thus, this brings to the fore, a ~~a~~ new definition of culture as something that may help individuals to interact effectively and gain a common ground of understanding. In most cases, it has been noticed that people make assumptions on one's culture based on very limited factors like ethnicity and race. However, in reality, it should be acknowledged that individuals' cultural identities are complex given that it weaves different group of cultures that in one way of another influence our lives. These facts ~~can~~ yield another definition that culture is not a linear concept in life ~~thus~~ and so cannot be understood from one direction only but should encompasses all the influences of one's life in terms of values, behaviors, and beliefs. In most cases, when people talk about culture, people tend to succumb to the assumptions that we are talking about national identities like: Native American, African

Comment [Editor52]: Please check for clarity

American, Hispanics/Latino American, and Asian American. However, it should be understood that we are just members of cultural groups, which means that culture should be those aspects of life that are found in such national groups. The author further says that culture is something that is developed and is developing in a continuous process since every individual is exposed to different groups of beliefs and values. On this note, it can be reasoned that culture is not static. Thus, it is an aspect of life that requires an individual to be ready to learn and adjust to the way of life of other people. It also implies that culture is an aspect of life **that needs time for one to be fully acquainted with.** It is like an element that moulds ~~someone~~ into a new being in terms of personal perception towards life, behaviors, values, and beliefs. It can be reasoned that culture goes with identity.

**Comment [Editor53]:** Do you mean to say that it necessitates that one spend time getting fully acquainted with it?

According to Hofstede (2001), cultural identity is usually shaped by historical and cross-cultural perspectives, which interact with both the interpersonal and psychological characteristics to ensure that all are present to improve learning. In another view, culture can be perceived as ~~the~~ clothingsartorial style, foodcuisines, music, and entertainment options ~~holidays~~, which ~~is~~ are shared by a group of people. However, the author further notes that it means more than just these visible traditions. In his view, culture is perceived as a combination of attitudes, thoughts, values, feelings, behavior patterns, and beliefs that are shared by a particular group of people. These groups can be ethnic, racial, social, or religious in nature. However, it should be noted that **culture is not basically** to those individuals born within a given ethnic or racial group.

**Comment [Editor54]:** Do you mean to say 'not basically restricted to those...'?

**Willima** (2005) in his view backs up prior definitions by asserting that culture is dynamic, and people usually move from one culture to the other. For instance, it should be understood that one can be born in a poor background, interacting with poor people. However, later in life such an individual may grow rich such that those who he or she interacts with ~~a-re~~ also from a wealthy background ~~rich class of people~~. Similarly, one can be born in a rural setting but develop ~~s~~ the interest to stay in an urban setting in the later stages of his or her development. In either case, the major elements of culture —will also change. Another shift in culture can be noticed when children are brought up in cultures where gender roles are pre-determined. However, when they enter the work force, they change their perceptions towards such cultural beliefs and make the right decisions s between what is acceptable and achievable ~~between-by~~ men and women in the society. College life can also change one's cultures in that some political beliefs with which he

**Comment [Editor55]:** Is this William?

**Comment [Editor56]:** Do you mean to say 'perceptions of culture'?



or she was raised ~~up with~~ may change ~~changes~~ due to the patterns of political practices in the college at our colleges. In fact, these are just a but a few of some the changes in one's culture. Culture can be influenced to suit one's life too. In essence, it is what makes one ~~be~~ unique. However, Willima says that this needs ~~necessitates~~ a broader view of this element of life. It needs broader and deeper consideration of class, gender, religious, physical, sexual orientation, and spiritual beliefs. By viewing these attributed ~~attributes~~ as interconnected elements of culture, it should be acknowledged that an individual cannot be described by a single label of cultural aspects. The definition of culture in this context should deeply focus ~~on~~ on the influential nature and implications of these elements rather than taking take them on literal ground.

Due to the dynamic nature of culture, Ailon (2008) says that culture must go along hand in hand with responsiveness. Responsiveness to culture refers to one's ability to learn from a group of people and relate with to them in a respectful manner. This can be a group from one's culture ~~of~~ or from a different culture. The process involves an adjustment of one's behaviors after learning something from ~~the~~ other cultures (Wilder, 2000). The process requires openness when thinking and experiencing (Wilder, 2000). However, it should be remembered that responsivity responsiveness in culture does not mean that one forgets his or her original culture and masters the new one ~~onee~~. Instead, it is a process that must be given time.- It is also not about making another person look like the way you are but. In fact, instead it should be perceived as a process of open cultivation and acquiring ~~acquisition~~ of new skills (Ailon, 2008). This means that an individual must honor both, his or her culture as well as the culture of the other people. In summary, a culture has its rules that an individual should ~~be~~ abided by. For instance, responsiveness to a culture requires that an individual should appreciate the existence of diverse values, develop self self-awareness on existing cultures, oppose stereotyping, and should not impose his or her own values.

Comment [Editor57]: Please check for clarity

### The Iceberg Model

Schwartz (2003) says that the Iceberg model plays an important role in understanding cross-cultural differences. Thus, this study will also employ it in understanding cross-communication differences between the American and the German ~~USA and German~~ cultures. In this current

study, it will help to improve the awareness levels ~~on-regarding~~ stereotypes, prejudices, and how to go beyond those. The diagrammatic presentation of this model shows only ~~a-the~~ tip of ~~the-an~~ iceberg ~~on the surface~~. However, just below the water surface is large body mass, which is hidden and invisible to those who don't understand the physics of buoyancy. Therefore, the Iceberg model reminds us that we should not only focus on visible part of the iceberg ~~on the surface~~ but also ~~to~~ be aware of the invisible part under the ~~water~~ surface ~~or~~ else we shall sink upon collision with itsink after colliding with it. The analogy in the Iceberg model will be appropriate in understanding how cultures differ from one another. ~~From the allegory of the what can be seen on a floating iceberg, we should understand that~~ there some aspects of culture that are not visible to the eye. They are hidden such that until one bumps ~~into-on to~~ them, one does not is when he or she can realize their existences. ~~In this regard, t~~This study will use this approach in the methodology section to understand both, the visible and invisible aspects of the USAmerican-German cultures. Most things that we may assume or know about a culture can be just stereotypes, which if used cannot explain what culture is. For instance, making an assumption that Americans eat large portions, are rude, eat burgers, and are stereotypes do not imply that this group of people exhibits these culturetraits. We need to use the Iceberg model to further understand and establish what is exactly behind these actions, which should add to the definition of a culture. In fact, from the Iceberg<sup>2s</sup> model, it ~~should beis~~ understood that in as much as these aspects constitute the American<sup>2s</sup> or German<sup>2s</sup> culture, they don't really define America as a whole given that every group of individuals in America or Germany have their independent sets of beliefs and values that they follow. Dealing with different groups of individuals in this manner can be depicted in the three levels of icebergs floating on water. Basically, the iceberg model considers three levels of culture: the visible ones, the ones just below the water surface, and the ones that exist at the bottom (the deepest level).

**Comment [Editor58]:** Use this instead of US or USA.

### Surface level: Observable cultural aspects

Through the Iceberg<sup>2s</sup> model, it should be understood that stereotypes, media, and prejudices do not necessarily reflect how a culture functions (Schwart, 2003). However, people may be blinded to misperceive them ~~as on how a given culture actually functions byif they do not comprehend the-getting-some~~ positive aspects associated with them. Therefore, the analysis through this

method will discourage the use of these elements to make conclusions about cross-cultural communication between ~~the~~Germany and the USA.

### The subsurface level: Intermediate cultural aspects

The intermediate level that follows the visible part of the iceberg represents the phase where we interact with the people of that culture and establish the meanings that certain things imply (Schwart, 2003). This second level of cultural analysis attempts to understand how a given group of people usually perform certain duties in their daily ~~if~~lives. It is a stage that gives us the opportunity to improve our understanding ~~of~~ how people's daily schedules ~~of people~~ are integrated in their cultures. In order to achieve best results ~~at~~ this stage, it is necessary to interact with people of that particular culture. This means that I will interact with an acknowledgeable-acknowledged people from both the US and Germany.

**Comment [Editor59]:** Do u mean to say a sample?

The second level of the Iceberg model describes certain cultural behaviors that need a little more time to comprehend as ~~it~~this involves much thinking (Schwart, 2003). In contrast to the surface level, the second level of analysis through this model entails behaviors that are observable but do not have obvious meanings ~~thus~~therefore, need time to be interpreted. For instance, a study in Japan revealed that they have *a sumo wrestler who throws a white substance into the ring* (Skolowinsky, 2004). This cultural aspect can challenge many people in discerning its implication based on the fact that a majority of people may know that the only white substance of significance to Japanese is the white rice. If not given time to get-understand its implications, then, erroneous assumptions can-may be made ~~that the wrestlers are throwing the white rice into the ring~~. In the study, it was finally established that the *sumo wrestlers* used salt and not rice for their purification rituals. In addition, greetings in Japan also need to be understood. ~~needs time to be understood~~. Their responses are terminated by “chotto” that also terminates the other speaker from making any further attempt to continue with the dialogue. Through the use of intercultural communication students, ~~the~~ researchers later established that the use of “chotto” in the Japanese context could imply a violation of their norms. From the-this case, it could-may be noticed that having been brought up in the American culture, someone that-who you may have not seen for a very long time like the-a Japanese friend, will often result in an American asking common

**Comment [Editor60]:** Does chotto mean 'excuse me'? The Japanese phrase 'chotto matte kudasai' would if literally translated mean please wait a while.

questions rather than focusing on professional ones. Thus, the case informs us that we should never make assumption on "social equality."

**Comment [Editor61]:** Please check for clarity

### Deep level: the invisible cultural aspects

From the discussion above, it can be proved that the first two levels of the Iceberg ~~represents~~ represent the aspects of cultures that are not ~~so-quitmuch~~ hidden ~~to-from~~ people's knowledge (Schwart, 2003). In the revised version of Iceberg model, there is ~~the-a~~ third level too. Initially, the Iceberg theory was represented by only two levels, what is seen on the surface and what is below the water level. The surface level represents the daily activities that can be physically observed and touched. This model was once applied ~~in-to the~~ analyzing ~~the~~ Japanese culture. The observable and tangible activities witnessed ~~in-among~~ the Japanese people of Japan were included taking off one's shoes ~~off~~, bowing, ~~or~~ using the chopsticks during meals etc. (Skolowinsky, 2004). In fact, these ~~are-were the~~ observable activities that regardless of one's cultural background ~~can-were very noticeable.be noticed~~. Even in other foreign countries, it is-was very obvious that anyone ~~can-could~~ see what ~~is-was~~ happening in the streets. Therefore, this should mark the first level of understanding a culture. It forms the base on which other levels of analysis are built.

**Comment [Editor62]:** Please check for clarity

The deep level culture comprises beliefs, values, and traditions of a culture (Schwart, 2003). This ~~is-1~~ level of ~~iceberg-the Iceberg~~ model tries to describe what a given group of people in a culture are willing to do and ~~what-those-that~~ they are not willing to do through a set of established rules and regulations. In the context of this level of methodology, value determines what ~~is-a~~ person from ~~the-that~~ culture will be willing to tolerate and what will not be tolerated. Reactions to certain situations are also measured at this level of cultural analysis. For instance, an a monogamous individual may not be willing to tolerate interacting with polygamous individuals given that this may make him or her ~~take~~ perceive such relations as more valuable and sacred.

**Comment [Editor63]:** Repetitive text

The third aspect of culture through the Iceberg model is that which cannot be seen. Usually, it is a part of culture that can never be assumed ~~and~~. This is considered the deep culture. One example that can be identified ~~in-through~~ Skolowinsky's study is the passive nature of Japanese. This aspect of culture also has its fair share of influences. ~~has also its influences~~. For instance,

**Comment [Editor64]:** The Japanese people or the language or culture?

when most of the Native English speakers initially begin teaching in Japan, Skolowinsky (2004) says that they are unprepared due to a lack of feedback from ~~the~~ Japanese students. Thus, the American deep culture filter can interpret this as lack of interaction, dislike, incomprehension, or indifference. -In as much as such Japanese passiveness in class can be interpreted by the Americans that way, the reality about Japanese culture has-poses a different proposition. In ~~the study~~ (Skolowinsky's study, (2004), it is learnt that the Japanese students are just abiding by their deep cultural norms that requires them to respect ~~the~~ authority. This can only be shown by not openly questioning their teacher or ~~not~~ being emotional. In contrast, the Americans value social equality, which is exhibited in the manner in which open and direct communication, is encouraged. In Japan, more-higher value is given-accorded to a hierarchical treatment of social relations, which ~~is-are~~ exhibited through the norms of-governing silence. Therefore, it can be seen how-that such cultural differences can-may create misunderstandings among the involved parties. In summary, it can-may be very easy for an American to be confused while in Japan, based on the fact that their culture assumes that closeness and hierarchy are mutually exclusive, which-is-different-from the way the Japanese extract ~~the~~ meaning from such hierarchical norms is different.

Based on the above cases, the Iceberg theory thus becomes the standard model for us to understand cross-cultural communication and its differences. However, just like any other metaphor, the model is an oversimplification. For instance, it is very obvious to know whether a shop attendant in Japan is present or absent by looking at the door of the shop (Skolowinsky, 2004). Based on past studies, it was established that a foreign sojourner can-could hardly understand some of the implications of what can-could be obviously observed. Thus, the study recommended that studies on the cultural aspects of a given group of people needs-needed to incorporate some people coming from that culture to help the researcher understand the meanings of behaviors in the deep cultures. In Japan, there is a short piece of cloth known as the "NOREN", which is normally hung outside a shop. This can happen in the presence or absence of an attendant. ~~Thus~~ Therefore, should a person from America visit the country, he or she may be looking to an open shop or a written sign that informs customers that the shop is closed. -In the context of Japanese culture, studies notice that it is up to the person (reader/listener) to correctly interpret ~~have the correct interpretation of~~ the *NOREN* hung inside or outside the door

or entrance to the shopping place. This means that even the observable features of a culture can be interpreted differently or cannot be interpreted at all by ~~people a person coming from another~~ coming from other cultures. At this point, it can be agreed that the top part of the iceberg represents this situation.

There are different cultures across the whole world as well as within the same cultures. However, Skolowinsky (2004) advises that it is important to acknowledge that the Iceberg model helps us understand these differences through stepwise approaches. While using the Iceberg model, it is recommended that sociologists understand that different people have different backgrounds in terms of religion, environment, social ties, and family relations. Once these are factored in, it will be imperative to consider individuals from the same culture exhibiting different cultural aspects, which should not be a surprise during cross-cultural studies like the one exploring the Germans and ~~US people~~ the Americans. In this regard, it will be of great significance to consider the distinct levels of the Iceberg in developing better relationships with the people from that particular culture ~~hence thereby, availing of the~~ giving the opportunity to understand even the deepest cultural aspects and differences.

### The Onion Model

Bunkowske (2002) developed "a cultural onion diagram" that ~~can~~ could be used to analyze and understand given sets of ~~a~~ cultures. In the cultural onion, each person is represented with seven physical, spiritual, and mental layers. These layers are used to organize the reality in a person's life. The layers are holistic and interrelated, and operate ~~from~~ back and forth ~~to~~ forth and ~~from~~ forth to back vice versa from the centre of the onion. Practically, an onion is made up of layers and one ~~cannot~~ cannot tell of the quality or characteristic of ~~the~~ inner layers unless the overlying one is peeled. In the same way, understanding one's culture must go stepwise from one level to the next.

#### *Layers of onion model*

The seven layers in the ~~onion~~ Onion model are artifacts, behavior, feeling, values, beliefs, worldview, and ~~the~~ ultimate allegiance (Bunkowske, 2002). Artifacts and behaviors form the outer layer of the cultural onion. These layers are immediate and apparent. ~~In~~ In-depth linkages

are solely available as credible connections are made with the inner most layers, which are world view and ultimate allegiance in an individual's culture. In using the onion model to create these relationships, one needs a considerable amount of time and effort-is needed. A person's physical attributes are termed Artifacts-artifactsare the physical attributes of a person. For instance, it refers to objects or things that can be associated with such individual. In other words, it refers to what people gather. Behavior simply refers to what an individual does. Feelings refer to the emotional evaluations and conclusions about what people encounter with-in day-to-day life. This is usually measured on a scale of love to hate, happy to sad, and calm to hungry among others. Values refer to mental evaluations and conclusions about an individual's experiences of daily life. This is also measured on a scale of good to bad. Beliefs refer to mental evaluations and conclusions on daily life based on a scale of true to false. World view refers to organized arrangement, the managing perceptions, and the internal gyro at the core of societal and human realityrealities. This aspect of the onion model provides a mental map of what an individual or group of people views and understands as real. Finally, the ultimate allegiance is regarded as the heartbeat, the trigger, the starting point, and the grounding reality that provides the basic direction in understanding the underlying meaning of personal stories. Worldview brings the cohesion-and, structure of mental mappings, and meta-narratives as well as perspectives in an individual's world view. Therefore, it can be seen that the seven layers of onion are used to understand the basic and observable cultural behaviors to-and the most complex ones that involve brain analysis. However, the layers give social researcher the opportunity to understand a culture in a more organized manner than by treating every element together.

**Comment [Editor65]:** Individually or collectively?

### *Levels of onion model*

Bunkowske, (2002) says that the seven layers of the onion discussed above can be further regarded in terms of three major structural levels. The levels integrate the cultural aspects right from the core of the onion to the external surface. Starting from the core, these levels are the foundational, the evaluating, and the actualizing level.

**Foundational level-** The foundational level of culture is regarded as the starting point for everything (Bunkowske, 2002). This level provides the-an understanding of how individuals think the world should be. It gives the perceptual foundation and the mental mapping for the

**Comment [Editor66]:** Please check for clarity

~~remaining~~ two remaining levels of culture. On this note, it can be seen that researchers ~~on~~ studying cultural differences need to focus on this aspect first so that they gain a clear understanding of the people in a given culture. Through this methodology, the researcher needs to treat it as the meta-story from which people move, live, and have their experiences. This level opens the way for the unspoken decision-making patterns and thoughts. The level is considered as the stage that triggers an individual's beliefs, feelings, behaviors, and values. It also triggers both the physical and mental impulses for gathering and manipulating the artifacts. Based ~~on~~ this fact, it can be seen that this level in the onion model explains why certain cultures have such observable cultural behaviors. The author uses a biblical text to support this level of onion model by quoting Proverbs 23:7, which says, "As a person thinks in his heart so he is." It implies that all the observable behaviors and way of life in a given culture originate from what such people think in their hearts. This foundational level, which is made of worldview and ultimate allegiance, is the most invisible aspect of culture that can only be implicitly understood. Thus, it cannot be immediately accessed and analyzed.

***The Evaluating level-*** The evaluating level of culture offers an automatic system for examining and judging the experiences in one's life (Bunkowske, 2002). At this level of the onion model, an individual's ideas or cultural ideas are measured against the foundational mental mapping of the culture in worldview and ultimate allegiance. This is to establish whether such experiences are good, enjoyable, or true. The layers of evaluating level of a culture provide and develop secondary-programmed mapping patterns, which reflexively examined and negotiate the many significant decisions and conclusion of life. These secondary-programmed patterns, which are used to draw conclusions about individuals' beliefs, values, and feelings that comes from the mental mappings as well as the programmed evaluating patterns of the layers below ~~then~~ them in the cultural onion. Thus, feelings should be evaluated from values, values from beliefs, beliefs from world view, and worldview from ultimate allegiance. However, the evaluating level with its layers of beliefs, values, and feelings is not as deeply entrenched in the cultural onion compared to the foundational level of worldview and ultimate allegiance. Therefore, beliefs, values as well as feelings are not as implicit as the worldview and ultimate allegiance in the foundational level. In this regard, these three aspects of evaluating level are more accessible to researchers compared to the other two in terms of the core level cultural aspects. However, they are not



easily accessible for observation and manipulation as the actualizing level that contains behaviors and artifacts.

**The actualizing model-** This level of understanding a culture acts on and lives out the reality as well as the fundamental mappings and the perspectives about such reality through the actualizing and foundational layers of culture (Bunkowske, 2002). It ~~means that implies that~~ for one to understand the top most level of cultures, he or she must develop it from the core level through the middle one. The actualizing level responds to the fundamental mental mappings and perceived realities by actualizing them. This process of actualization usually happens in the external aspects of daily life. At this point, there is no choice for it to take place. Instead, actualization of previous levels ~~semi-automatically or automatically~~ takes place in response to internal mental mapping, ~~semi-automatically or automatically~~. In this regard, the functions of doing and gathering on a routine basis takes place as strong contact is made with the people or things in a given culture. However, researchers need to acknowledge that the results of such contacts with the people or things can be negative, positive, or neutral. This encompasses spiritual, mental, and physical dimensions of the contact. At this level of cultural understanding, the researcher needs to acknowledge that people will only show ~~out~~ their choices when they interact with God, with ~~gods~~ Gods, with one another, as well as with the world. This level is usual accessible as people within a particular culture come in contact with one another and objects. In this regard, people will tend to intentionally bring their culture into contact with other people's cultures in the same society. They can also carry such cultural aspects to other societies. Thus, the researcher is rendered with good opportunity to access and evaluate the observable interactions when individuals show what started in the foundational level.

Hofstede (2010) in his revised model also talks of the "Onion Model of culture." The author reasons that culture is made up of three main layers around the core, and every researcher trying to understand culture can use this model. The Core refers to the values of a certain culture that are very dynamic. It stands for those aspects of cultural values that mostly remain the same. In this regard, a researcher must make use of history about a society so as to establish the types of cultures that have remained static over a period of time. This means that in conducting a cross-cultural study, a researcher will have to consider that some of the values that may seem outdated but can still play a role in influencing how such people live in the modern society.

The first layer around the core is regarded as the rituals (Hofstede, 2010). *Rituals* can be regarded as a way of individual's hygiene. For instance, Asians take a bath in the evening while Americans take a birth-bath in the morning. Germans also like shaking hands more often as the Malay tenderly touch the finger tips and then point it to the heart. However, studies show that such rituals undergo slow changes. The *Heroes* forms the second layer around the core of every culture. A hero can be an affliative individual but has influence on the culture. For instance, the publication of the novel, Dracula, developed among the Americans an innate fear of 's ~~publication made Americans to develop fear about~~ Vampires, even though it was not witnessed in their culture before. Besides, the heroes' level can be represented by national heroes and scientists in photo models. In short, this level of culture reflects ~~on~~ those individuals who play ~~are~~ role models in the society in which ~~where~~ they ~~had~~ lived.

The third and the last level of understanding culture through the Onion's model ~~are is that of the~~ Symbols (Hofstede, 2010). In the modern society, it should be understood that a majority of symbols are used as brands. For instance, we have Louis Vuitton, BMW, and Apple. In his view, Hofstede says that such symbols move with momentary fashion. Based on the three layers of Hofstede's ~~onion~~ Onion model, the author says that the layers can be trained and learned through practices exclusive of the core layer, which represents the inner cultural values. In his analysis, the various sets of inner cultural aspects are: dirty vs. clean, good vs. bad, unnatural vs. natural, irrational vs. rational, ugly vs. beautiful, abnormal vs. normal, and paradoxical vs. logical.

**Comment [Editor67]:** Please check and make the name consistent.

### National and Supra-National Cultures

When dealing with issues of culture, it should be remembered that national cultures are different from supranational cultures (Cowan, 2000). National cultures, in the view of Worrel, Cross and Vandiver (2001) refer to only those cultures that have meaning and significance to one nation. However, when dealing with more than one nation, such cultures can no longer apply. Based on these propositions, there are political, economic, or social organizations that operate in only one nation while some operate across ~~the~~ borders, i.e. the United Nations (Cowan, 2000). In both cases, it is very challenging to establish common organizational cultures that apply to all people since it is a combination of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Worrel, Cross and Vandiver, 2001). In the context of multinational corporations or organizations, it is not even easy

to get the right answers to how people should communicate with one another. Therefore, there is a need to harmonize such situations by first understanding the cultural backgrounds of employees in such organizations, followed by an understanding of the culture of the people to be served so that a synergy is established.

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