



Massey University

***Communicating Across Cultures in a
New Zealand Workplace: an investigation of
attitudes, policies and practices at Excell, Auckland***

A 75 point thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Management in Communication Management at Massey University,
Palmerston North, New Zealand.

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2006

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Communicating Across Cultures in a New Zealand Workplace: an investigation of attitudes, policies and practices at Excell, Auckland

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Reference information:

Mannes, M. (2005). *Communicating across cultures in a New Zealand workplace: an investigation of attitudes, policies and practices at Excell Auckland*, Palmerston North, New Zealand: Massey University, Department of Communication and Journalism.

Includes References and Bibliography.

Subject search words:

Stereotype, Power distance, Cross-cultural communication, High and low context communication.

Abstract

From a sociocultural perspective, the aim in this study was to find out whether or not New Zealanders in one Auckland workplace consciously communicate in a different way with colleagues from migrant cultures. Because New Zealand has become increasingly culturally diverse, workplaces have to adapt to a multicultural workforce. Migrants have cultural values that may conflict with New Zealand values; therefore, it is possible that misunderstandings may occur.

The objectives in this study were to find out if in one research site whether New Zealanders adjusted their communication when communicating with colleagues from migrant cultures. Methodology was concentrated on intercultural concepts of positive and negative stereotyping, high and low context communication, hierarchy and cultural differences in power distance to explore any awareness of differences in communicating with migrants compared with the way in which communication was conducted with New Zealanders. Informal interviews were conducted to guide the direction of an initial questionnaire which led to the development of the questionnaire used in a survey carried out with 53 Pakeha and Maori working at Excell Corporation, a New Zealand company in Auckland.

Results indicated that New Zealand employees of Excell did adjust their communication when communicating with colleagues from different cultures. However the extent of adaptation depended on the situation. The results confirm the significance of this study for organisations with a multicultural staff by highlighting why and where communication breaks down. For example, avoiding migrant colleagues occurred because of previous frustrating encounters, stereotypic attitudes and not having the time to try to understand migrant colleagues.

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Preface

Research Background

I have always been fascinated with people from different cultures and what it is that enables us to communicate to a greater or lesser degree. This interest took me overseas for many years and I enjoyed the diversity of people and the challenge of communicating with others from different cultures. Returning to New Zealand in the late 1990s came as quite a culture shock as I came back to a New Zealand which was quite different from the one I had left. A New Zealand that, it seemed, had seen an explosion of migrants from all corners of the world, but especially from Asia.

The New Zealand population is made up of various cultures including many that differ from the New Zealand culture. By *New Zealand culture* I mean the culture comprising Maori and Pakeha values that have shaped New Zealand. In my field as a consultant I work with various organisations and people from different countries and backgrounds and often see challenges or misunderstandings arise between New Zealanders and migrant colleagues when delivering messages, sometimes at a high cost to the organisation. Too many times I have seen colleagues, both migrant and New Zealand, avoiding each other because of not being able to understand the other's language or accent, as well as being offended by and/or misunderstanding each other. Often it is not language that is the problem but rather the different communication styles and cultural norms that each person uses to get her or his message across. However, I have found that most people do not understand these concepts, therefore, without some intercultural learning, do not have the ability to deal effectively with intercultural exchanges.

Further, this study helps me with my own work in understanding real issues being faced by organisations today because of challenges in communication styles. Also it

is important for me to understand how we do or do not adjust our communication when communicating with migrant colleagues in order to understand how to address the challenges some multicultural organisations in New Zealand are facing. This project has also been of great value to me in understanding how I communicate with migrant colleagues and has made me aware of how I adjust my communication, or - in some cases – do not adjust it, and how it has affected further communication and relationships with migrant colleagues.

Acknowledgements

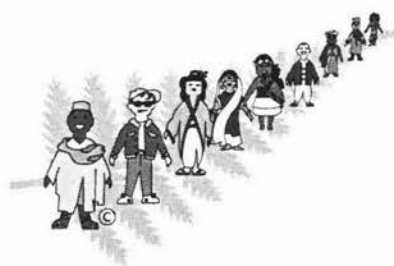
Many people have supported me through the long journey of this project. Firstly I am grateful to Marianne Tremaine, my supervisor, whose encouragement throughout has been tremendous and for the breakfasts she shouted when I flew down to Palmerston North at some ungodly hour in the morning to work on the project. Marianne has been with me from the beginning when she first answered my queries about undertaking writing a thesis and her enthusiasm and honesty helped me to reach the decision to go ahead - and she is still here at the bitter sweet end, helping me prepare the research results for publication. Thanks, Marianne - it was a pleasure working with you. In addition I greatly appreciate the help of Heather Kavan, my second supervisor.

Needless to say I could not have achieved the results without the 53 participants from Excell who completed the questionnaire and whose enthusiasm and commitment to the research made my job easy. I would like to thank also the CEO of Excell at the time the information was gathered, who was supportive of this research.

Being an extramural student is sometimes very lonely, and surrounding yourself with good friends who are there for you when you need support is critical. I acknowledge the support I received from Sally Young and Karen Duncan off whom I have been able to bounce ideas. Very special thanks go to my mentor, Catherine Harris, who has kept me on track and spent many hours working with me. Finally, the most important person whose patience and encouragement have been unyielding throughout my studies - I acknowledge and thank my partner, Geoff. Without his support you would not be reading this today.

Communicating Across Cultures in a New Zealand Workplace:

**An investigation of attitudes, policies and practices
at Excell, Auckland**



Chapter 1. Introduction

1.0 Introduction

"We all have the capacity to communicate with other people, however unlike ourselves they might be, and to learn to understand them" (Hofstede, Pedersen, & Hofstede, 2002, p. xix). Although we have the capacity, the amount of cultural apprehension we experience, or lack of willingness to interact with a person from a different culture may, prevent us from understanding and/or communicating with her/him. Increasingly, workplaces in New Zealand are becoming multicultural and New Zealand (Pakeha and Maori) and migrant (first generation migrants living in New Zealand) co-workers need to communicate in order to work effectively. However, if migrant workers use different communication styles from those of the host culture, does the host culture adjust its communication style to facilitate understanding or do they use their own style and expect migrant workers to understand? In this case study, we explore the extent to which New Zealand employees adjust their communication when communicating with co-workers from migrant cultures.

Each organisation has its own structure, systems, and organisational culture (Hofstede, 1985; Shockley-Zalabak, 2002) and because of this it would be difficult to understand how employees adjust their communication working within many different contexts. Therefore this thesis is a case study of one multicultural organisation in New Zealand and represents an attempt to understand how employees adjust their communication within the context of their organisational environment. The research question is:

“Do New Zealand employees in organisations with immigrant staff find they need to adjust their means of communicating when interacting with colleagues from immigrant cultures?”

From a sociocultural perspective, the aims in this study are to understand how we communicate with migrant colleagues and explore how three aspects of culture: stereotyping, high and low context communication, and the dimension of power distance, influence the communication adjustment.

Current information shows New Zealand is considered a multicultural society, (EEO Trust 2004; Johnston, Poulsen, & Forrest 2003; Statistics NZ 2003), and employers now have to contend with migrant employees. Migrant colleagues bring their own values and communication styles to the workplace that are sometimes at the opposite end of the continuum to New Zealand communication styles and values. Although New Zealanders and new migrants need to work side-by-side, more often than not, little thought is given to intercultural communication and interaction to promote effective working relationships. For example, in New Zealand employers place more emphasis on finding the most ideal, qualified and/or experienced person to fill a vacant position rather than basing selection on how the person will fit in with existing employees (Excell HR Manual 2001; Humphries & Grice 1995). As Humphries and Grice (1995) explain, one of the criteria for fairness employers use is ‘merit’ and employees in New Zealand, as in most Western cultures, are employed on their merit, yet the definition of *merit* is of individualistic standards, therefore, the employer looks more favourably on individualistic attributes. Humphries and Grice go on to say that many migrants in New Zealand are from more collectivistic cultures, therefore, they are at odds with the competitiveness of individualistic values and have no choice but to conform to more individualistic values in order to access employment. In this situation, once

migrants are employed they may find they also have to conform to different values and communication styles to be able to communicate effectively with New Zealand colleagues.

New Zealand workplaces are becoming more multicultural, largely due to recent immigration trends, and cultural and ethnic diversity in New Zealand are facts of life. The last ten years have seen a great change in the population of New Zealand with the immigration of people from different cultural backgrounds, and today New Zealand, especially Auckland, is a multicultural society. In the EEO Trust's (Equal Employees Opportunities Trust) diversity survey report 2004 they state that

"New Zealand's working-age population has become, and will continue to be more ethnically diverse, than in the past. Two forces are contributing to this: growing numbers of Maori and Pacific people reaching working age and increased proportions of migrants in the population. About 21% in 2001 of working-age New Zealand residents were born overseas, up from 17.6% in 1991. In 2003, 37% of permanent and long-term arrivals in New Zealand were from Asia, 34% from Oceania, 20% from Europe and 4% from the Americas" (EEO Trust Diversity Survey Report, 2004, p 13).

Diagrams 1 and 2 are taken from the New Zealand Census 2001 and support the findings of the EEO Trust Diversity Survey Report (2004), especially the growth of the Asian population. The diagrams show the changes in ethnic groups from 1991 to 2001 and the fastest growing ethnic groups in New Zealand in 2001.

Diagram 1. Cultural diversity in New Zealand 2001

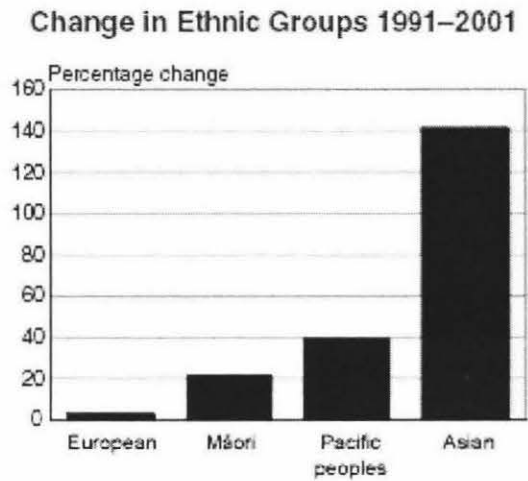


Diagram 2. The fastest growing of the top 50 Ethnic Groups in 2001

Ethnic Group	2001 Count	Percentage increase from 1991
Korean	19,026	1,946
Arab	2,856	1,514
Croat	2,502	1,363
Iraqi	2,145	772
South African	14,889	642
Russian	3,084	543

(New Zealand Census snapshot: cultural diversity, 2001)

May (2004) also supports the changing face of New Zealand and explains “we have seen a marked change in the demographic composition of Aotearoa/New Zealand, with an attendant marked increase in ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity” (May, 2004, p. 247). These diversities are often grounds for confusion or misunderstandings and New Zealand as a whole is grappling with how everyone fits in. It is also often assumed that people from other cultures communicate in different ways which sometimes discourages contact or communication at any more than a basic, functional level (Stephan & Stephan 1992; Ward & Kennedy

2001). Our culture influences our communication style and Chaney and Martin (2004) explain the relationship between communication and culture by saying "whereas communication is a process, culture is the structure through which the communication is formulated and interpreted" (p. 5). Therefore in a multicultural environment there is greater opportunity for misunderstandings as each person interprets messages through her or his own cultural understanding. Misunderstandings in the workplace can have serious consequences and/or be costly, and for that reason, it is critical that employees communicate effectively to avoid such misunderstandings.

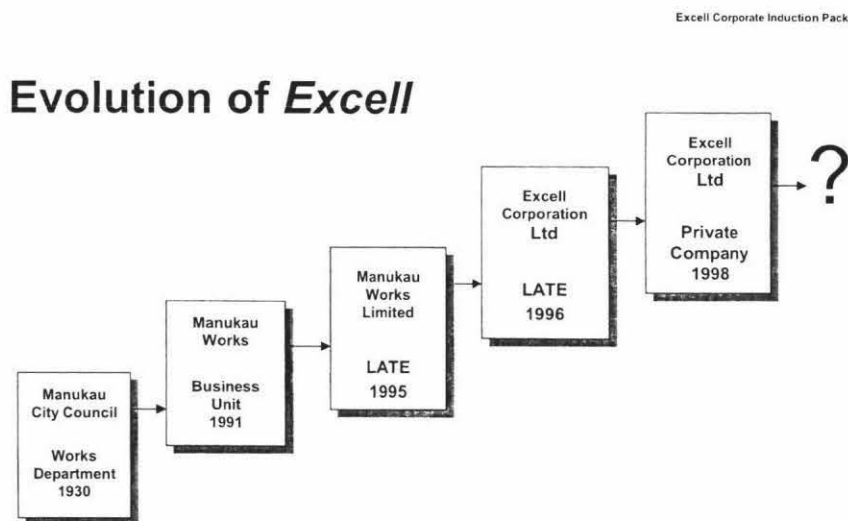
Effective communication is essential to the success of business and it is necessary that employees and employers communicate effectively, (Likert, 1961; Shockley-Zalabak, 2002). Although "no two people ever attach the same meaning to a message" (Gudykunst, 2004, p. 28), by the phrase *communicating effectively* I mean that the message is sent in a manner that minimises misunderstandings. In the multicultural workplace, where stereotypes and the dimension of power distance or context in communication can affect the way we communicate, effective communication is especially important to avoid misunderstandings - and this means that we may need to adjust our communication style when communicating with colleagues.

To understand this case study in context it is important to: introduce Excell Corporation Limited where the research was undertaken, understand what constitutes a New Zealander, know who the migrant colleagues are, and define the theoretical dimensions being applied. This contextual information is defined under the headings: Excell Corporation Limited, Definition of a New Zealander, and Definitions of Dimensions of Culture as follows.

1.1 Excell Corporation Limited

Excell Corporation Limited (Excell) is one of New Zealand's largest suppliers of infrastructure maintenance solutions and specialises in: open space management, environmental services, water and drainage maintenance, roading and property services. Excell originated from Manukau City Council's Works Business Unit in 1995 and moving from a Local Authority Trading Enterprise (LATE) to become a private company. The company grew predominantly by the acquisition of Business Units from other councils.

Diagram 3. Evolution of Excell Corporation Limited



(Excell Induction Pack, 1999, p. 4)

Over the past ten years since its formation, Excell has successfully transformed itself from a local to a national business, creating jobs for approximately 700 hundred people, and consistently delivering total quality service to its customers throughout New Zealand and Australia. Excell's mission statement is *"Excell Corporation delivers quality service to our customers through the commitment to excellence of our motivated team"*.

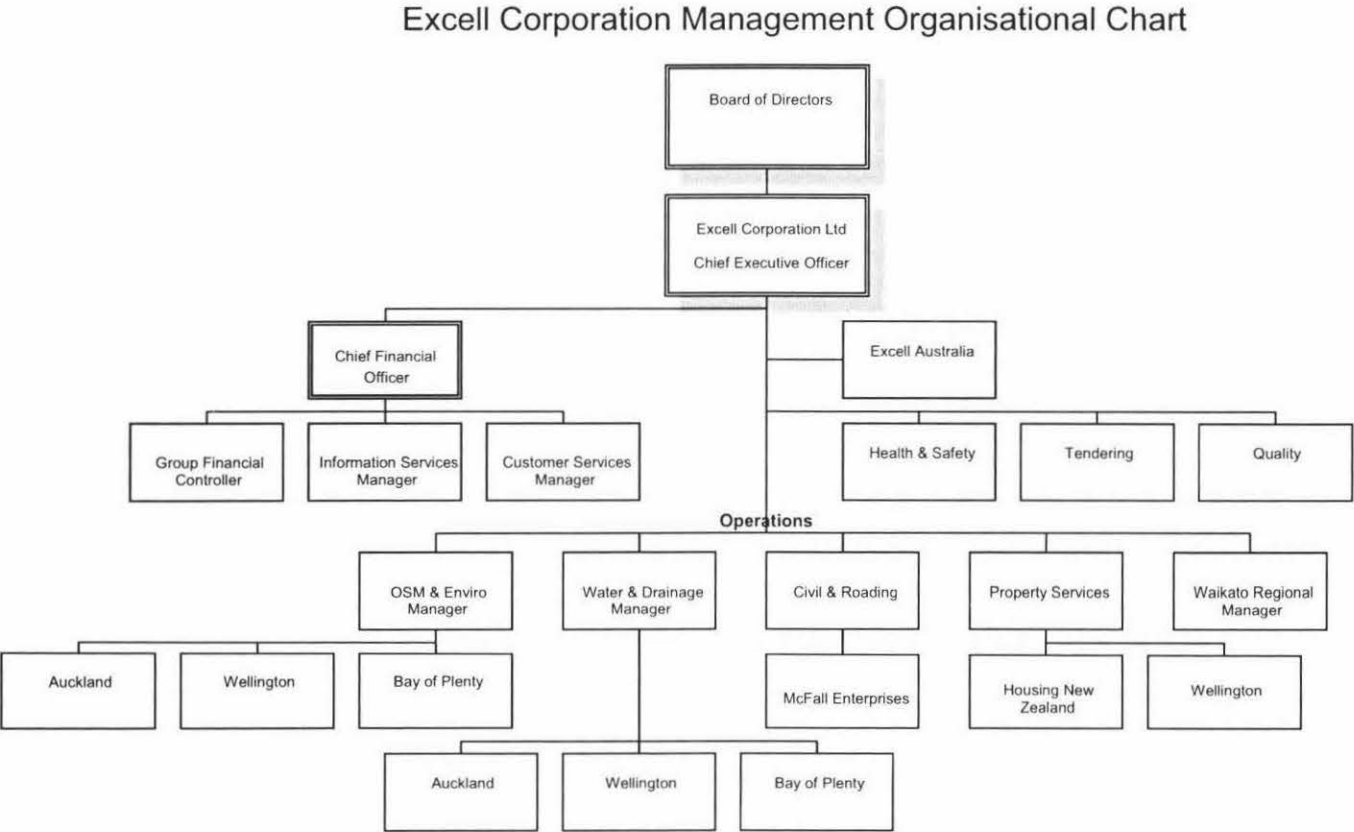
When I spoke with the Human Resources (HR) manager about the mission statement, he indicated that it may change in 2006. He explained that in 2006 Excell would be entering a new phase in business, a new CEO would be appointed, and all systems, structures and the mission statement would be reviewed to reflect the organisation's going forward.

Although this research was conducted under the 2005 structure from 1 February 2006 an Executive Chairman will head Excell and the management structure will change and three new positions will be added (or replace existing positions): a Chief Operations Officer (COO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), and a Business Development Manager (BDM).

The current CEO epitomises the style of "management by walking around", first described by Peters and Waterman (1982) and reinforced by Kotter (1999) and Elkin, Jackson, and Inkson (2000), as he is often seen walking around the depot talking to employees. He promotes an open door policy, meaning that he welcomes any employee who comes to see him at any time. Each month the CEO holds a meeting which is open to all employees. The meeting is well attended by a range of employees from upper management to labourers. In these meetings he talks about the financial status of Excell, contracts that have been won or lost, and recognises employees who have exceeded workplace expectations.

The organisational structure of Excell Corporation is displayed in Diagram (4). Please note that this structure may change in 2006.

Diagram 4. Excell Corporation Limited Organisational Chart



Excell, because of the nature of the services it provides and its original location, (Manukau City, a known bicultural, now multicultural, area of Auckland), has always seen itself as bicultural with employees from both Pakeha and Maori backgrounds. Over the past ten years, however, people of more and more differing ethnicities have joined the Excell workforce and it is obvious today as you walk around the head office, that it is a multicultural organisation. To understand Excell in a multicultural context, I conducted an informal interview with the CEO to discover how Excell dealt with its multicultural workforce.

The CEO explained that they actually take advantage of positive cultural values (for example, the collectiveness and family orientation of Maori) to build and promote organisational culture. He finds that by using values that align with employee values and that are positive for the organisation, employees are more likely to feel they belong and commit to the organisation. He says that the collectiveness of Maori also aligns with many immigrant cultures we have here. *"We are all one team and need to work together"* he says.

The message Excell applies constantly to motivate employees and build positive culture is *"we are all in this together and we need to support and respect each other"*. This comment is supported by the 2005 staff survey with 54% of staff, when asked what makes Excell a great place to work, giving responses relating to the quality of people or of the team with whom the participant worked. Following are responses by two staff members written in the survey *"The people, I have never worked for a company where co-workers are so friendly and keen to assist each other"* and *"The people within the organisation have a sense of purpose that seems to push everyone along and setbacks do not have an effect, we just get up and push on with the job"* (Excell Staff Survey, 2005, p. 5).

The CEO says there is no tolerance for discrimination or racism within Excell and they try very hard to accommodate particular cultural behaviours. For example family and/or a *Kaumaatua*¹ are able to attend interviews, special occasions, or disciplinary hearings, and Muslim workers are able to pray when they need to, although there is no special area set aside for this. Although the CEO spoke positively about accommodating cultural behaviours, I felt this was aimed primarily at Maori and Pacific Island employees. The CEO has found the main problems that occur because of differences in culture are in top level management, therefore when interviewing for management positions he is also looking for how the person would fit in the organisation. He asks questions such as "Have you worked with and/or managed people from different cultures and how well do you relate to people from other cultures?" He is aware, through experience that particular cultures do not fit in well at Excell because of a clash of cultural values; however there is no training for employees to address these problems.

Commitment to diversity and greater acceptance of diversity is achieved through multiple channels, such as constant reinforcement, change of initiatives, commitment to valuing diversity, creating an atmosphere of inclusion, and through changes to policy, (Gilbert & Ivancevich, 2000; Landis, Bennett, & Bennett, 2004). Although there are no policies directly relating to different cultures there are policies in the Recruitment and Selection and Employee Relations chapters of the Excell Human Resources Manual (2001) that support the CEO's comments and fair treatment of all employees. The policies are as follows:

¹ Kaumaatua – Maori word for Elder, i.e. a person of either sex of grandparental or equivalent age and social status; a person knowledgeable in *tikanga Maori* (Metge, 1986, p.156).

The Recruitment and Selection policy set out quite clearly that a standard process should be used in all instances to ensure fair treatment. The policy (HR Chapter 1, 2001, p. 1) states:

Excell is committed to:

- *Hiring the best suited applicants for available positions*
- *Developing team members and making the best use of their abilities*
- *Ensuring the use of fair and valid selection techniques*

A standard process shall be used in all instances of temporary and permanent employment to ensure fair treatment of all applicants. Employment decisions shall be based on job specific criteria extracted from the position description.

Excell, like many companies in New Zealand, uses a standard process to ensure fair treatment and this is seen to be non-discriminatory. However, the standard process is defined by New Zealand values and expectations therefore when recruiting people of different cultures, whose values are different, this might mean a standard process could actually be discriminatory. Acceptance of diversity means that organisations need to challenge the belief that equal treatment in the sense of the same treatment is desirable and as Sue (1991) points out "equal treatment can be discriminatory, whereas differential treatment that recognises differences is not necessarily preferential" (p. 101). Rajan and Harris (2003) also support Sue and explain "if diversity management is about accessing the best talent and leveraging it to deliver targeted business outcomes, all HR practices need to be open and fair: meritocratic yet sensitive to inter-personal differences" (p. 19).

Understandably, organisations do require certain attributes of their employees, though not allowing for diversity within their recruitment processes indicates a lack of commitment toward diversity. An increasing body of literature (Rosen & Lovelace 1994; Gilbert & Ivancevich, 2000; Jones, Pringle, & Shepherd, 2003; Roosevelt, 1990; Sue, 1991), points out that acceptance of diversity is achieved through changing traditional approaches towards equality and suggests that, to successfully manage diversity, organisations must strike a balance between expectations for assimilation and efforts to accommodate diverse groups of people and this needs to be reflected in organisational policies.

The Employee Relations chapter of the Excell HRM manual includes addressing issues pertaining to discrimination and harassment. Excell Employee Relations policies are intended to ensure the fair and reasonable treatment of all staff and are as follows:

Excell Corporation has a commitment to meeting all legal requirements that apply as an employer and to positively managing its relationship with employees.

In the area of Employee Relations Excell's aims are:

- *To create a work environment where co-operation, teamwork and participation are fully developed and where the need for high standards of performance are understood by all.*
- *To ensure that all employees are treated fairly and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.*

- *To make decisions in consultation with those affected by any change and in accordance with commitments made in applicable employment Contracts/Agreements.*
- *To recognise that for a sustainable employment relationship to exist, Excell Corporation needs to be efficient, competitive and well managed and appropriate management decisions must therefore be made in this regard.*
- *To ensure that when making decisions, business considerations are balanced against any impact on the quality of working life of employees...*

These above points taken from the Employee Relations policies indicate that Excell undertakes to create a good working environment for its employees and to treat employees fairly, at the same time fulfilling its own business objectives. What is not clear from these policies is how cultural differences will be taken into account to create a good working environment for all employees.

To create a good working environment, organisations need to accommodate diverse groups, their differing contributions, expectations and needs, and the success of this depends on both policy makers and employees at all levels (Hartel, 2004; Jones, Pringle, & Shepherd 2000; Humphries & Grice, 1995; Rosen & Lovelace, 1994). In their study titled *Introducing diversity in the New Zealand branch of a US multinational* Jones, Pringle, & Shepherd (2000) found that American initiatives of managing diversity did not translate across cultural boundaries because they represented a strategy of assimilation (to the American way) rather than one which genuinely valued diversity. We can assume from Jones, Pringle, & Shepherd's study that, if an organisation does not truly value diversity, migrants working within the organisation may feel as if they are being forced to adopt values of the host nation also, rather than having their values play

a part in creating a quality working environment. Sue (1991) believes that recruiting minority individuals without subsequent changes to policies and internal changes within the organisation will result in minority workers feeling less valued and/or harassed or frustrated possibly resulting in loss of valuable minority employees.

Included in the Employees Relations chapter of Excell's HRM are the following Harassment Policies (HR Chapter 4, 2001. p. 2) which show that there is no tolerance of discrimination and state:

All employees have the right of freedom to work for Excell without the fear or concern of being harassed. Harassment based on age, marital status, gender, religion, ethnic origin, ethical beliefs, colour or race, employment status, disability, sexual orientation, family status, membership or otherwise of employee associations, is unacceptable.

Any harassment by any person, either an employee or another person who has contact with team members during the conduct of Excell business, will not be tolerated. Appropriate action will be taken to investigate and remedy complaints made to Management.

Employees who are harassed by clients, Team Members or other people encountered while carrying out their duties as an employee have a number of options for action, ranging from an informal discussion to external legal action...

...Employees who harass co-workers, clients or members of the public on Excell premises or while carrying out their duties as an employee, will be dealt with using the company's disciplinary policy. This does not preclude other penalties being

enforced under the Human Rights Commission Act or the Employment Relations Act, which may result if a formal complaint is made under either legislation.

It is important that information about any harassment situation is limited only to those involved in resolving the issue, and who have a genuine need to know the facts as far as possible.

The policy also includes the Display of Offensive Material and states:

In accordance with efforts to prevent harassment, visual material that is either racially based or pornographic in nature will not be displayed or viewed in Excell premises or vehicles. It is the responsibility of the Manager accountable for each work area to ensure the above is enforced and instances are promptly dealt with.

The Harassment Policy also includes Racial Harassment (HR, Chapter 4, 2001, p. 23) and the Racial Harassment policy states:

It is recognised that 'race' can be defined as a person's colour, race, ethnic or national origins.

Racial harassment occurs if language, visual material, or physical behaviour is used which expresses hostility against a person, or brings a person into contempt or ridicule based on their race.

To be considered harassment the behaviour must be both:

- *hurtful and offensive (even if conveyed by a third party e.g. customer or supplier), and*

- *of a severity that it has a detrimental effect on that person's employment.*

Excell team members are encouraged to try to deal with offensive behaviour themselves or seek help from a Manager before the situation becomes serious enough to warrant a formal complaint.

If a person feels they have been subjected to any form of harassment they should follow the Harassment Complaints Procedure.

These policies set out very clearly that harassment will not be tolerated at the Excell workplace, reinforcing the CEO's comments. It is interesting to note, however, that the onus is placed upon the individual employees to deal with harassment themselves, in the first instance, before involving their manager and before the situation becomes serious. From a cultural perspective placing the responsibility on the employee gives rise for concern in the multicultural workplace, especially if migrant employees are high context communicators who prefer to avoid confrontation to save face, (Beamer & Varner, 2005; Hall, 1998; Ting-Toomey, 1998), which could lead to the racial harassment not being reported.

It is difficult to comment on Excell's commitment towards the racial harassment policies as this study was not concerned with measuring harassment. In saying that, it is important to this study to acknowledge these policies, because determining harassment across cultures is difficult. As Chrobot-Mason and Hepworth (2005) point out the "issue regarding what constitutes a reasonable person's standard of a hostile or intimidating work environment is subjective, there are no clear guidelines to define a racially hostile work environment" (p. 2218). Thus, conflicting values may be perceived as harassment by some employees

from opposite ends of the continuum, especially if they do not possess accurate knowledge of each other's values.

Although none of these policies are culture specific, they do play a small part toward acceptance of diversity and underpin tolerance of diversity. The final reference is from the Collective Employment Contract where an illusion to different cultures - albeit aimed at the bicultural workplace - is made. In the Collective Employment Contract under Bereavement leave; it reads:

Clause 30 Bereavement/Tangi Hanga Leave

(b) Any employee who requires leave to attend a tangi or similar bereavement service of a person who is not of their immediate family may do so. At the worker's request such leave will be deducted from their annual leave entitlement or treated as leave without pay or otherwise, at the discretion of the Manager.

As Excell becomes more diverse this clause may have to be renegotiated to define "similar bereavement service" to include different bereavement rituals more reflective of the cultures found at Excell. Additionally, managers who have the discretion to allow leave under certain conditions will need to be well versed in different bereavement rituals to ensure employees are granted fair leave provisions.

1.1.1 Employee Attitudes towards Multiculturalism

To further understand multicultural interaction at Excell it was important to obtain opinions from employees to clarify how they aligned with the CEO's comments and the Excell policies. Employees' opinions are important to this case study to understand the organisation's attitude to multiculturalism as a whole, especially as

the policies are not culture specific. I chose two people and took notes while I conducted informal interviews at their work stations regarding their thoughts on cultural interaction in the Excell workplace.

One person worked in administration and was a young Pakeha female who had worked for Excell for ten years; the second was an older Maori male who worked in the field as a truck driver and had been with Excell for seven years. Both had very similar answers and agreed that there did not seem to be any discrimination or racism in the organisation. Both said they had never received any training in regard to working with people of different cultures and said *"we just get on with it"*. The female commented that she knew of one situation where a colleague was having trouble working with migrant colleagues and when this particular colleague was interviewed to ascertain what her issues were, they found she was racially prejudiced. I asked if anything had been done to help this colleague understand her migrant colleagues and she said *"No, she just had to deal with it herself"*. Both commented that they would be interested in some kind of training to better understand their migrant colleagues and the Maori interviewee said he often took a bit of extra time to try and understand a migrant colleague, but the Pakeha interviewee said *"I just act and speak as I normally do"*.

The last comment in that paragraph, (*"I just act and speak normally"*), may in itself exist as a barrier to communication with migrant colleagues who communicate differently from people of the host culture. With this in mind, it is practical to introduce the aspects of culture with the people and cultures involved in this study to understand how barriers might cause employees to adjust their communication when interacting with migrant colleagues.

1.2 Definition of New Zealander for this study

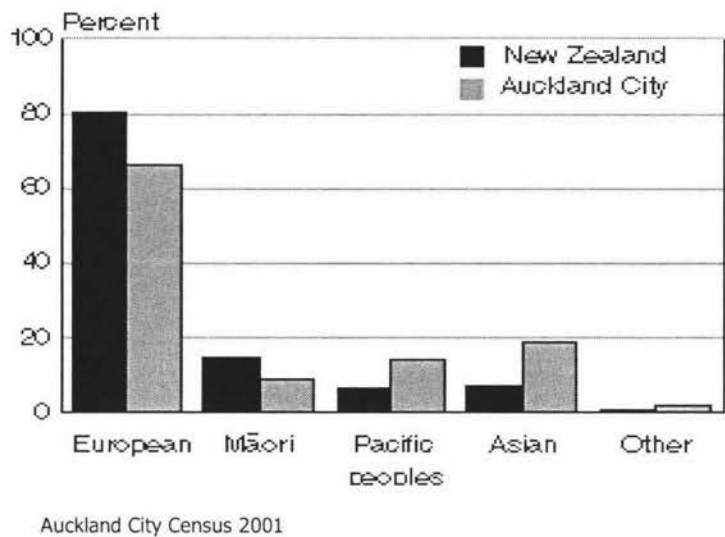
It is important for this study that we clarify who a New Zealander is as participants in this study were New Zealanders. New Zealand, by official definition, is bicultural, that is, it is composed of two cultures coexisting in partnership, and is recognised by the government as bicultural, (Kelsey, 1996; State Sector Act 1998). Biculturalism was adopted in 1984 as a key component in formal state policy and "the notion that the key constitutional relationship in New Zealand society is the partnership between Maori and Pakeha under the Treaty of Waitangi" (Poata-Smith, 2004, p. 65). As this suggests, New Zealand is made up of two main cultures: Maori (descendants of Pacific Islander people who migrated to New Zealand 1000 years before the Europeans) and Pakeha² (people of European origins). "New Zealanders can find the first expression of the collective identity in the Treaty of Waitangi. Signed between the tangata whenua³, Maori and the British Crown, the Treaty recognises two peoples, Maori and Pakeha" (DeVito, O'Rourke, & O'Neil, 2001, p. 5). Therefore in this study a *New Zealander* will be defined as a *Maori or Pakeha who was born, and has lived the majority of her/his life, in New Zealand*. New Zealanders whose New Zealand parents were overseas at the time of their birth have not been included as the time the parents spent overseas may have impinged on their cultural values which may have changed thus influencing the culture of their children which may be quite different to the general New Zealand culture. It is important to note, however, that New Zealand today is considered multicultural, with "over 200 different ethnicities" (Chase et al., 2000, p. 71) residing here. Evidence of multiculturalism can be seen as you walk around cities or visit school campuses, particularly in Auckland.

² Pakeha is the Maori word for New Zealand people of European descent

³ Tangata whenua is a Maori word meaning local people; "Person(s) connected with a place or Marae through a line of occupying ancestors and ideally owning 'Maori land' in the vicinity" (Metge, 1986, p.158).

Because this study was undertaken at Excell Corporation Limited (Excell), an organisation located in Auckland, it is helpful to recognise the cultural diversity within Auckland compared with New Zealand as a whole, as shown in the graph below.

Diagram 5. The population grouped by ethnicity of Auckland compared with New Zealand



This diagram shows that “the population of Auckland City contains a larger proportion of Pacific peoples (13.7%) and larger proportion of Asian people (18.7%) compared with the whole of New Zealand (at 6.5% and 6.6% respectively)” (Auckland City census 2001, www.stats.govt.nz).

Information gathered from the New Zealand Government Statistics (census 2001) website shows that the main immigrant cultures are Pacific, Asian, Indian, South African, and European, with the most rapidly growing ethnic groups being Korean, Arab, Croat, Iraqi, South African, and Russian. Immigrant cultures for this particular study include Great Britons, Fiji Indians, Indians, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and South Africans. For this study *Asian* refers to people from *East Asia* or what is sometimes referred to as *the Orient* (China, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong,

Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, Cambodia, Thailand, Philippines, and Indonesia) and although there are important differences, cultural values are relatively similar, sufficiently so that in this thesis the term *Asian* is used to consolidate and generalise about all Oriental cultures as one, unless specific points need to be made about a particular cultural group within the heading of Asian. The main areas of this research are considered similarly by all these cultures within Asia.

1.3 Definitions of Dimensions of Culture used in this Study

"The first use of the term *culture*, in its anthropological sense, was that by Tylor (1871) who defined culture as "that complex whole in which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (p. 22, cited in Landis et al., 2004, p. 167). *Culture* is a broad term and encompasses *all systems that help define one group of people from another* (Beamer & Varner, 2005, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2004). The definition as given by Lustig and Koester's (2003) definition will be used to define culture as it is used in this study. They say culture can be defined as "*a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, and norms, which affect the behaviours of a relatively large group*" (Lustig & Koester, 2003, p. 27). Their definition is particularly relevant to this study because in a multicultural organisation where there are many cultures, members of each will behave according to their cultural values and beliefs, which may impact adversely on the decoding perceptions of the receiver - whose cultural values may not be aligned to those of the sender: thereby impacting on the communication interaction.

For this study I look at specific aspects of culture to help identify the variations in the way they have been theorised in order to identify cultural differences that may cause difficulties in the communication process. The aspects are: stereotyping, the

dimension of power distance, and context in communication. There has been much study of these areas (Allport, 1954, Fiske, 1998; Gudykunst, 2004; Hall, 1994; Hofstede, 1980, Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, Korac-Kakabadse, & Savery, 2001; Stephan & Stephan, 1992) and, when people are from different ends of the continuum in regard to these dimensions, there are likely to be misunderstandings. Therefore, to assist with understanding this study in the correct context, the cultural aspects are defined and discussion shows where New Zealand and migrant cultures relevant to this study are situated on the continuum of high and low power distance and high and low context. (An in-depth discussion of these aspects of culture is found in the literature review).

1.3.1 Stereotyping

"Stereotyping involves a form of categorising that organises our experience and guides our behaviour toward various groups within society" (Adler, 2002, p. 81). Stereotypes describe the behavioural norms for members of a group and do not allow for individual differences (Allport, 1954, Hinton, 2000; Wood, 1999). Stereotypes, like other forms of categorisation, can be negative or positive. Positive stereotyping is when the stereotype is consciously held, descriptive rather than evaluative, accurate and is modified based on further observations. Negative stereotyping occurs when we place people in the wrong category, when the group is incorrectly described and there is no allowance for individual differences, and when we fail to modify the stereotype based on observations.

Humans stereotype as a way of making sense of the information they receive. In their study of stereotype attribution Feldman, MacDonald, and Ah Sam (1980) explain that New Zealanders "appear to stereotype on an occupational rather than an ethnic basis," (p. 198) and go on to say that much of the stereotyping occurs because of the assumption that Maori and Pacific Islanders are working or lower

class while Pakeha are middle class⁴. Conversely, Didham and Bedford (2004) point out examples of negative stereotyping by New Zealanders, still recognised today, as Pacific Islanders being referred to as 'coconuts', the Dutch as 'tulip munchers' and the English as 'whingeing poms'.

Today, politics and media also have a great impact on creating stereotypes. In politics Winston Peters, of the New Zealand First Party, has been one of the most vocal in this area as he has attempted to mobilise "public opinion against 'Asian immigrants' for electoral advantage. This was done by identifying them as threats to 'social solidarity' and to the New Zealand society" (MacPherson & Spoonley, 2004, p. 225). The media also influence stereotypes and "social distances are obvious in the language and symbols which media use to present 'ethnic' issues to audiences" (MacPherson & Spoonley, 2004. p. 226).

1.3.2 Power Distance

Power distance refers to the extent to which a person accepts unequal distribution of power (Hofstede, 1980). Cultures with low power distance promote equality and believe that there should be "interdependence between less and more powerful people" (Neulip, 2003, p. 65). On the other hand, high power distance cultures are hierarchical and inequality of power is expected and desired. In high power distance cultures, "workers are generally uneducated and superiors are entitled to special privileges and status" (Neulip, 2003, p. 66).

New Zealand Pakeha society is considered relatively low power distance and New Zealand as a whole promotes equality. Beamer and Varner (2005) state, "New Zealand is a highly egalitarian, flexible, horizontal society in which birth does not determine what level an individual may attain in the society" (p. 131). Results of

⁴ It is interesting to speculate if this study were to be replicated now whether or not the findings would still hold.

research conducted by Hofstede (1989) reinforce the statement that New Zealand is low power distance. However, the same approach cannot be attributed to New Zealand Maori who are relatively high power distance, as Mahuika (1992) explains "chieftainship is a birthright and the measure of chieftainship is the sum of a 'whakapapa'⁵ Leadership is the political functioning of chieftainship" (p. 44).

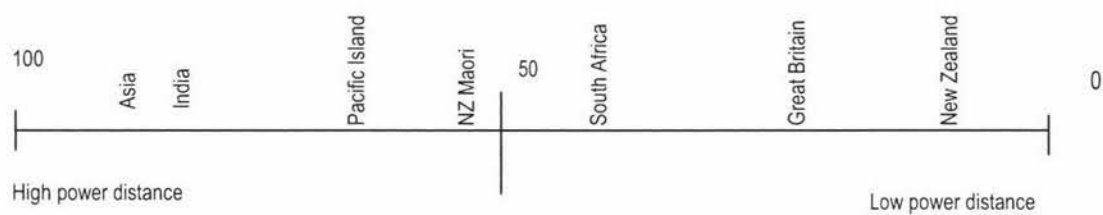
Maori protocol is strict and relationships are mediated and guided by the high value placed on '*mana*'. Mead (2003) explains that mana has a range of meanings including authority, control, influence, prestige, and power. He goes on to say "people with mana tend to be persons in leadership roles in the community. They are well placed in terms of whakapapa and come from chiefly lines or important families" (2003, p. 29). Maori culture is intricate and complex and Maori values today differ somewhat between 'rural' and 'urban' Maori with the latter having adopted various Pakeha ways. Metge (2004) explains that although urban Maori have retained certain elements of their traditional culture they have adapted and/or adopted many practices and ideals of Pakeha origin to their own ends and to the changing conditions. Urban Maori were forced to change to ensure survival in their new environment, for example, taking regular employment, making a total commitment to a cash economy and all that was entailed in meeting financial commitments of their new environment, and this left little time for attending to cultural needs (Walker, 1992). Although Maori have adopted some Pakeha behaviours, hierarchy in the tribe and unequal distribution of power show that Maori still have higher power distance.

Like Maori culture, Fijian Indian, Pacific Island, Indian, South African and Asian cultures are all considered high power distance by Hofstede (Moran &

⁵ Whakapapa is a Maori word and means descent line, genealogy (Metge, 1986)

Reisenberger, 1994). Lustig and Koester (2003) also agree that Asian and Indian cultures are high power distance but place South African as low power distance; as well as Great Britain. This indicates that the latter two cultures align more with the Pakeha culture while the others are similar to Maori culture.

Diagram 6. Continuum indicating Power Distance Index Values for Cultures Involved in this Study



(Adapted from Hofstede’s Power Distance Index, 1980)

1.3.3 High and Low Context Communication

Cross-cultural misunderstandings can be difficult to identify. As Metge and Kinloch (2001) explain: “where members of different cultural groups do come together in formal and informal situations, misunderstandings and tension arise even where there is the greatest goodwill on both sides, misunderstandings which the parties themselves find hard to explain” (p. 8). These misunderstandings can be due to differing communication styles in terms of emphasis on context or words to convey meaning. *Context* in communication refers to *the amount of context used to transmit a message*. In high context communication most of the information is either in the physical context or it is internalised in the person and little meaning is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message (Hall, 1994). For example, a Maori colleague of mine has tried many times to explain a hui (meeting) held in the whare nui (meeting house) on the Marae and how silence, who speaks, what the

speaker says and what the speaker does not say, the way the speaker expresses her/his message, a look from an elder or a thump of a staff all make up the message, making it very difficult for the uninitiated to decode effectively. Low context communication is the reverse; most of the meaning is provided in the explicit code (Neulip, 2003).

Although there are few statistical data available which identify where countries are located on the high/low context continuum (Dahl, 2000) New Zealand Pakeha culture is considered to be relatively low context. However, this cannot be said about the Maori culture. Metge and Kinloch (2001) and DeVito, O'Rourke, and O'Neil (2001) in their discussion on how cultures differ, point out that Hall's research in New Zealand used a sample of mostly Pakeha people and the collectivist nature of Maori was not reflected in the research. They go on to say that most indigenous cultures, such as Maori, tend to be high context and as they place great emphasis on the group rather than the individual and on relationships are thus collectivist. Much research (Anderson, Hecht, & Smallwood 2003; Beamer & Varner 2005; Griffin, 1997; Hall, 1997) indicates that high context cultures generally also tend to be collective. Stubbe (1997) also supports this and explains "there is a marked tendency in Maori exchanges for meaning to be left implicit, and polite listeners may therefore limit their verbal intrusion on the speaker's floor... Holmes (in press) found that Maori listeners provided less overt verbal feedback" (for example, often supportive mutterings of approval – *kia ora*) "than Pakeha, and while Pakeha listeners often asked questions" (p. 262). Stubbe goes on to say that it is well documented that for Maori speakers non-verbal signals are of more importance than verbalisation, whereas Pakeha tend to define communication in terms of verbal expression.

Much like the Pakeha culture, many researchers (Beamer & Varner 2005; DeVito et al. 2001; Lustig & Koester 2003; Neulip, 2003) agree that most Western and/or English-speaking cultures tend to be low context and most Eastern cultures high context. Brew and Cairns (2004) also agree that high context cultures such as East Asia “intermesh person and issue, are indirect, and rely on contextual cues and situational knowledge” (p. 333). Therefore we can say that people from Great Britain, South Africa, and India are likely to be low context in their communication, and people from South East Asia and the Pacific Islands are likely to be high context communicators.

Diagram 7. Continuum indicating High and Low Context for Cultures Involved in this Study



1.4 Structure of this Case Study

This thesis begins with an introduction to the concept that culture affects the way New Zealand employees communicate with migrant colleagues and goes on to show how New Zealand employees of Excell adjust their communication when communicating with migrant colleagues because of cultural aspects of stereotyping, the dimension of power distance and context in communication. This case study comprises three sections: Research Field, Instruments and Preparation, and Data Analysis and Interpretation. Each section is made up of chapters and is introduced below.

1.4.1 Research Field

The Research Field section includes two chapters; Literature Review (Chapter two) and Research Objectives (Chapter three).

In the literature review background information necessary to contextualise the extent and significance of the research question is given, and current literature and research in the areas of stereotyping, the dimension of power distance; and high and low context communication are identified and discussed.

In the Research Objectives chapter the objective of the study is introduced – that is, to discover whether or not New Zealand colleagues adjust their communication when communicating with migrant colleagues and an explanation of the rationale of applying the particular cultural aspects of stereotyping; the dimension of power distance and high and low context communication is discussed.

1.4.2 Instruments and Preparation

In the second section, Instruments and Preparation, all methodological procedures used to gather information for this study are described. The Methodology presents the procedures used to conduct the research, identifies theory that helps elucidate comments made by the employees, all questions and scenarios used in the questionnaire are presented, and the research participants are introduced. Finally, ethical considerations of this study are discussed.

1.4.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The third and final section is Data Analysis and Interpretation. This section is divided into three chapters, Results (Chapter five), Discussion (Chapter six) and Conclusion (Chapter seven).

The Results chapter presents the findings from the informal interviews and of the questionnaire, followed by the Discussion chapter which is organised around the interpretation of the results of the key finding from the questionnaire.

The New Zealand in a Theoretical Context section takes the discussion further and links findings of this research to those of existing research. Following on from this section future study areas are highlighted indicating future study identified from this case study.

The Concluding chapter presents conclusions drawn from research, including discussion of the findings of this research, and the arguments presented are summarised under the three cultural aspects of stereotyping, the dimension of power distance, and context in communication.

1.5 Summary

Excell has always seen itself as bi-cultural and is increasingly becoming multicultural. Excell does not have any policies that acknowledge cultural differences, however, there is much emphasis on treating every employee fairly and equally and this is supported by the CEO of Excell who encourages all Excell employees to work together, and to support and respect each other. Comments from Excell employees also supported the CEO's comments that everyone works together; and employees said "we just get on with it".

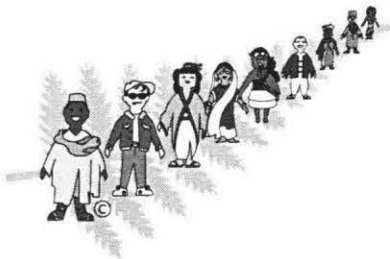
To understand the study in context, participants' culture and relevant migrant cultures have been introduced, categorised, and placed in different positions along the continuum of the dimensions relevant to the study. For example, South African, English, and Indian nationals are likely to be low context communicators while

Asian and Pacific Islanders are likely to be high context communicators; Asian, Pacific Island and Indian people are likely to prefer high power distance whilst English and South African people are more likely to prefer lower power distance. For Excell to work efficiently, it is important that employees are able to communicate effectively and interact with each other and if employees who come from opposite ends of the continuum work together and do not take the time to understand the other person misunderstandings are likely to occur.

The aspects of culture that are used in this study - stereotyping, the dimension of power distance, and context in communication - are widely researched and are areas that contribute to misinterpretation and misunderstanding when communicating across cultures. By conducting informal interviews and questionnaires directed at all levels in Excell, we can begin to understand how culture affects communication and the way in which we are likely to adjust our communication when communicating with migrant colleagues. Intercultural communication competency in the workplace is a real issue that multicultural organisations in New Zealand must address. Therefore, this research is timely in addressing issues being faced today in Excell.

In the following chapter existing literature is discussed and important factors in the areas of stereotyping, the dimension of power distance, and high and low context communication are identified. These provide the theoretical foundation on which this research is based.

RESEARCH FIELD



Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Successfully communicating with people from another culture requires an understanding of differing cultural values, communication patterns and styles. The Introduction established three main areas of theory: stereotyping (the categorising of individuals into groups), power distance (the way in which people accept unequal distribution of power), and context in communication (the amount of context that is needed to communicate) that are used in this study to understand how these aspects of culture affect communication and interaction between colleagues of different cultures. At Excell there are many cultures and these cultures are positioned in different places along the continuum of high and low context, and high and low power distance. Therefore, it is important that we understand these dimensions to enable us to understand how communication is influenced.

When we talk about a person's *culture* we are referring to *the sets of values and behaviours that they share with like-minded people that make them different from other groups of people*. Our culture is learned and ranks what is important, furnishes attitudes about what is appropriate, and dictates our behaviour (Beamer & Varner, 2005). Often we misunderstand someone from a different culture because we try to understand their behaviour through our own cultural behaviours and experiences and often do not know that we are misunderstanding them because - as Miroshnik (2001) suggests - we assume that the other person's environment is similar to ours and behave accordingly.

The aim in this review is to discuss relevant literature and current research that contributes to answering the question: *to what extent do workers adjust their communication style when communicating with fellow workers from immigrant cultures?* This review will include investigating how positive and negative stereotyping, the dimension of power distance, and context communication impact on the communication process. It is important to fully understand the theories behind these three aspects of culture so they can be applied later in the discussion of results.

Both past and current research on these aspects will be discussed relating to a workplace situation. In the review research will be detailed on the three cross-cultural communication areas of interest to this study: stereotyping, the dimension of power distance and context in communication. The review will include an exploration of each aspect in order, beginning with stereotyping, then the dimension of power distance, and finally cross-cultural communication styles.

2.1 Stereotyping

Stereotypes are generalisations that we believe although they are based on very scanty information. Stereotypes allow us to understand and organise our environment and are a way of making our complex world simpler (Allport, 1954; Beamer & Varner, 2005; Chang & Kleiner, 2003; Gudykunst & Kim, 1994; Harris & Moran, 2000; Lippmann, 1929; Stephan & Stephan, 1996). The earliest study of stereotyping is attributed to Walter Lippmann and the publication of his book *Public Opinion* (Allport 1979; Hinton 2000; Stephan & Stephan 1996). Lippmann (1929) describes stereotypes as "simplified pictures in our heads" (p. 4) of people and events in the world. Lippmann describes stereotypes as

"an ordered, more or less consistent picture of the world, to which our habits, our tastes, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves" "any disturbance of the stereotypes seems like an attack upon the foundations of the universe. It is an attack upon the foundations of our universe, and, where big things are at stake, we do not readily admit that there is any distinction between our universe and the universe" (Lippmann, 1922, pp. 95-96).

Allport (1954) further defines stereotyping as "an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category" (p. 191) and although Allport agrees that the credit goes to Lippmann for establishing the concept of stereotyping, he argues that Lippmann confuses stereotype with category. Allport believes that a category "can be held in the mind simply as a neutral, factual, nonevaluative concept ... stereotype enters when, and if, the initial category is freighted with pictures and judgements ..." (p. 192). It is Allport's distinction of stereotyping from categorisation and the positive and negative stereotypical views held by the subjects who completed the questionnaires which form the content of this study.

Katz and Braly (1933) introduced a method of measuring stereotyping and devised a "trait checklist" of descriptive adjectives. In their 1932 study, one hundred students from the Princeton University, America, were given a list of 84 descriptors and asked to choose the adjective that best described ten ethnic groups. Katz and Braly's technique uncovered a consensus in the views of one group regarding another group and adduced that the stereotype consists of those traits that are chosen by the greatest number of respondents. The research by Katz and Braly in the 1930s regarding prejudice, or attitudes toward groups, came to reflect cultural stereotypes or images about people that, for the following twenty years, resulted in

social scientists trying to understand discrimination focussed on the negative features of stereotypes (Allport, 1979; Hamilton & Sherman, 1996; Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994; Hinton, 2000; Schneider, 2004), so that "stereotypes which were assumed to be largely reflections of a culture rather than of individual experiences with people of these groups, promoted negative evaluation" (Schneider, 2004, p. 9). It has been argued that a Katz and Braly type "traits list" evokes negative stereotypes, however, it should be noted that much of the research carried out today continues to use such lists or questions (Chang & Kleiner, 2003; Feldman, MacDonald & Ah Sam, 1980; Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Wiseman, Hammer & Nishida, 1989). "What matters is the character of the stereotypes, and the gullibility with which we employ them" (Lippmann, 1922, p. 90).

Most definitions of stereotypes agree on three things: stereotypes are generally inaccurate, stereotypes are usually negative, and stereotypes are assigned to groups of people not allowing for individual differences (Allport, 1954; Beamer & Varner, 2005; Hinton, 2000; Schneider, 2004; Stephan & Stephan, 2003). Each of these aspects presents problems and the following discussion concentrates on these three areas.

Lippmann (1922) believed that, because our lives are so busy, we cannot observe everything and we do not have time to get to know one another in a workplace environment, therefore, we notice traits that are synonymous with the position and fill in the rest from pictures within our heads. We are able to fill in the gaps because our cultural stereotypical beliefs are learned from parents, schools, media and "are reinforced by culturally created social realities and limited contact with individuals from other groups" (Schneider, 2004, p. 23). This argument is further developed by Devine (1989) "She argued that because people are inevitably exposed to the cultural transmission of stereotypical ideas during childhood

socialization, social category membership comes to be inextricably associated with stereotypical notions that spring to mind without any conscious intention on the part of the perceiver" (paraphrased in Quinn, MacRae & Bodenhausen 2003, p. 88). Allport (1979) believes that "a stereotype is sustained by selective perception and selective forgetting" (p196) and that people look for the stereotypic behaviour that is compatible with their preconceived belief.

If inaccurate stereotypes are firmly held, they lead to inaccurate predictors of others' behaviour, misunderstandings, and decreased effectiveness in communication (Gudykunst & Kim, 1994; Kim, 1991; Landis, Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Wood, 1999). When we see a person acting in a certain way or behaving peculiarly, we attribute meaning to that behaviour as we understand it through our own culture and, therefore, it may not be an accurate analysis of the observer. As Lippmann (1929) points out,

"If we cannot fully understand the acts of other people, until we know what they think they know, then in order to do justice we have to appraise not only the information which has been at their disposal, but the minds through which they have filtered it." (p. 85).

Therefore, if our stereotypes are inaccurate, communication between colleagues of different cultures might result in misunderstandings thus decreasing effective communication. Miroshnik (2001) believes that "people from one ethnic group are not inherently better or worse (usual judgement) than people from another group; they are simply different" and to "ignore these cultural differences is unproductive" (p. 527).

The second aspect of stereotyping questions whether or not the consequences of stereotyping are negative. It can be argued that stereotypes are often seen as negative (Gudykunst, 2004; Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Hodson, Dovidio & Esess, 2003; Galinsky, 2002) and in the workplace environment, more often than not, bad or strange behaviours are the behaviours emphasised and talked about. When we stereotype people we often act towards the culturally different in a manner that reinforces our belief in the attributed stereotypical behaviour, thus not allowing adjustment of the held belief.

"Many definitions of stereotypes and prejudice reflect the strong link that these concepts have had to the study of ethnic and racial groups. This link resulted in a near exclusive focus on derogatory characterizations and feelings directed at out-group members. Thus most definitions of stereotypes and prejudice have been limited to negative thoughts and feelings." (Wright & Taylor 2003, p. 433).

Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern suggest, "stereotypic beliefs are a well established source of inimical attitudes toward the culturally different, especially where there has been minimal prior intergroup and interpersonal contact" (Spencer-Rogers & McGovern, 2002, p. 613). When employees already hold stereotypic beliefs and a new member is introduced who fits into the stereotype category, the tendency is to behave towards her/him in a way that is consistent with the stereotype, thus affecting the way of communicating with the new staff member. Thomas believes that "once we categorise an individual as member of a category, such as a culture, the associated information about the category is applied to them" (2002, p. 77).

Thirdly, cultural stereotypes disregard the uniqueness of people (Allport, 1979; Chang & Kleiner 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 1996). Mamman, (1996) believes that stereotyping is a social process in which people are assigned attributes solely on the basis of their group identity. That is to say, for example, when we hold a stereotype of a particular culture we assign that to all the people of that culture not allowing for individual differences among people and thus reinforcing the stereotype across all members of the group. "Because stereotypes are sometimes applied indiscriminately to members of a particular culture or social group, they can also lead to errors in one's expectations about the future behaviours of others" (Lustig & Koester, 2003, p.153). These findings are supported in research carried out by Allport (1954), Fiske, (2000), Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, (2002), and Stephan and Stephan (1996). Herein lies the danger for the workplace, as any negative stereotypic views held by an employee or group of employees about a certain culture will be compounded if further employees are hired from that culture, intensifying the challenges to workplace communication and climate.

Immigrants from Asia or India are easily stereotyped because they are identified as different just by their appearance and their accents. Others such as English or South African migrants are not so easily identified until they speak. "European migrants are generally not perceived to be racially distinct from Pakeha New Zealanders, they have not been subject to racialised hostility comparable with that encountered by Asian and Pacific migrants" (Ongley, 1996, p. 16). Language also separates one person from another, and researchers (Edwards 1982; Lustig & Koester 2003; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002) point out that non-native speakers of a language are rated less favourably on attributes such as competence and trustworthiness. Personal non-belief in one's own capability to understand people from immigrant cultures is also likely to lead to disengagement after experiencing early failures (Earley, 2002; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern

2002). In a workplace situation, disengagement is undesirable and needs to be managed by breaking down the barriers and allowing and encouraging employees to adjust previously held beliefs.

However, Harris and Moran (2000) consider that "stereotypes aid us in predicting behaviour by reducing our uncertainty" (p. 42) and "can be a useful tool in understanding unfamiliar cultures" (Beamer & Varner, 2005, p. 24). People from different cultures behave differently and those differences affect their relationship with workmates. It is important for this study that we understand how stereotypes can affect communication amongst colleagues of different cultures.

"In everyday life, we are repeatedly confronted with people with whom we must interact. In order to accomplish this goal, however, we must form an impression that captures the other person's characteristics in a coherent and meaningful manner." (Quinn, MacRae & Bodenhausen, 2003, p. 87) and, as Adler (2002) explains "effective stereotyping allows people to understand and act appropriately in new situations" (p. 81). In a workplace situation where employees are not often afforded the choice of colleagues, effective stereotyping may facilitate relations with colleagues of different cultures. Adler believes that for stereotyping to be effective, individuals must be aware they are describing a group rather than an individual, use descriptors rather than evaluations, the stereotype should accurately describe the norms and values of the person involved, and should be modified based on further observations and experiences with the person and situations. To effectively stereotype, a person must be consciously aware of the beliefs s/he already holds and have the courage not to follow mainstream beliefs but "have the ability to move beyond stereotypes and to respond to the individual" (Lustig & Koester, 2003, p. 154).

There has also been a lot of research done concerning in-groups and out-groups. "Triandis defines an *in-group* as "a group whose norms, aspirations, and values shape the behaviour of its members. An *out-group*, on the other hand, is a group whose attributes are dissimilar from those of the *in-group*, or who oppose the accomplishment of the *in-group's* goals" (cited in Neulip, 2003, p. 180). A large body of research agrees that, when we meet people from other cultures, we immediately categorise them as an in-group or out-group members (Gudykunst et al., 2005; Landis et al. 2004; Stephan & Stephan 1996). Fox (1993) believes that in most organisations the representation of the cultural groups is highly skewed, for example "in the Netherlands, Dutch men are dominant; in New Zealand, Pakeha men are dominant" (p. 11) which contributes to in-group and out-group attitudes. Thomas (2002) suggests that to maintain our self-image we consistently discriminate in favour of the group(s), with which we identify. "Prejudicial judgements about members of out-groups relate to beliefs about the character of these groups. These, often negative, attitudes toward out-group members are based solely on their membership in a particular group" (Thomas, 2002, p. 44). This research shows that in-groups represent a special membership characterised by a strong internal bond amongst its members and sometimes hostility towards out-groups. Often people from the same cultural background tend to stick together. "We are all culturally based and culturally biased" (Beamer & Varner, 2001, p. xviii).

"Giles and Robertson (1990), Gudykunst (1996), and Wiseman & Koester (1993) believe that cultural variations in values, norms, and customs may lead to cultural misunderstandings and instances of communication breakdown that are stressful and unpleasant" (cited in Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). Repeated communication failures and misunderstanding will ultimately give rise to negative evaluation, interaction, and attitudes toward people of a different culture. The following quotation from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), although

referring to the particularist and universalist dimension, show cultural views held when people are on the opposite ends of the continuum, and can be related to the dimensions used in this study. They say,

“Business people from both societies ... tend to think [of] each other [as] corrupt. A universalist will say of particularists, “they cannot be trusted because they will always help their friends”; a particularist, conversely, will say of universalists, “you cannot trust them: they would not even help a friend” (cited in Adler, 2002, p. 65).

To overcome such situations, colleagues need to be able to trust each other and this can happen only when employees gain knowledge of different cultures and accept and respect cultural differences. However this is not easy when the behaviours being displayed are undesirable in one's own culture. To help explain how people interpret cultural difference Bennett (1986) developed the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The model describes the development of a person's attitude toward other cultures and is divided into six stages of development: denial, defence, minimisation, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. The development model moves from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Earlier stages “define the parochial denial of difference, the evaluative defense against difference and the universalist position of minimization of difference” (Bennett, 1986, p. 179). The latter stages develop understanding and acceptance of the other culture.

The second stage, defence, is of importance to this study to understand interactions between people of different cultures. In explaining defence Bennett (1986) says “it is not uncommon to find a mix of Denial and denigrative Defence, where one culture is targeted as ‘bad’ and other cultures are simply ignored” (p.

188). The cultural differences experienced by people with a Defence perspective are stereotypical, and consequently, people at Defence are more openly threatened by cultural differences; their world is organised into "us" and "them, " and they believe their own culture is superior to other cultures (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). A consequence of Defense is that the person may avoid someone of a different culture when they feel threatened or superior to the other culture (Snellman & Ekehammar, 2005; Mamman, 1996; Allport, 1954). Avoiding a colleague who is different is an easy way out, but not an effective one, especially if it means the particular encounter encourages you to avoid others from that culture also.

In their research on the relationship between intercultural competence, knowledge of another culture and cross-cultural attitude, Wiseman et al. (1989) found that the greater degrees of perceived knowledge of a specific culture were related to greater culture-general understanding and that further interaction with people of another culture encouraged new cultural perspectives. Wiseman and Koester (1993) and Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002) also believe that, with increased cross cultural exposure, people become more adept at communicating and interacting with non-natives as well as showing more empathy toward cross cultural differences. In his research on class segregation Cook (1985) found that the relationship, cooperation and attitudes between black and white tenants tended to be more positive when they lived closer to each other and had the opportunity to observe cross-racial interaction. However, he does warn that his research was "carried out in situations where whites and blacks were already in contact at the time of the investigation" (Cook, 1985, p. 454).

All these findings are consistent with Allport's contact hypothesis. Allport (1954) proposed that increased contact with individuals, under certain conditions, would

reduce intergroup bias and conflict. The conditions for the contact situation included: cooperative interaction, equal status among the participants, individualised contact, and institutional support for the contact, thereby, controlling the situation and encouraging interaction in a less threatening environment. Contact under these conditions does reduce bias (Cook, 1985) and presumably happens because people have more time to get to know each other and are able to produce more favourable impressions of out-group members (Gaertner, Dovidio & Bachman 1996; Wiseman et al. 1989; Rogers & McGovern 2002).

Although Moghaddam (1998) concurs with Allport's contact hypothesis, he cautions that the contact hypothesis in cross cultural settings may not be so simple because contact is sometimes acknowledged differently in different cultures. Limitations placed upon a culture, and the behaviour displayed because of them, may cause misunderstanding during initial contact. Cohen (1980) also advises caution regarding the condition of institutional support and points out "it would difficult to create equal status interactions between African American and White students when the authority figures in the situation are not themselves from both groups" (cited in Stephan & Stephan, 1996, p. 68). However Mamman (1996) points out that "the organisation can promote intercultural contact through valuing diversity programmes; status can be 'equalized' if the diverse employee occupies a high position. Therefore, in line with the contact theory, increased contact at the workplace should reduce misunderstandings and create an atmosphere of favourable and effective interaction" (p. 463). However, the contact hypothesis is forever being revised; for example, Cook (1985, p. 455) added his own conditions:

- 1. The first condition is that the status of the participants from the two social groups must be equal in the situation in which the contact occurs;*

2. *The second is that attributes of the disliked group that become apparent during the contact must be such as to disconfirm the prevailing stereotyped beliefs about this group;*
3. *The third is that the contact situation must encourage, or perhaps require, a mutually interdependent relationship, that is, cooperation in the achievement of a joint goal;*
4. *The fourth is that the contact situation must have high acquaintance potential, that is, it must promote association of a sort that will reveal enough detail about members of the disliked group to encourage seeing them as individuals rather than as persons with stereotyped group characteristics;*
5. *The fifth condition is that the social norms of the contact situation must favor the concept of group equality and egalitarian intergroup association.*

However, societal context variables continue to influence the outcomes of contact (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). Because different cultural beliefs on how a person should behave further contact and interactions may not necessarily reduce anxiety and misunderstandings as each are likely to evaluate the other using their own culture as a reference.

2.2 Power Distance

One such context variable (that New Zealanders tend to reject) is unequal distribution of power. *Power distance* refers to *how a society feels about hierarchy and inequality of status* (Hofstede, 1980). New Zealand society prides itself on being egalitarian – as exemplified by the often expounded adage of the 1950s and 1960s ‘Jack’s as good as his master’ even though there is a need for titles of

positions. For low power distance cultures, power is viewed as something which should be distributed equally, whereas in high power distance cultures, such as Asia, India or Fiji, unequal distribution of power is expected and acknowledged socially.

To understand the term *power distance* it is important that we explain its origin. Power distance is the name given to a dimension of culture explored by Hofstede. By dimension I mean an aspect of culture that can be measured. During his research in the 1970s Hofstede, in his attempt to define national cultures, measured four dimensions of culture, power distance being one of the four dimensions. Using empirical measures, Hofstede surveyed employees in over fifty countries that worked for the multinational corporation IBM.

"Scores on power distance for fifty countries and three multicountry regions have been calculated from the answers by IBM employees in the same kind of positions on the same survey questions. All answers were of the precoded answer type so that answers could be represented by a score number: usually 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. A mean score was computed for the answers of an equally composed sample of people from each country" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 41).

Scores were calculated using a formula to find a score between 0 (being lowest power distance) and 100 (being highest power distance) and are shown on a continuum of high and low.

Important to this study are the scores showing where New Zealand and the relevant migrant cultures are positioned on the power distance continuum. Asia (China scoring 80) and India (scoring 77) are high power distance societies,

whereas South Africa (scoring 49) Great Britain (scoring 35) and New Zealand (scoring 22) signify lower power distance (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 43). The scores are useful in assisting us to understand the working environment in terms of the dependence relationship between subordinates and bosses.

In low power distance countries there is limited dependence of subordinates on bosses and there is a preference for consultation. In high power distance countries subordinates are seen as afraid to disagree with their boss and bosses are seen as autocratic or paternalistic (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Many researchers (Beamer & Varner, 2005; Gudykunst, 2004; Moran & Reisenberger, 1994) support Hofstede's power distance index. However, McShane and Travaglione (2005) believe that caution should be used when applying these data today citing three reasons of which two that I mention may be relevant to this study: (1) "the data are almost a generation old and some cultures have changed", (2) "if IBM and students are representative of the population in each country, these studies assume that everyone in a society has similar cultural values" (p. 14). Another point worthy of mention is that the employees surveyed were likely to have been male and white, reflecting the workforce at the time, thus not showing a true representation of national culture.

Although there has been criticism of dimensional approaches to understanding culture (Tayeb, 1996; Kim, 1991; Collier & Thomas, 1988) Guirdham (1999) argues that dimensional approaches have produced a large quantity of empirical research and provided the most widespread increase in cultural awareness and understanding of cultural challenges and cultural implications in the workplace. Therefore, the power distance index is still a valuable tool today by means of which to understand relationships in the workplace. However, what is complex is power distance itself.

Power distance is a complicated dimension of culture because of the various ways in which power is perceived and/or accepted. Romm and Yi-Shu (2002) argue that "while subordinates in certain cultural climates may not have a strong sense of interdependence in terms of their experienced link with superiors, their perceptions of what is an 'acceptable' distance between them might still vary from situation to situation" (p. 403). Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) suggest that power is usually explained from the behaviour of more powerful members and reminds us that "authority survives only where it is matched by obedience" (p. 46). Ng & Burke (2004) found that individuals from high power distance cultures are more accepting of hierarchical organisational structures and status, therefore, have lower expectations of fair treatment whereas those from low power distance cultures are likely to value equal employment diversity. Ng & Burke (2004) found in their study that non-North-American and non-Caucasian people held cultural values that were less supportive of equality and, therefore, more effort must be made through education so that high power individuals develop views more supportive of equality.

"Depending on the culture, some people might be regarded as superior to others because of their wealth, age, gender, education, physical strength, birth order, achievements and a variety of other characteristics" (Lustig & Koester, 2003, p. 116). As mentioned earlier, Maori culture is relatively high power distance, however this hierarchical difference is mainly displayed in Maori environments, for example, at home and on the Marae. However, working environments are dominated by Pakeha cultural values including the promotion of equality. For Maori, promotion of equality may cause uncertainty as it opposes the cultural norms and values of Maori who "outwardly acknowledge and respect people in accordance with hierarchical position and/or role status" (Jones, Pringle & Shepherd, 2000, p. 376). Jones, Pringle and Shepherd go on to say that in some situations it is likely that

cultural identity would dominate and that some tension may exist for other group members between their ethnic and organisational cultures.

Therefore it can be said that the difficulty for any culture is that values are not easily communicated across cultures and it is these values that have the potential to place people in a situation of cultural conflict or compromise, thus making it more challenging to communicate and acculturate in the workplace.

In their study of relationships between subordinates' work-related values and selected leadership styles, Jensen, White and Singh, (1990) asked respondents to indicate which out of four management types given they would prefer to work with. They found that "Subordinates' perceptions of actual and/or ideal supervisors' leadership styles were shown to be related to subordinates' work-related values". We can conclude from this study that high power distance individuals prefer a hierarchical leadership style whereas low power distance individuals prefer a more consultative style.

Blodgett, Lu, Rose, and Vitell (2001) suggest that "individuals with a higher level of power distance are more apt to accept the inequality of power between superiors and subordinates, are reluctant to disagree with superiors, and believe that superiors are entitled to special privileges" (p. 192). Immigrant colleagues coming from high power distance cultures, such as Asia or India, with expectations that power ought to still be assigned to them and work in a manner that supports high power distance, are likely to cause friction in the more horizontal workplace in New Zealand. In low power distance cultures such as New Zealand, workers confront colleagues or supervisors assertively and there is a general feeling of equality, whereas in high power distance workplaces, direct confrontation and assertiveness may be viewed negatively (DeVito et al., 2001).

In the multicultural workplace with colleagues from either end of the continuum, power distance can, understandably, contribute to complications where, for example, some employees have expectations that they possess power and status, meanwhile they are treated on equal terms by colleagues as being 'just one of us'. Miroshnik (2001) suggests that problems arise when managers from one culture interact with employees from another, for example, when a manager from a low power distance culture tells an employee from a high power distance culture s/he does not know the answer. The employee assumes that her/his boss is incompetent. However, within the cultural context this assumption is incorrect and therefore is likely to impact on the working relationship.

Blodgett et al. (2001) also believe that high power distance individuals tend to look to the superiors for guidance and are often proud to show dedication and loyalty to their superiors. When we assume others' environments are similar to our own, we behave accordingly and assume all people think and feel the way we do. When we behave according to our own norms we communicate with others using our communication style, not being aware that this may confuse, show disrespect, or create misunderstandings with someone whose norms are opposite to our own.

Miroshnik (2001) believes that, "management's practices that are suited for their own cultural environment may bring about undesirable, perhaps terrible, consequences in another culture" (p. 525). To understand that people from different cultures behave differently, and that those differences affect relationships with colleagues, is fundamental to successful interaction in the workplace.

Reynolds and Valentine (2004) pose the question *"why is it that some cultures prefer hierarchical organisational structures and others do not? One answer lies in the comfort these structures provide – a concept that helps people within a culture*

avoid uncertainty" (p. 44). In high power distance workplaces, employees know exactly what is expected of them and respect the levels of hierarchy. People within high power distance cultures are brought up to be obedient, to show respect to others and also to respect parental authority, which continues to play a role in that person's life (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Because our cultural value systems are a part of us, we take these values in to the workplace also (Beamer & Varner, 2005; Hofstede, 1980; Miroshnik 2001). For a person from a high power distance culture to work in a low power distance organisation can be challenging, as the levels of hierarchy and structures are absent and this might leave her/him feeling lost and uncertain. A simple example of this is how to address one's superior. In New Zealand the norm is to call a person by her/his first name whatever their position, a practice that is virtually unheard of in India and Asia, where it would be seen as utterly disrespectful. Triandis (1967) concluded that "the unequal status contact that is typical in many international organizations has the effect of accentuating negative stereotypes" (p. 52). Conversely, an employee from a low power distance culture would feel restricted and disrespected in a high power distance organisation.

In business, managers from a low power distance culture prefer a more consultative approach and subordinates expect a great deal of autonomy. However, managers in high power distance cultures are likely to prefer an autocratic or centralised decision-making style and to closely supervise subordinates: channels of communication are one-way and are mediated (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Landis et al., 2004; Lustig & Koester 2003; Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2003). For many Asian cultures, language also establishes who has authority and the language used by superiors differs from that of subordinates (Beamer & Varner, 2005; Gudykunst, 2003). Using language that

reflects the context of one's position will possibly cause confusion in the communication process and misunderstandings in a low power distance or multicultural workplace where language tends to be the same for all. The communication process is affected not only by power distance but also by the way we send our message and the emphasis we place on directness or indirectness to communicate that message.

2.3 High and Low Context Communication Styles

Cultures also differ on the continuum regarding indirect or direct communication of messages and, because culture is interwoven with communication, distinct patterns of communication emerge (Fox 1993; Gudykunst, 2004; Hall, 1976). The introduction of the study of intercultural communication can be attributed to Edward T Hall, post-World War II, when business and governments were expanding and rebuilding globally and found they were ill-equipped to deal with communicating with people from different cultures (Hall, 1959; Martin, & Nakayama, 1997). In Hall's (1959) introduction he says that "when it becomes apparent to people of different countries that they are not understanding one another, each tends to blame 'those foreigners', for their stupidity, deceit, or craziness" (p. ix). However, first impressions are often wrong because neither person has had the opportunity to reveal her or himself fully in such a short period of time (Hall, 1959). Hall (1976) further explains that "a high context communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is coded in the explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low context message is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code" (Hall, 1976, p. 91). In short, *context* is defined as *the information that surrounds the event and that the context that surrounds information is critical to meaning* (Hall, 1989). Our communication systems are so

ingrained that we find it difficult to decode another's system which does not use the same code as our own and, as Scheu-Lottgen and Hernandez-Campoy (1998) point out, "for any kind of interaction, communication contextualization becomes a social and interpersonal obligation that depends to high degree on shared knowledge" (p. 376).

Further definition of context in communication comes from Korac-Kakabadse et al. (2001, p. 3) who explain the

"terms high/low context cultures describe the cultural rules around information exchanges and, in particular, the degree to which information in a culture is explicit, vested in words or precise and unambiguous meaning (low context) and the degree to which it is implicit, vested in shared experiences and assumptions and conveyed through verbal and non-verbal codes (high context)".

The literature provides evidence for other theories, such as Servaes' (1989) Western versus Asian styles of communication and Hofstede's (1980) Individualism versus Collectivism, which can be integrated with Hall's high and low context communication to extend and further develop cross-cultural interaction (Gudykunst 2004; Korac-Kakabadse et al., 2001; Landis et al., 2004).

In their study Korac-Kakabadse et al., (2001) identified Hofstede's (1980) distinction between individualistic and collectivist cultures saying

"the direct style of interaction exhibited by actors of individualistic cultures can be viewed as an extensions of actors' cognitive perception of themselves, striving to present themselves as an individual ... In contrast, by being indirect and ambiguous, the

collectivist actor is behaving in a manner that, with time and involvement, gradually takes form from the situation" (p. 10).

Beamer and Varner (2005) and Landis et al. (2004) argue that a circular and indirect communication style works well for collectivist cultures, whilst a linear and direct style works well for individualistic cultures - and often misunderstanding arises because one is listening for an explicit point and the other is listening for the point that is implicit in the message. High context collectivist cultures include Japan, China, Greece and Spain, and low context individualistic cultures include Germany, America, Switzerland, England, and New Zealand (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1998).

High context cultures, such as Asian cultures, intermesh person and issue and rely on contextual cues and situational knowledge resulting in the use of implicit references (Brew & Cairns, 2004; Lustig & Koester, 2003). Little overt expression is preferred to protect face. People can be embarrassed by an explicit message or open emotional expression, so indirect communication - which relies on interpreting the context - enables one to save face. For example, if food is offered only once because there is not sufficient food or the food is of poor quality it will be refused unless offered again at least twice more. This procedure saves face for the host and visitors.

Losing 'face' is a sense of being humiliated and is an expression that has made its way into the English language from the Chinese. "David Yau-Fai Ho, a Hong Kong social scientist, defined it as follows: *Face is lost when an individual, either through action or that of people closely related to him, fails to meet essential requirements placed upon him by virtue of the social position he occupies*" (cited in Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 89). The definition of *face* shows that power distance, more

likely higher power distance culture, is also interconnected with face and context in communication and the sender needs to be aware of how the other regards face (Scheu-Lottgen & Hernandez-Campoy, 1998; Scollon & Scollon, 1995). To further define *face* Gudykunst (2004) explains "the concept of face is about identity, respect and other-identity consideration issues within and beyond the actual encounter episode" (p. 73). The importance of understanding the concept of face in assisting cross-cultural communication is explained by Hall (1959) who says that *face* is a precious identity resource in communication because it can be threatened or undermined.

Hofstede & Hofstede (2005) believe that the English have no equivalent expression for face, thus it makes it difficult when interacting with cultures where face is important. However Scheu-Lottgen and Hernandez-Campoy (1998) and Brown and Levinson (1978) suggest that the English version of face can be related to a person's level of politeness. Scheu-Lottgen & Hernandez-Campoy (1998) found in their study that "the greater the power and distance between speakers, the stronger the indirectness in the use of independence strategies" (p. 386).

Face becomes challenging when the way in which people think they should be treated does not match the reality of how they are actually treated by other people: the greater the discrepancy, the greater the disrespect or loss of face experienced (Gudykunst et al., 2005; Landis et al., 2004; Scheu-Lottgen & Hernandez-Campoy, 1998). Communication in high context cultures contributes to saving face as messages are not directly expressed, therefore a person is not directly confronted. However, the message is communicated and understood - albeit unclearly by a low context person. Using a direct messaging style is likely to contribute to loss of face for high context cultures.

In contrast to high context, people from a low context culture tend to express information through emotions such as facial expression, tone of voice or body movements (Beamer & Varner, 2005; Chaney & Martin, 2004; Hall, 1994). For the low context receiver communicating with a high context sender, much of the message might not be understood as the low context receiver is looking for communication cues familiar to her/him. The lack of facial expression or gestures could lead to the receiver of the message believing the sender is withholding something or, the receiver could misunderstand the message, or misjudge the sender. The frustration for low context communicators is understanding the code of high context communicators (Hall, 1998; Gudykunst, 2004; Korac-Kakabadse et al., 2001). Failure to take contexting differences into account, however, can cause problems between cultures (Hall, 1976), and without time spent learning the high context code, communication is likely to continue to be challenging.

Some degree of high and low context communication difference occurs in every society, however, cultures differ in the degree that context is considered necessary for effective communication (Chaney & Martin, 2004; Gudykunst, 2004; Hall, 1998; Hofstede, 1980). Chase, O'Rourke, Smith, Sutton, Timperly, and Wallace (2000) believe that there is a pattern of similarity in the mode of communication of New Zealand Maori and Pakeha that is distinct from that of migrant Chinese and Indian cultures. To reduce these barriers a greater awareness of how our culture affects the way we communicate is needed, together with realisation that when migrants join the workforce they are usually keen to fit in and work hard to adjust. Adler (2002) maintains that although we may think that the biggest obstacle to conducting business in a multicultural environment is understanding, the greater difficulty actually involves becoming aware of our own cultural conditioning. That is, we need to be aware that we use our own norms and behaviours to communicate and understand colleagues, and we assume that they share our interpretation and

understanding. This assumption of similar perceptions and interpretations can lead to misunderstanding or misinterpreting messages that colleagues send, and within a business environment this type of miscommunication can lead to serious consequences.

In any organisational setting, communication is the mutual exchange of meanings between active participants. In multicultural settings, meanings may be misconstrued or contradictory depending on the style of delivery. Problems occur when employees from opposite ends of the continuum communicate, since people using an indirect style perceive those using a direct style as rude and abrupt and not concerned with building a relationship. Also, high context cultures are "already deeply involved with others where subtle messages with deep meaning flow freely" (Korac-Kakabadse et al., 2001, p. 8). Conversely, colleagues using a direct communication style perceive colleagues using an indirect style as beating around the bush, or having something to hide, and are not in a position to attend to meaning through context; therefore, not receiving and/or understanding the complete message (Chaney & Martin, 2004; Gudykunst, 2004; Landis et al., 2004). In order to communicate effectively across cultures, both parties must have an understanding of the extent to which context is used to convey meaning.

Brown and Levinson (1978) also suggest that in cultures which function using direct communication, direct behaviour is perceived as the norm for interaction, whilst for cultures that function using an indirect style, a direct or confrontational style of communicating can be perceived as highly threatening or unsettling and likely to lead to a loss of face.

A noteworthy point regarding the use of an indirect style of communication is highlighted by DeVito et al. (2001). They explain how easy it is for a

misunderstanding to occur, for example, if you use an indirect style, you may be doing so to be polite or it may be because of your cultural upbringing, however if "you assume, instead, that using indirectness is manipulative, because your culture regards it as being so, then miscommunication is inevitable" (p. 133).

In much of the New Zealand society we are taught that directness is the preferred style, although "many Asian and Pacific Island cultures stress the value of indirectness largely because it enables a person to avoid appearing criticised or contradicted and thereby losing face" (DeVito et al., 2001, p. 133). Another example from Early (2000) highlights challenges when communicating across cultures. He explains that many negotiators, particularly from the West, find it difficult to deal with Chinese negotiators and often "encounter severe problems understanding their counterparts, and interpreting correctly what their counterparts want to convey" (p. 10) because of the high context style used.

Drawing on my own experience, I can say that communicating with a person who speaks another language is sometimes challenging and to add to that a different communication style tends to cause frustration, misunderstandings or embarrassment as both struggle to interpret the message correctly. For example, when a migrant colleague has a strong accent which makes it difficult to understand the words s/he uses and I have to ask two or three times if s/he can repeat her or himself. I have also observed colleagues in similar situations and the result has been to avoid encounters because of apprehension about communicating with people of that culture. Each challenging encounter contributes to stereotyping the people of that particular culture as hard to understand.

2.4 Summary

In summary, this review has examined literature that helps explain how colleagues can adjust communication styles to accommodate colleagues from migrant cultures. The literature indicated that different cultural norms and beliefs - such as the dimension of power distance and high and low context styles - plus our perceptions and stereotypical beliefs - have an impact on effective communication and affect how we interact with others.

Most researchers believe stereotypes are inaccurate, negative, and that stereotypes disregard the individual, however, stereotyping also acts as a starting point when interacting with a person from a different culture for the first time. Stereotypic beliefs are often shared by a group of like-minded people and are reinforced by that group's culturally created reality. Therefore a group of homogenous workers might easily assign migrant workers to an out-group without taking time to know them, further contributing to barriers in the multicultural workplace. Although stereotyping is often viewed as negative, if beliefs are adjusted (through greater interaction with colleagues of different cultures) to a more detailed, clearer perception, it can be viewed as positive and to lead to fewer misunderstandings.

Also contributing to misunderstandings in communication is the way in which power distance is viewed by cultures. By using Hofstede's (1980) power distance index we have been able to categorise cultures involved in this study. New Zealand workplaces, such as Excell, are generally regarded as horizontal and promotion of equality is encouraged. However, the power distance and values of migrants from higher power distance cultures, whose values do not easily translate across cultures and may be seen as undesirable in the host culture, have the potential to

place people in a situation of cultural conflict or compromise, therefore, making communication in the workplace more challenging.

The last challenge to communication discussed in this review is the amount of context people use to communicate their message. Research has shown that some migrant groups in New Zealand use high context (indirect) communication styles which are at the opposite end of the continuum from the New Zealand low context (direct) communication style, and because of this migrants may face communication difficulties and/or stereotyping in the workplace. People look for familiar cues to find understanding when communicating, and when these cues are not apparent they are likely to misinterpret the message sent contributing to misunderstanding. Finally, effective communication is fundamental to the smooth running of any organisation and when communication breaks down, so too do the systems within the organisation.

In the following chapter the objectives for this study, including discussion on the importance of this study for multicultural organisations such as Excell are outlined.

Chapter 3. Research Objectives

3.0 Introduction

The important observations emerging from the literature review regarding stereotyping, power distance and context in communication are that they all contribute to misunderstandings across cultures. While research has concentrated on the impact stereotyping, power distance and context have on the communication process, this research will examine how people in a multicultural environment adjust their communication because of stereotyping, power distance, and context. New Zealand considers itself a multicultural society, but migrant cultures frequently exhibit values that are undesirable in New Zealand, thus making it important for organisations in New Zealand to understand how culture impacts on interaction and communication in a diverse workplace.

The aim in this chapter is to define the objectives of the study and explain why the study is important for organisations, such as Excell, in contemporary New Zealand society. As Henderson (1994) explains, corporations have to manage diversity - not because they want to out of the goodness of their hearts but because they want to survive. The objective of this research is to explain whether the three dimensions of stereotyping, power distance and context affect communication in the Excell workplace.

This chapter defines the objectives of the research relating to the way that communication is affected by cultural aspects identified, the research question is presented, and additional queries to do with avoidance, perception, power, and time that will help understanding and aid in answering the research question are

identified. Lastly the importance of this research is highlighted taking into account how society influences the way we interact with each other.

3.1 Research Objective

The primary objective of this research is to discover whether the cultural aspects of stereotyping, the dimension of power distance, and high and low context communication, influence the way New Zealand employees at Excell communicate with migrant colleagues within the workplace. This investigation will lead to a better understanding of how these aspects affect communication at Excell in order to answer the research question.

These aspects have been chosen because the cultural values which migrants exhibit are often in conflict with New Zealand values. This value difference is particularly noticeable in relation to power distance and context in communication. These aspects of culture have been widely researched, (Allport, 1954; Beamer & Varner, 2005; Bennett, 1986; Gudykunst & Kim 1994; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Miroshnik, 2001; Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Triandis, 1967) resulting in a clear understanding that these aspects are likely to contribute to misunderstanding and/or misinterpretation in the communication process.

3.1.1 Specific Objectives

3.1.1.1 Stereotyping

The first objective of this research is to explore stereotyping behaviour and the way it affects communication between New Zealand and migrant employees of Excell. As Feldman, MacDonald, and Ah Sam (1980) point out, New Zealanders tend to stereotype on occupational position, however, more recently migrants in

New Zealand are being stereotyped - for the most part negatively by media and politicians, and it is important to discover whether this affects the way New Zealanders stereotype and communicate with migrant colleagues.

3.1.1.2 Power Distance

The second objective of this study is to investigate the way that differences in power distance affect communication processes between New Zealand and migrant employees of Excell. Many of the people of migrant cultures working at Excell tend to be on the opposite end of the continuum from New Zealanders with regard to attitudes around power distance. New Zealand organisations, such as Excell, are mostly horizontal and justifiable power difference is seen as earned power linked to occupation, education and socio-economic status - that is, power people earn by their determination, hard work, and motivation. Therefore, low power distance cultures tend to resent people whose power is decreed by birthright or wealth (Neulip, 2003).

3.1.1.3 Context in Communication

The third objective is to investigate how context differences between high and low context cultures affect communication between New Zealand and migrant colleagues of Excell. One of the fundamentals of communication is understanding the message sent in the way that enables the receiver to action the message appropriately. When colleagues are communicating using styles at opposite ends of the continuum, that is, high context indirect messages or low context direct messages, there are likely to be misunderstandings that can lead to serious consequences.

3.2 Research Question

The research question is

Do New Zealand employees in organisations with immigrant staff find they need to adjust their means of communicating when interacting with colleagues from immigrant cultures?

To assist in answering the research question, I investigate whether or not:

- Negative stereotyping affects the way New Zealand colleagues of Excell communicate with their migrant counterparts and if they adjust their communication because of stereotypic beliefs held. To further understand how stereotypes affect the communication process I will be looking particularly for avoidance because of stereotypic beliefs or negative emotional responses in the workplace. Both of these outcomes will indicate an adjustment in communication.
- Employees from Excell who work in a more horizontal equal society find it difficult to work - and communicate - with colleagues from status and power orientated cultures, because of the way it affects their communication. Of particular interest will be to investigate how migrants from high power distance cultures who are in positions of power are perceived by New Zealand employees of Excell - also, the reaction from New Zealand Excell employees to the display of power, and whether it is accepted or questioned and/or ignored.
- Differences between high context and low context communication styles cause difficulty in understanding and interpreting messages. Of particular interest is whether or not a person from a low context system will take the

time to interpret or understand a message from a high context colleague and also how low context communicators perceive colleagues who use high context communication. Finally, I examine whether or not the effect of perception and context are likely to encourage colleagues' to respond by adjusting their communication.

3.3 Importance of this Research

As mentioned previously, stereotyping, power distance, and context in communication may all contribute to misunderstandings or misinterpretation in communication. However, the way that colleagues of different cultures respond to difference by adjusting their communication is not widely researched. It is important to understand how we adjust our communication when communicating with migrant colleagues to discover:

- Whether it facilitates communication or forms barriers to the communication process.
- The extent the adjusted communication impacts on workplace relations, cross-cultural communication, and workplace efficiency and productivity.

The following examples from previous research support the importance of understanding how these aspects contribute to misunderstandings across cultures.

3.3.1 Importance of the study of Stereotyping

Schneider (2005) suggests the media stereotype by the way they frame stories, include or leave out particular ethnicities, the amount of negative coverage given to certain ethnicities or by consolidating cultures (as done in this study for Asians). An example of consolidation was found in the Letters to the Editor section in the

New Zealand Herald where Terry Kerr wrote to the editor regarding an article written on Asian Kidnapping in New Zealand. In his last sentence Kerr states "I stand to be corrected, but would it seem that the kidnappings that are reported and make it to the press are almost exclusively a Chinese phenomena (sic). In that light, it is a kind of collective racism to label them Asian" (Kerr, 2005). In this statement Kerr is pointing out that the original story should be reported more accurately rather than grouping all people from Asian cultures as people who commit this crime. Thus the original story may encourage stereotyping of anyone who looks similar to a Chinese person because of the way it was reported.

Although this article and other media reports are expressions of views they can reinforce barriers between in-groups and out-groups and encouraging a belief of values heterophily. Heterophily is the term referring to perceived differences between two people and can be caused because of physical attributes, background, attitudes, values and personality (Dodd, 1998). For example a New Zealander and Chinese see each other approaching in a hallway, and based solely on appearance, might come to a mutual, though silent, conclusion that the other person is different from them and in turn "that heterophily perception may precipitate little more than a greeting – or worse hostility" (Dodd, 1998, p. 209). The more different we perceive a person to be the more likely it is to affect the way we communicate with them and if those perceptions are encouraged, as stereotypes, through mainstream communication then we are likely to believe the stereotype encouraging the perception of heterophily.

Journalists, like politicians, whose main message channels are the media, have the ability to encourage stereotypes of ethnic minorities in New Zealand by way of

coverage and choosing to highlight negative behaviours. An example of political interference was given at the beginning of this study but is worthy of a reminder. Winston Peters of the New Zealand First Party has been very vocal regarding immigration and has identified Asian migrants as threats to social solidarity and to New Zealand society (MacPherson & Spoonley, 2004).

3.3.2 Importance of the Study of Power Distance

Gudykunst (2003) explains the effects of power distance across cultures saying "people from high power distance cultures, for example, do not question their superiors' orders. They expect to be told what to do. People in low power distance cultures, in contrast do not necessarily accept superiors' orders at face value; they want to know why they should follow them" (p. 64). He goes on to say that when people from two different systems interact misunderstandings are likely, thus affecting communication.

A possible example of this may have been the cause of a recent tragedy in Auckland where Nurse Cruzada took over care of a patient and "noticed the fatal medication error on the patient's file, but failed to act on it possibly because it was not her place to correct a person of higher status such as a doctor or senior nurse. She told the Health and Disability Commissioner that she "intended to tell the doctors" and "call the nurse [Ms A]", and "put it in the patient's notes" but it "slipped her mind" (*New Zealand Herald*, 6 May 2006). Because Cruzada is Filipino and is likely to be high power distance in her communication, culture is likely to have been an important factor in the failure to inform the doctors. She has since left New Zealand.

3.3.3 Importance of the study of Understanding Context

Hall's (1994) explanation supports the likelihood of misunderstandings caused by communication differences in high and low context cultures because of context and says "it is often necessary in an intercultural situation for the low context person to have to go into much more detail than he is used to when he is dealing with high context people. If the low context person interacting with the high context culture does not really think things through and try to foresee all contingencies, he's headed for trouble" (p. 127).

In New Zealand the tendency is to use a more direct communication style and to assist communication in the multicultural workplace it may simply be a matter, for both migrants and New Zealanders, of learning another communication code in order to understand the other person or at least minimise misunderstandings. The following example supplied by Thomas and Inkson (2003) shows how easy misunderstandings can occur. "The following box shows a variety of ways of saying "no" politely and indirectly. In most cases a low context individual would understandably think that the answer was quite possibly "yes" (Thomas, & Inkson 2003, p. 111)

Saying "No" in response to "Has my proposal been accepted?"

Conditional "yes"	If everything proceeds as planned, the proposal will be approved.
Counter question	Have you submitted a copy of your proposal to the ministry of...?
Criticizing the question	Your question is very difficult to answer.
Refusing the question	We cannot answer this question at this time.

(Thomas, & Inkson 2003, p. 111)

3.4 Summary

This research concentrates on whether people alter their communication because of aspects such as stereotyping, the dimension of power distance and context in communication, and the objective of this study is to investigate how the cultural aspects affect the communication process between New Zealand and migrant employees at Excell. Recent stereotyping by media and politicians around the cultural values of migrants which they see as undesirable in New Zealand may have an impact, even subconsciously, and might affect the way New Zealand employees of Excell communicate with migrant colleagues. Stereotyping may also cause a greater perception of heterophily and encourage New Zealanders to assign their migrant colleagues to an out-group.

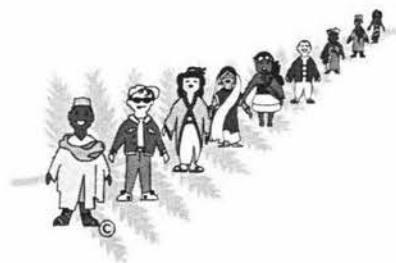
The intention in this research is to answer the question - Do New Zealand employees in organisations with immigrant staff find they need to adjust their means of communicating when interacting with colleagues from immigrant cultures?

Communication is crucial for organisations and, to be successful, organisations need to understand cultural behaviours such as power distance and context. A specific aim of this study is to discover the extent to which New Zealand employees adjust their communication because of stereotyping, power distance, and context in communication and to what extent it impacts on workplace relations and interaction. In this study this is explored through informal interviews and a self-completed questionnaire.

This chapter has established the importance of studying cultural aspects that might impact the way New Zealanders communicate with their migrant colleagues and

has given real life examples demonstrating that the cultural aspects do indeed affect communication. To ascertain how the cultural aspects impact communication between New Zealanders and migrants research needed to be conducted. The following section, Instruments and Preparation discusses the methods and procedures that were used to conduct this study.

INSTRUMENTS AND PREPARATION



4. Methodology

4.0 Introduction

The success of multicultural organisations depends on the ability to manage diversity and understand the dynamics of different cultures in the workplace. As suggested in the previous chapters, culture impacts on the communication process and the purpose of this research is to explore the nature of that impact in order to appreciate the effect culture has on communication in the workplace. For example, if because of stereotypic beliefs s/he holds, a New Zealand employee avoids a migrant colleague it is likely that communication avoidance will contribute to the breakdown of communication systems ultimately leading to messages/instructions not being received.

The aim in this chapter is to introduce and discuss the methodology used to conduct this research. In the first section the procedures employed to conduct this research, guided by Yin's (1993) three principles of data collection, are outlined. Yin's, (1993) three principles of data collection that are discussed are (1) use of multiple sources of evidence, (2) organisation and documentation of data collected and (3) maintaining a chain of evidence. The research procedure includes an informal interview with the CEO of Excell regarding organisational practices and policies as well as with two staff in order to determine whether or not staff attitudes toward multiculturalism aligned with the CEO's comments and Excell policies. Further informal interviews were held with staff at Excell to ascertain their perceptions of any intercultural communication issues within their workplace. These interviews guided the development of the questionnaire leading to its design and administration.

A questionnaire was chosen to minimise interruption to participants' work time and furthermore because the questionnaire method is an established means of collecting information at Excell. In the second section the designing, collection, and collation of the questionnaire are described. Following the questionnaire section the selection of the participants is discussed and participants are divided into groups categorised by age, gender and ethnicity. All participants were employed by Excell at the time of the research and 85% of the participants regularly interacted with colleagues from immigrant cultures in the workplace. In the final section of this chapter the focus is on ethical considerations in conducting this research.

4.1 Procedures

I have had previous business dealings with Excell and knew Excell was a multicultural organisation. I approached the CEO of Excell to discuss the possibility of conducting research at the East Tamaki Depot (May 2005). He was happy to support such research and we discussed how best to conduct it. The CEO and I concluded that a survey would be the best method of research as employees were used to this technique and it would not encroach greatly into their work time.

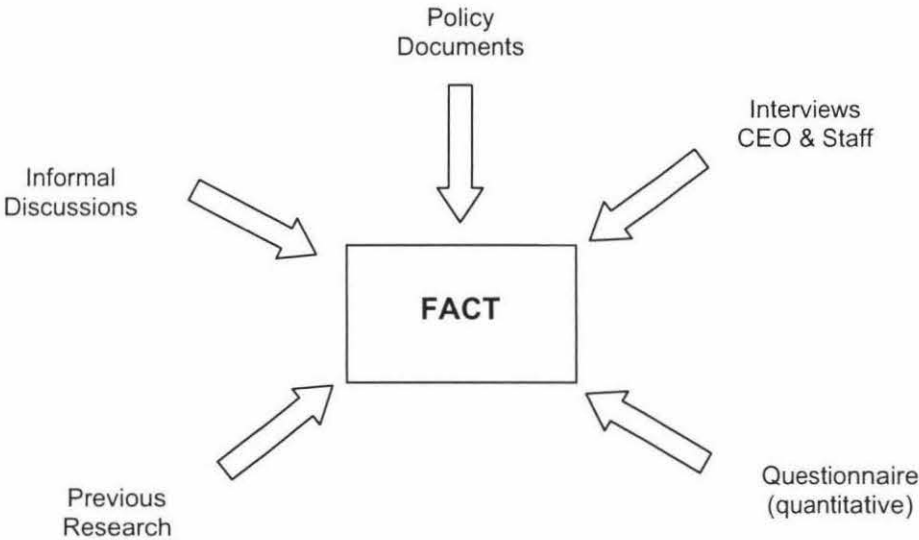
The research procedure of this study is structured in a funnelled format (see Frey, Botan, Friedman & Krepps, 1992, p. 92-3) meaning the study initially approaches the research quite broadly through informal interviews and then narrows down to more specific, questions in the questionnaire.

4.1.1 Data Collecting Procedures

In this research study the three principles of data collection, which are outlined by Yin (1993, p. 90) were applied. Using these three principles helps to reinforce the reliability of this case study.

Yin describes the first principle of data collection as the “use of multiple sources of evidence” (p. 90). He points out that a major strength of a case study is the ability to use multiple sources for data collection. In this study data were gathered via an initial interview with the CEO, interviews with staff, Excell policies, and a literature review. It is hoped that these multiple sources of data provide “converging lines of inquiry” (Yin, 1993, p. 92) and thus triangulate the results (see diagram below).

Diagram 8. Convergence of Multiple Sources of Evidence (Adapted from COSMOS Corporation cited in Yin, 1993, p. 93).



The second principle of data collection has to do with the organisation and documentation of data collected (Yin, 1993). He says that each case study should develop a presentable formal database which increases the reliability of the study. For this study I kept a research journal, and carefully documented all data in a computerised database.

The third principle of data collection is the importance of maintaining a “chain of evidence” (Yin, 1993, p. 98) which also strengthens the reliability of the case. Each stage of the research process should clearly link to the stage before and after, for example, the data collection of this study followed the procedures of collecting, collating and maintaining data and linked closely with the research questions asked and the theoretical propositions.

4.1.2 Multiculturalism at Excell

To begin the research I conducted an interview with the CEO, searched Excell policies for policies on diversity, and interviewed two employees to understand attitudes toward multiculturalism at Excell. Understanding the attitudes towards multiculturalism is important for interpreting the results. For example, the level of communication adjustment from participants might be a reflection of the commitment - or lack of commitment - to diversity at Excell.

4.1.2.1 Interview with CEO

The first source of information for this research was an interview with the CEO of Excell on 10 September 2005. An informal interview with the CEO, as shown in the introduction, confirmed my initial thoughts that Excell would be a good organisation in which to conduct this research, as he spoke of challenges they experienced in a multicultural environment. For example, he spoke about experiencing challenges with culturally diverse staff in top management due to their perceived possession of power. The interview was also important for gaining an understanding of the organisation's attitude toward diversity and whether or not diversity was valued. Values shape the culture of an organisation and are ultimately passed down from the top, that is, by the enacting of those values by top management (Shockley-Zalabak, 2002; Clampitt, 2001).

4.1.2.2 Excell Policy on Cultural Diversity

In support of the CEO's comments, it was important to cross reference these with Excell policies on diversity to appreciate how multiculturalism is managed at Excell. Commitment to diversity and greater acceptance of diversity are achieved through multiple channels, such as constant reinforcement, change initiatives, commitment to valuing diversity, and creating an atmosphere of inclusion and also through changes to policy, (Gilbert & Ivancevich, 2000; Landis, Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Although there are no policies directly relating to different cultures at Excell there are policies in the Recruitment and Selection and Employee Relations chapters of the Excell Human Resources Manual (2001) that are relevant to the CEO's comments as they deal with fair treatment of all employees.

For example, in the Excell Human Resource Manual Recruitment and Selection chapter the policy states that *"a standard process shall be used in all instances of temporary and permanent employment to ensure fair treatment of all applicants"* and in the Employees Relations chapter it states *"to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and in accordance with the principles of natural justice"* and *"All employees have the right of freedom to work for Excell without fear or concern of being harassed. Harassment based on age, marital status, gender, religion, ethnic origin, ethical beliefs, colour or race ... is unacceptable"*. Although these may appear generic type policies they act as a guide to the overall culture and accepted behaviour at Excell and if supported by the CEO and management are a basis for positive intercultural interaction at Excell.

4.1.2.3 Informal Interviews with Two Staff

As well as reviewing organisational policies, the research included conducting two informal interviews with two New Zealand employees of Excell, to also understand

more about attitudes toward multiculturalism within the organisation. These employees interviewed were chosen because of their ethnicity, gender and work role. One employee is female, Pakeha, and works in the office, and the second is male, Maori, and a truck driver. By interviewing two people from different backgrounds, I was able to get a sense of how they, as workers at Excell, felt about multiculturalism and whether their perception of multiculturalism aligned with Excell policy and the comments from the CEO.

This is the second research project I have conducted with Excell staff and from previous feedback, experience, and interaction with employees I knew that staff were more likely to open up if the interviews were informal. Specific feedback from the previous project given by Excell employees explained that they found it disconcerting and distancing when I was reading questions from a piece of paper in front of me. Also, when I asked if I could tape the interview, they were very hesitant to give any information. However, when I spoke to them informally they were more relaxed and readily able to discuss the way they approached cross cultural communication at work. Because of the hesitant reaction encountered when I asked if they would mind being recorded I decided that for this study all interviews should be informal and I would take brief notes.

4.1.3 Informal Discussion – focus group or not?

Initially I proposed to conduct a small focus group to ascertain the challenges employees might face when communicating with colleagues from immigrant cultures, however, I decided against this because ethnicity is a sensitive subject. It was necessary that people spoke openly and truthfully and I felt this might not happen in a group, where participants could be wary of being perceived as culturally insensitive or influenced by answers from other participants (Frey et al.,

1992). Instead I spoke with ten employees of Excell on an individual basis, at their workstations, using an informal, conversational approach to discuss any challenges they faced when communicating with colleagues from immigrant cultures. The interview topics included each participant's feelings toward migrant colleagues, working relationships with migrant colleagues, communication difficulties with migrant colleagues, and preference for different power structures in the workplace.

These background discussions helped the research in two ways: firstly, to understand if there were any communication problems and, secondly, to aid formulation and confirm the direction of the questionnaire. As suggested by Gudykunst, Lee, Nishida, and Ogawa (2005) "our cultures have a tremendous influence on the way we communicate, whether we are aware of it or not" (p. 443). The common difficulties employees raised included language barriers and the fact that some New Zealanders found it difficult to understand migrant colleagues whose English was not of a high level. One commented "*of course we need to speak with them differently so they will understand*". However, as discussions continued I found that it was not so much the level of English, but rather it was the accent that was the barrier, especially when communicating with Indian colleagues with strong accents.

The themes that were identified throughout the interviews clearly indicated that stereotyping, power distance, and high context communication contribute to New Zealand colleagues feeling a need to adjust their style of communication when communicating with migrant colleagues, and these findings ultimately steered the direction of the questionnaire.

4.1.4 Questionnaire

One questionnaire was administered at Excell. A self-completed questionnaire was chosen as the information-gathering tool for several reasons. Firstly, when speaking with the CEO, he informed me that the bulk of information-gathering within Excell was done using anonymous surveys. I chose to do an anonymous questionnaire, not only because of the CEO's comments but also because of the initial hesitancy with interviewees, who did not want to be recorded, and also to encourage honest and candid answers. Secondly, it meant that every person got the same questionnaire; thirdly, it was more convenient for the employees and did not take much time out of their work schedule and finally, the employees were familiar with the questionnaire format.

Frey, Botan, and Kreps (2000) list many advantages of questionnaires, and these supported the decision to use a questionnaire in this study. Advantages relevant to this study were allowing employees to complete the questionnaire at their convenience, ensuring participants' anonymity, encouraging responses from people who are reluctant to talk, and increasing the accuracy of the data because participants record their own. For this reason, the survey method was chosen because it afforded participants a degree of privacy and also because all participants were literate and able to complete a questionnaire. It was assumed that participants had a high level of comfort completing forms due to their familiarity with similar tasks within their jobs at Excell.

4.1.4.1 Distribution and Collection of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire⁶ was first distributed by email⁷ on 21 September 2005 to those who had email addresses: administration staff, team leaders and staff up to

⁶ Refer to Appendix for complete questionnaire

executive level. Managers were asked to pass on the questionnaire to workers who did not have an email address and inform them when I would visit. I followed up by visiting Excell employees at work on 23 September 2005 to distribute and explain the questionnaire to those who had not received it by email. Each employee was given as much time as s/he needed to complete the questionnaire. Although it was a self-completed questionnaire, when employees were completing their questionnaires, I was available to answer any queries.

Of the 53 participants, 28 completed the questionnaire in my presence. The 28 participants were labourers whose roles included mower operators, gardeners, indoor and outdoor disposal and cleaning staff, drivers, and mechanics who were reassured by my presence and I was able to answer their questions. At the same time, completed questionnaires from employees who had received the questionnaire by email were collected. The remaining questionnaires were returned to an allocated staff member who passed them on to the researcher a week later.

4.1.4.2 Breakdown of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was of a quantitative nature and used a combination of Likert scale ranking by importance and multiple choice answers with an opportunity to comment. The Likert scale and multiple choice styles were chosen for the questionnaire because they are easy to complete (Frey et al., 1992). The questionnaire was split into three sections.

In Section A, a small amount of demographic information was collected to help identify wherever differences in age, gender, or ethnicity had an impact on

⁷ Refer to Appendix for email message

communication and views on multiculturalism at Excell. In Section B Likert scale questions were used and were designed to identify cultural dimensions of the participants. The particular cultural dimensions were those of stereotyping, power distance and context in communication. This information assisted in understanding why some participants might adjust their communication styles to a lesser or greater extent.

Section C was made up of scenarios with multiple choice answers and was used to measure the extent to which New Zealand employees adjusted their communication with migrant colleagues using scenarios designed around stereotyping, power distance and context in communication. The scenarios were chosen to reflect the working environment at Excell and an explanation will be given in the questionnaire breakdown. Following is a breakdown of the questionnaire by section.

4.1.4.3 Questions of Section A

Section A collected data on participants' ethnicity, age, and gender. Three further questions were asked, using Likert scale answers, to ascertain how often participants interact with migrant colleagues and their opinion on diversity at Excell. The three questions are shown below.

How often do you have to interact with colleagues from immigrant cultures?					
<i>Every day</i>		<i>Frequently</i>		<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Rarely</i>
Does Excell promote equal opportunity no matter who you are?					
<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>moderately agree</i>	<i>moderately disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
Does Excell value cultural diversity?					
<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>moderately agree</i>	<i>moderately disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>

4.1.4.4 Questions of Section B

In Section B, quantitative research was used in the form of questionnaires using Likert scale questions that were coded and then analysed using a content analysis procedure. These questions addressed the cultural behaviours and norms of participants', such as stereotypical attitudes, preference for high or low power distance and preference for high or low context communication styles. The answer to these questions was important to understand the cultural values of participants and understand why they may adjust their communication with migrant colleagues in the scenarios given in Section C.

Stereotypical attitudes

The first two questions in Section B, questions 7 and 8, shown below measured the stereotypic attitudes held by participants. Question 8 indicates the possibility of stereotyping and will be cross referenced with questions 7 and scenario 4 to ascertain stereotypical attitudes. In both questions agreement indicates higher stereotypic attitude and disagreement indicates lower stereotypic attitude. The level of agreement or disagreement indicated participants' level of stereotypic attitude.

I avoid speaking with colleagues from immigrant cultures because they won't understand me.					
Strongly agree	agree	moderately agree	moderately disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
Do you agree with the saying "Once a Chinaman always a Chinaman?"					
Strongly agree	agree	moderately agree	moderately disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

High power distance or low power distance

Questions 9 and 10 measured participants’ attitudes toward power and indicated whether they preferred low or high power distance. In both questions agreement indicates participants’ preference for high power distance and disagreement indicates low power distance. The level of agreement or disagreement indicated participants’ acceptance of higher or lower power distance.

Managers should make decisions without consulting employees.					
Strongly agree	agree	moderately agree	moderately disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
It is frequently necessary for a manager to use power and authority when dealing with subordinates.					
Strongly agree	agree	moderately agree	moderately disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

High context or low context communication style

The last two questions in this section, questions 11 and 12, measured participants’ preference for low or high context communication. In both questions agreement indicates participants’ preference for low context communication and disagreement indicates high context communication. The level of agreement or disagreement indicated participants’ preference for higher or lower context communication.

People should say what they mean.					
Strongly agree	agree	moderately agree	moderately disagree	disagree	strongly disagree
When a message is ambiguous it means that person is hiding something.					
Strongly agree	agree	moderately agree	moderately disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

4.1.4.5 Questions of Section C

Section C used quantitative research in the form of scenarios with multiple choice answers. The research included gathering information on the extent participants adjusted their communication with migrant colleagues because of stereotyping, power distance, and low and high context communication styles. Participants were also given the opportunity to comment if their desired answer was not listed or if they wanted to further explain their choice. These questions were in the form of scenarios and were designed to measure the extent of communication adjustment or adaptation. To be able to measure whether participants adjusted their communication the scenarios were presented twice, firstly directed at asking about the situation in terms of communicating with immigrant colleagues and then the same scenario was presented directed at asking about the situation if communicating with New Zealand colleagues. Any difference in answers between the two scenarios indicated communication adjustment (Yin, 1993; Frey et al., 1992).

Scenario 1

The first scenario (over the page) was designed to distinguish between high and low context communication. The situation reflected high context style and the multiple choice answers asked how participants would react when the person was a migrant or New Zealand colleague. A 'team meeting' situation was used as participants regularly attend weekly team meetings with their team leader. For approximately 70% of participants these meetings are likely to be informal and are a chance for participants to discuss issues with their team leader and for their team leader to update them on organisational and work matters. Often these meetings are held on site, that is, for example, at a park, in a lunch room, at an outlying

depot or even a café, depending in which department s/he works. Answers B, C and D reflect high context tendencies whilst A reflects low context tendencies.

You are in a team meeting and your colleague begins to ask a question and is taking a long time to get to the point. When s/he finally gets to the point you don't really understand what s/he means. Do you:

- a. Ask her/him directly to explain what s/he means again because you didn't understand.
- b. Ask in an indirect way so s/he doesn't feel embarrassed to give more information
- c. Avoid answering and begin discussing something else
- d. It would depend on who it was (please comment below)
- e. Other (please comment below)

New Zealand Pakeha are considered low context, whilst Maori tend to be high context as are immigrant colleagues from Asia, India, and Fiji. Therefore, it is likely that Maori would find it easier to communicate with immigrant colleagues from high context cultures whereas Pakeha might find it more challenging.

Scenario 2

The second scenario (over the page) was designed to distinguish between high and low power distance through use of titles. It is common practice at Excell to address a person by their given name no matter which occupational level a person is at. Answers A and B reflect low power distance and answers C and D reflect high power distance, although C is less high power distance than D. New Zealand Pakeha are considered as low power distance whilst Maori tend to be high power distance; similar to their immigrant colleagues from Asia, India, and Fiji. It should be noted that although power distance is being measured by use of titles this could

also reflect the level of politeness a person is using. New Zealanders are taught to be polite. In saying that, if you are being polite by using a title you are assuming some power distance by way of showing respect to someone older or of higher authority.

You have just been introduced to your new manager. She seems a very approachable person and you think you will get on well. She was introduced to you as Mrs Mortensen. You wonder what her first name is. What happens next?

- a. The next time you speak with her you ask her what her name is and then call her by that name.
- b. Find out what her name is from another colleague and then call her by that name.
- c. Continue to call her Mrs Mortensen but think she is a 'snooty' person.
- d. Are happy to call her Mrs Mortensen.
- e. Other (please comment below).

Scenario 3

The third scenario is shown below and like the first, was designed to distinguish between high and low context communication and how directly or indirectly

Your colleague often communicates with you in a very direct manner. You sometimes feel offended by this. You don't think s/he means to offend you but every time you come away feeling upset. What happens next?

- a. You tell your colleague that you find her/his manner of speaking offensive
- b. Say nothing and have negative feelings toward her/him each time s/he speaks with you.
- c. Avoid her/him as much as possible.
- d. Accept that is just the way s/he is.
- e. Other (please comment).

participants would respond in the following situation towards a colleague with a similar background and if they would act any differently towards a migrant colleague. New Zealand Pakeha are considered low context, meaning they would communicate more directly than Maori and migrant colleagues from Asia, India, and Fiji, who tend to be high context and are more likely to communicate indirectly. Answer A reflects low context communication whereas B, C, and D reflect degrees of high context communication preference.

Scenario 4

The fourth scenario is shown below and was designed to assess participants' propensity to stereotype. This scenario was changed slightly when directed at communication with a New Zealand colleague to read this person is from "up north and is a bit thick" (this comment was chosen as I had heard of employees from 'up north' being referred to in this way). Answers A and C indicate a higher propensity to stereotype whilst B indicates a lower propensity toward stereotyping. The question was designed to measure whether participants reacted differently when directed at a migrant colleague or a colleague.

You have a brief conversation with a colleague. S/he is very hard to understand, and you're not sure what s/he is saying. You recall another colleague telling you this person is from 'overseas' and is a 'bit thick.' S/he seems a nice enough person. How do you react?

- a. Agree with your other colleague that this person is a 'bit thick'.
- b. Give this colleague the benefit of the doubt and listen carefully and try to understand what s/he means.
- c. Make a mental note to yourself that you will try to avoid this person.
- d. Other (please comment).

4.1.5 Questionnaire Collation

The data from the questionnaires was entered on the computer. The sample was divided into ten subgroups based on gender, age, and cultural background to compare the extent to which each group adjusted their style of communication when communicating with colleagues from immigrant cultures.

Participants had a good understanding of the questionnaire and the only word that caused some confusion was “ambiguous” which had to be explained to some participants. When the questionnaire was distributed it was made clear to participants that *immigrant colleague* meant a person who was not Pakeha or Maori. Two participants commented that they did not interact with immigrant colleagues; however, I knew they did and pointed this out to them. They had become so familiar with two Fijian Indian colleagues that they did not consider them immigrants any more. Becoming so familiar with colleagues that you do not consider them as migrants could be explained by contact hypothesis theory. Contact hypothesis claims “that (prejudiced) beliefs held about groups can be changed through specific types of positive interpersonal contact between in-group and out-group members” (Oakes et al., 1994). The two participants had constant contact with Indian colleagues who worked in the mechanical workshop and who fixed their equipment, and they saw each Indian colleague “as one of us”. Because of this comment, after the questionnaire was completed I decided to follow up participants’ definition of *immigrant colleague*. I contacted ten of the participants and asked them to clarify what they thought I meant by *immigrant colleague*. All ten said “anyone that was not Maori or Pakeha” as stipulated by the research, and then added they were thinking of interactions with Pacific Islanders, Indians, Asians and South Africans.

4.1.6 Limitations of Questionnaire Format

The questionnaire did create a little confusion for some participants because the scenarios were presented twice which made them think they had answered the question already if they had not read the instructions carefully. As I was there to answer any queries I was able to remind approximately 85% of participants that the scenarios were presented twice, once when communicating with migrant colleagues and once with fellow New Zealand colleagues. The scenarios that were concerned with communicating with a migrant colleague were presented first as I felt that therein lies the greater challenge of communication.

The amount of time allowed to conduct the research was limited - and although consideration was given to splitting the questionnaire into communicating with migrant colleagues and then returning for communicating with fellow New Zealand colleagues, I was not convinced this would have worked any better as participants may have tried to remember what they answered for migrant colleagues.

I am aware that a limitation of this kind of research is that people tend to give socially desirable responses. I also acknowledge that participants might give superficial responses in keeping with what is perceived as desirable in the Excell workplace but not necessarily their own belief. As Frey, Botan, and Kreps (2000) explain "people also may provide inaccurate information when asked to step outside themselves and comment on behaviours they might not normally think about or remember".

4.1.6.1 Limitations of Data Collection

To ensure the questionnaire was completed anonymously I did not ask for the participant's position within Excell. This may limit the interpretation of results as attitudes may vary according to the position each participant held.

A final limitation is that I am unable to guarantee complete anonymity due to prior knowledge of the organisation and working relationships with personnel.

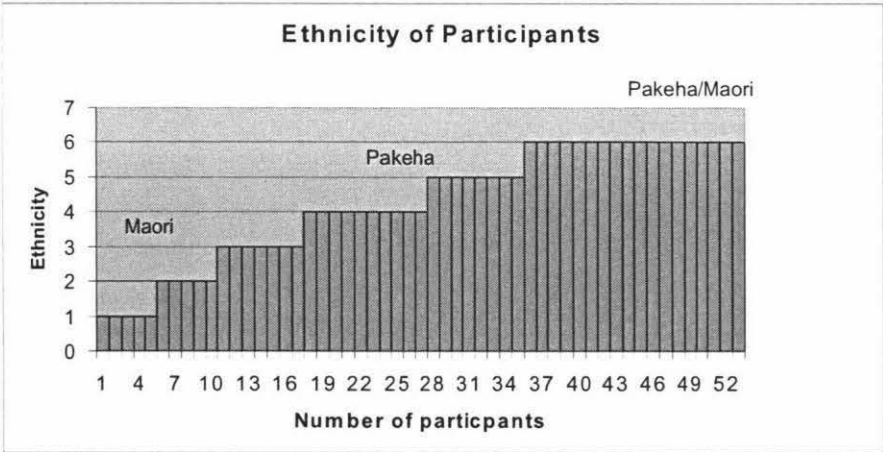
4.2 Research Participants

The participants for this research project are employees of Excell Corporation Limited (Excell) Auckland, New Zealand. Excell provides New Zealand's most comprehensive range of facilities, infrastructure maintenance and management services covering open space management, environmental, water, drainage and roading services. Excell employs approximately 300 staff in the greater Auckland area and over 860 in Australasia. The Human Resources Department at Excell does not collect specific data pertaining to ethnicity, however, it is obvious as you walk around Excell that there are staff from many different cultures. A recent staff survey (2005) completed by 362 out of a total of 723 staff showed that 55% identified themselves as New Zealand European, 23% as New Zealand Maori, 7% as Pacific Islanders and 15% as other.

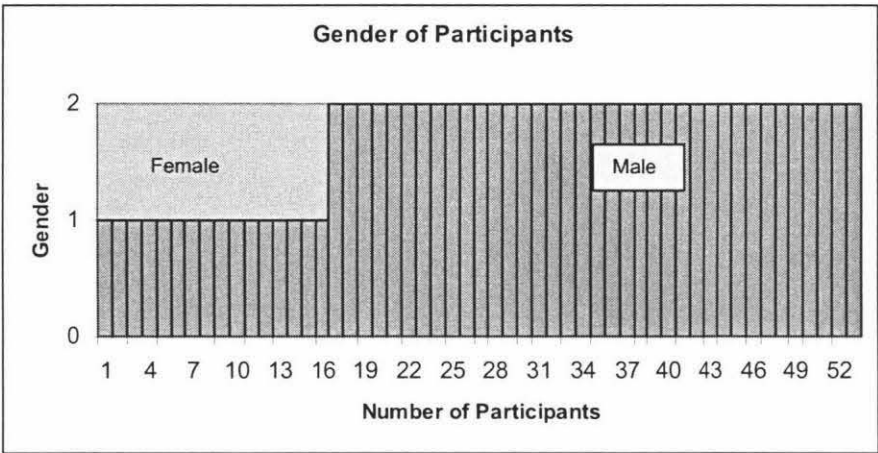
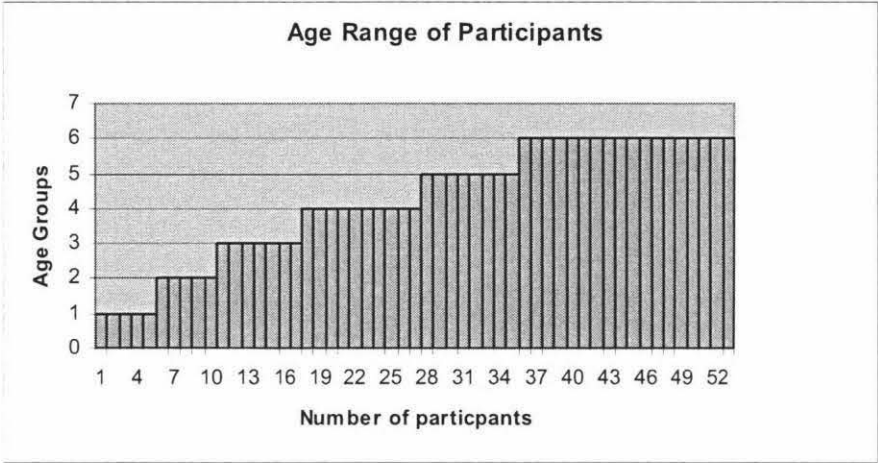
A convenience sample of 60 participants was chosen from the East Tamaki Depot of Excell who were available to complete the questionnaire and met the criteria required for participation in the survey (being either Maori or Pakeha or both). Of the 60 questionnaires distributed, 53 were completed and returned.

Participants were New Zealanders as defined in the introduction and covered all staff groups - that is, labourers, drivers, administration staff, team leaders, and all levels of management. Nine of the participants were New Zealand Maori, four males and five females. Forty-one of the participants identified themselves as New Zealand European of which 11 were female and 30 were male. Two of the participants identified themselves as New Zealand Maori/European and both were male. One participant did not indicate ethnicity. The ratio of Pakeha to Maori working at Excell is comparable with the statistics given for the Auckland region (2001) in which 68.5% of people in Auckland Region said they belong to the European ethnic group while 10% identified themselves as Maori (Census, 2001).The ages of this sample ranged from 20 – 45 and over and were distributed evenly. These statistics can be shown in graphical form as follows:

Diagram 9. Ethnicity, Age and Gender of Research Participants



Key - Age Groups in Years
1 = 20 - 24
2 = 25 - 30
3 = 31 - 35
4 = 36 - 40
5 = 41 - 45
6 = 45+



4.3 Ethical Considerations

Frey, Botan and Kreps (1992) define *ethics* as “moral principles and recognised rules of conduct regarding a particular class of human action” (p. 140).

Excell Corporation Ltd. employs a multicultural workforce in Auckland and was approached to take part in this research and accepted. With full consent of the company’s, CEO, participants were chosen as discussed above.

4.3.1 Access to Premises and Participants

Access to the premises and employees was negotiated between the company and me. I was permitted to visit the East Tamaki depot and all sub-depots of East Tamaki, throughout September and November 2005, providing I contacted specific team leaders to let them know I would be on site and the timing of my visits. There were no restrictions regarding those I could approach to complete the questionnaire.

4.3.2 Ethical Guidelines

Communication research often intrudes into the lives of people being studied. As research involves giving or gaining some information, or observing people in their daily exchanges and then making these findings known to others; this process will have some effect on the people being studied (Frey et al., 2000). To lessen the effect on the participants I followed four fundamental ethical guidelines: (a) providing the participants with free choice, (b) protecting their rights and privacy, (c) benefiting, not harming them, and (d) treating all participants with respect (Frey et al, 1992).

4.3.3 Participants' Anonymity and Confidentiality

To protect the rights and the privacy of the participants I took the issues of anonymity and confidentiality very seriously. Although most participants wanted to talk about the questionnaire, all questionnaires were immediately placed in a closed box once completed. Remaining questionnaires were collected by a trusted staff member who placed them in a sealed envelope until they were collected a week later. All completed questionnaires remain the property of myself and are for use for this study only.

4.3.4 Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct

The survey was designed along the guidelines of the *Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Research and Teaching Involving Human Subjects* and approval of the study by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee was obtained⁸. This research is considered low risk⁹ as I am conducting anonymous questionnaires. The research project was explained to the participants and that completion and return of the questionnaire implied consent to participation. They were also informed that they had the right to decline to answer any particular question.

4.3.5 Ethical Limitations

The topic of culture is very broad and can be interpreted in many different ways. A limitation with this type of research is that each person interprets the questions through her/his own cultural view. To interpret the questionnaires I have recognised my own biases so as they do not to influence interpretation. These biases include bias against what I thought respondents might say and how I interpreted their attitudes and behaviours whilst in the Excell environment. I have also recognised that knowing many of the employees and their attitudes toward migrants could influence the way I interpret their answers and I have been vigilant in taking care that expectations do not influence my interpretation of the results.

4.4 Summary

To begin the research informal interviews were held with the CEO of Excell and two employees, both in order to examine Excell policy on diversity, and to understand multiculturalism at Excell. The CEO uses positive cultural values such

⁸ Refer to Appendix 11

⁹ Refer to Appendix III

as collectivism and team work to shape the culture of Excell. Although some cross-cultural issues had been identified, no training or counselling is available at Excell regarding intercultural interaction and awareness, which might contribute to employees' adjusting their communication because of lack of intercultural training.

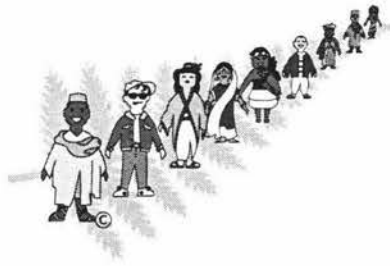
Further informal interviews were held with ten Excell staff to aid the direction of the questionnaire. Comments from these interviews demonstrated that stereotyping, power distance and context in communication all contributed to challenges when communicating with migrant colleagues. From the small number interviewed it was ascertained that communication was adjusted when communicating with migrant colleagues and in some cases this led to avoidance of that person.

To measure the extent to which staff adjust their communication, a questionnaire was devised to be distributed to participants. A questionnaire was considered the best form of information gathering as the fifty-three participants were familiar with this technique; it afforded participants a degree of privacy, and fitted in well with their work schedule. The main section of the questionnaire was made up of scenarios firstly directed at communicating with migrant colleagues and then presented again aimed at communicating with New Zealand colleagues, in order to show the extent to which participants adjusted their communication in the former situation.

The participants were New Zealanders, had lived the majority of their life in New Zealand, and covered all staff groups. Participants' groups were made up of 77% New Zealand European and 23% New Zealand Maori and of the total 30% were female and 70% male.

The Methodology section has established the three data collection methods - informal interviews, questionnaire and researching Excell policies, who the data was collected from and introduced the questions participants were asked to complete. In the following section, Data Analysis and Interpretation the results of the informal interviews and questionnaire are discussed and interpreted, and these findings are related to existing research and theoretical foundations.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION



Chapter 5. Results

5.0 Introduction

In this section the results of the research are presented. The informal interviews indicated that stereotyping, power distance and high and low context communication contributed to adjusting communication when communicating with migrant colleagues and the aim of the results chapter is to present further findings from the main research instrument, the questionnaire.

The results section includes a summary of the informal interviews and presents the full findings of the questionnaire. Firstly the attributes of the sample are presented, then the informal interviews are summarised, and data collection and collation are discussed. Secondly the results are presented in order of communication topic, that is, stereotyping, power distance and high or low context. The results are then displayed in tables following the summary of responses to each question.

5.1 CEO Interview and Review of Excell Policy

The first source of information for this research was an interview with the CEO cross- referenced with Excell policies on diversity and opinions of two staff members. The results are summarised as follows. The CEO uses positive cultural values, particularly those of collectivism and teamwork, to shape Excell culture. The teamwork culture is supported by the CEO's comment, which is promoted throughout Excell, *"we are all in this together, we need to support and respect each other"*.

There are no policies that are specific to intercultural interaction and communication. However, most policies promote equality, one standard for all, and respect for each other. For example, one policy from the Employee Relations chapter states *“to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and in accordance with the principles of natural justice”* (Excell Human Resources Manual, 2001).

The perception of multiculturalism at Excell of those interviewed was, that in general employees *“just get on with it”*. There is no training specifically aimed at facilitating communication across cultures or cultural-awareness although the employees interviewed thought it might help in understanding migrant colleagues. If cross-cultural issues were identified then the employees had to deal with them themselves. Neither of the employees interviewed had heard of any training or counselling that might clarify the issue involved or help prevent misunderstandings.

5.2 Attributes of the Sample

In total 53 participants completed the questionnaire. One person, an older male, did not enter his ethnicity; however he was included in the results. Ages ranged from 20 to 45 and over and there was a fairly even distribution across age groups. However, when we collapse the groups into younger (20-30) and older (31-45+), it is evident that two-thirds of the group are older. The majority of the participants were Pakeha males and two participants identified themselves as Maori/Pakeha. These two participants have been included in the Maori category. Table 1 (on the next page) shows a breakdown of the research sample for this study.

Table 1. Participants by ethnicity, gender, and age

Ethnicity	Maori 21%				Pakeha 79%			
Gender	M 6		F 5		M 30		F 11	
Age	Y = 2	O = 4	Y = 1	O = 4	Y = 9	O = 21	Y = 5	O = 6

*M = Male and F = Female, Y = Young and O = Old

Participants were asked how often they interacted with colleagues of migrant cultures and were asked to indicate the frequency of interaction. Eighty-five percent of participants interacted with immigrant colleagues on a regular basis, with 33 participants interacting every day, twelve frequently, seven occasionally and only one participant rarely interacting with immigrant colleagues.

To gauge their own perceptions of the cultural environment the participants worked in, they were asked whether they felt Excell valued equal opportunity and cultural diversity. Two questions were asked:

- (1) Does Excell promote equal opportunity no matter who you are?
- (2) Does Excell value cultural diversity?

For the first question 12 strongly agreed, 26 agreed and 11 moderately agreed, making 92% who expressed some level of agreement. Four participants (8%) disagreed. In the second question six strongly agreed that Excell valued diversity, 25 agreed and 18 moderately agreed; that is 92% who expressed some agreement with four participants (8%) who disagreed.

Looking at the respondents as a whole, 21% are Maori, 79% are Pakeha and two-thirds of the sample was over 30 years of age. All but one of the respondents of the sample, who was a Pakeha male, interacted with colleagues from immigrant cultures either occasionally (13%) or on a regular basis (85%) and 92% of participants felt Excell valued diversity and promoted equal opportunity. The 8% of participants that perceived diversity was not valued were males aged between 31-35 years, two were Pakeha and the other did not disclose their ethnicity.

5.3 Informal Discussion with Staff

Informal discussions were held with ten staff members to determine if there were any communication problems and to aid formulation and confirm direction of the questionnaire. The interview topics included participants' feelings toward migrant colleagues; working relationships with migrant colleagues; communication difficulties with migrant colleagues; and preference for different power structures.

The common difficulties employees raised included language barriers, and some New Zealanders found it difficult to understand migrant colleagues whose English was not of a high level. One New Zealander commented *"of course we need to speak with them differently so they will understand"*, however, as discussions continued, I found that it was not so much the level of English but rather it was the accent that was the barrier, especially when communicating with Indian colleagues with strong accents. For example comments included *"... but when he gets going I have no idea what he's saying"*; *"He's got quite an accent, not as bad as (S¹⁰) though"*; *(S) in the workshop is really hard to understand, he speaks so fast and I hardly understand his accent – sometimes I wait until he is not there, then I go in"*.

¹⁰ (S) and any other single letter in brackets indicates the name of the person the interviewee was talking about.

Another issue raised was that New Zealand employees sometimes found messages from migrant colleagues difficult to understand as the message itself was confusing and they were *“not sure what they’re getting at”*, often resulting in the New Zealander ignoring or avoiding that person.

Further comment was that *“some of them (migrant colleagues) always say “yes” even when they don’t understand”*. In the literature review the concept of face was discussed and this comment is likely a way of saving face for the migrant employee.

There was also a strong perception expressed that some migrant colleagues look *“down on us”* and treat us as if we are *“just workers”*. Further investigation showed that interviewees were thinking of Asian and South African colleagues who were in a position of authority. The cultures mentioned are more likely to be high power distance whereas New Zealand is low power distance and, this may explain why the interviewees were feeling they were being treated with little respect.

Throughout the discussions I discovered a clear ‘in-group’ mentality and many times I heard the comment *“they don’t talk with us so we don’t talk with them”* from New Zealanders. Other comments included *“But we’re just told to work with them so we just do as we are told. Only talk to them when I have to”*; *“They keep to themselves; I don’t really have much to do with them if I don’t have to”*. Comments such as these show in-group tendencies. As discussed in the literature review, an in-group is a group whose norms and values shape the behaviour of its members.

5.4 Questionnaire

The areas that the questionnaire had been set up to explore, when cross-tabulated with the questions in section B and the scenarios in section C, were differences in terms of ethnicity, gender and age. Both ethnicity and age have been re-categorised to give larger numbers within cells to facilitate analysis. The five separate age categories have been collapsed into two groups: a younger (Y) group aged from 20 – 30 and an older (O) age group 31 – 45+. Also, the two participants who were both Maori and Pakeha, have been included within the Maori category.

5.4.1 Stereotyping

Two questions from section B and one scenario from section C were used to measure the extent to which participants acknowledge using stereotyping.

The first question on stereotyping indicated that the majority of participants did not feel they needed to avoid immigrant colleagues out of fear that they (immigrant colleagues) would not understand them. When asked if they avoided speaking with colleagues from other cultures because they would not understand them 2, from the 53 participants, strongly agreed, 3 agreed, 5 moderately agreed, 4 moderately disagreed, 21 disagreed, and 18 strongly disagreed.

Breakdown of ethnicity, age, and gender is shown table 2 and indicates that those who agreed with the statement were a minority and mostly older Maori and Pakeha participants. The majority disagreed and were an even mix of gender, age, and ethnicity.

Table 2. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of agreement or disagreement on avoiding communicating with immigrant colleagues for fear of not being understood

Agreement 19.3%				Disagreement 80.7%				
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	3 (5.7%)		7 (13.4%)		8 (15.3%)		34 (65.5%)	
Gender	M 1		M 5		M 5		M 25	
	F 2		F 2		F 3		F 9	
Age	Y = 0	O = 3	Y = 3	O = 4	Y = 2	O = 6	Y = 11	O = 23

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was older male who disagreed

The second question on stereotyping asked participants if they agreed with the statement “Once a Chinaman always a Chinaman” and 5 of the participants strongly agreed, 8 agreed, 11 moderately agreed, 3 moderately disagreed, 16 disagreed, and 2 strongly disagreed. One person made the comment that the saying was unfamiliar to him.

A more even split, than for the previous question, can be seen in table 3 (on the next page) with 24 participants agreeing and 27 disagreeing, indicating a higher stereotypic attitude in this situation compared with question one, where only 20% of participants stereotyped because of race.

Whilst the table indicates an even mix of gender and age in agreement with the statement compared with the previous question, it also shows that a higher proportion of Pakeha are in agreement.

Table 3. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of agreement or disagreement indicating stereotypic attitude toward a particular race

Agreement47.1%					Disagreement52.9%			
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	7	(13.7%)	17	(33.3%)	5	(9.8%)	22	(43.1)
Gender	M	5	M	12	M	3	M	18
	F	2	F	5	F	2	F	4
Age	Y = 2	O = 5	Y = 7	O = 10	Y = 1	O = 4	Y = 5	O = 17

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was an older male who agreed
 * 1 person who did not answer was a young New Zealand European female and 1 person chose to comment

The third question measuring stereotyping was the fourth scenario in Section C and was presented twice, and participants were asked to answer in two ways, firstly when communicating with immigrant colleagues and secondly when communicating with New Zealand colleagues. When participants were asked if they assumed the attitude of their colleague who alleged migrant colleagues “were from overseas and a bit thick” they answered as follows. For migrant colleagues 4 strongly agreed that they would believe their colleague without giving a migrant colleague the benefit of the doubt, 45 replied that they would give the colleague the benefit of the doubt and listen carefully and try to understand her/him, with one participant adding the comment that “over time this person would have to demonstrate that they add value”, two of the participants made a mental note to avoid that colleague in future encounters and one commented that he “would look at the bigger picture and try to figure it out from there”. One participant did not respond to this question.

A breakdown of ethnicity, age, and genders is shown in the table below and results indicate agreement from a minority, mainly older males. However, the majority disagreed and did not want to see themselves as stereotyping. The finding indicates that participants do not have or are reluctant to admit having stereotypic attitudes toward immigrant colleagues in this situation.

Table 4. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of high or low stereotypic attitudes toward immigrant colleagues

High Stereotypic Attitude 12%					Low Stereotypic Attitude 88%			
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	1	(2%)	5	(10%)	9	(18%)	35	(70%)
Gender	M	1	M	4	M	4	M	25
	F	0	F	1	F	5	F	10
Age	Y = 0	O = 1	Y = 1	O = 4	Y = 3	O = 6	Y = 14	O = 21

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was an older male and has a low stereotypic attitude

* One older Maori male who commented, and one older Pakeha male did not answer

Conversely, when faced with the same scenario but aimed at a New Zealand colleague who was “from up North and a bit thick” participants responded as follows: 6 strongly agreed with their colleague that that person was a bit thick without giving them the benefit of the doubt; 42 agreed they would give the person the benefit of the doubt and try to understand them; while 2 made a mental note to avoid them, and 1 commented: “I probably would not give this person as much tolerance as an immigrant as they have less of an obstacle to overcome (i.e. no language barrier) and should be able to communicate better”. Two participants did not answer this question.

Results indicate there is little difference between communicating with migrant colleagues and New Zealand colleagues, with 80% of participants giving a colleague the benefit of the doubt and taking time to understand her/him. It is interesting to note that two older Pakeha males were more likely to take the word of a colleague about a New Zealander than they were about a migrant.

Table 5. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of high or low stereotypic attitudes toward fellow New Zealand colleagues

High Stereotypic Attitude 18%					Low Stereotypic Attitude 82%			
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	2	(4%)	7	(14%)	9	(18%)	32	(64%)
Gender	M	0	M	7	M	6	M	21
	F	2	F	0	F	3	F	11
Age	Y = 1	O = 1	Y = 2	O = 5	Y = 2	O = 7	Y = 12	O = 20

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was an older male and has low stereotypic attitude

* One older Pakeha male did not answer, and one older Pakeha male commented only

In conclusion, results for questions relating to stereotypic attitudes influencing communication with migrant colleagues indicated that within the respondents there was a reluctance to see themselves as stereotyping. Participants wanted to see themselves as able to take people for who they are, or, that they were unwilling to recognise or accept that they stereotype. Although results indicated that most participants seemed to be less likely to stereotype a small number of older Pakeha males did indicate a higher likelihood of stereotyping. The results showed that when given a particular race to comment about, there was a higher and more evenly split ratio of stereotyping.

Generally participants were not concerned that immigrant colleagues would not understand them, however 10 participants would deal with the situation by avoiding immigrant colleagues – in other words adjusting communication by way of avoidance. When asked to comment about a particular race the results indicated that a higher number of participants stereotype with 24 agreeing with the statement once a “Chinaman always a Chinaman”.

When judging a migrant colleague the majority of participants, 44, said that they were unlikely to listen to a colleague's view about this particular migrant colleague but would rather give the migrant colleague the benefit of the doubt and find out what s/he was like for themselves. There was a small change from six to nine when talking about a migrant colleague compared with talking about a New Zealand colleague, indicating that a colleague's judgement might be accepted more often about a New Zealander workmate.

5.4.2 Power Distance

Power distance was measured by using two questions from section B cross-tabulated with one scenario from section C.

When asked if managers should make decisions without consulting employees one out of 53 participants strongly agreed, 2 agreed, 11 moderately agreed, 15 disagreed, and 13 strongly disagreed. One participant commented, “depends”. Results indicated that a high percentage of participants were low power distance when asked how they felt about the following situation.

A breakdown of ethnicity, age, and gender is shown in the tables below and indicates that those who agreed, showing a higher power distance attitude, were a minority and no one person, gender or age differentiated participants. A strong majority disagreed with this statement, indicating low power distance; there were an even distribution and spread of age, gender and ethnicity.

Table 6. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of agreement or disagreement whether managers should make decisions without consultation with employees

Agreement 25.4%					Disagreement 74.6%			
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	3	(5.8%)	10	(19.6%)	8	(15.6%)	30	(58.8%)
Gender	M	2	M	6	M	4	M	24
	F	1	F	4	F	4	F	6
Age	Y = 1	O = 2	Y = 5	O = 5	Y = 2	O = 6	Y = 8	O = 22

*1 person who did not show ethnicity and did not answer was an older male

*1 person who was a young New Zealand European female chose to comment

The second question addressed the extent to which a manager should use power and authority. Participants were asked if it was frequently necessary for a manager to use power and authority when dealing with subordinates. One strongly agreed, 11 agreed, 12 moderately agreed, 12 moderately disagreed, 14 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed. One participant did not comment.

Results indicate a more even spread of participants agreeing and disagreeing and show that, in this particular situation, 45% of participants agreed that management should be afforded more control through power and authority, indicating that a higher power distance is accepted in this situation. A breakdown of ethnicity, age,

and gender is shown in the tables below and indicates that agreement was more likely in older male participants, and those that who disagreed were more likely to be younger.

Table 7. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of agreement or disagreement for power and authority use by managers

Agreement 45%					Disagreement 55%			
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	4	(7.8%)	19	(37.2%)	7	(13.7%)	21	(41.1%)
Gender	M	2	M	13	M	5	M	16
	F	2	F	6	F	2	F	5
Age	Y = 0	O = 4	Y = 4	O = 15	Y = 1	O = 6	Y = 9	O = 12

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was an older male who agreed

*1 young New Zealand European male did not answer the question

The second scenario from section C asked participants how they would respond to a manager introduced to them by title of “Mrs Mortenson”. When participants communicated with immigrant colleagues 18 out of 53 would ask Mrs Mortenson what her first name was and then call her by that name; one of the 18 participants also commented that s/he would ask her how she would like to be addressed, 6 would find out what her first name was from a colleague and then call her by that name, 16 were happy to continue to call her “Mrs Mortenson”. Twelve chose to comment on this question. Eight commented that they would ask her how she would like to be addressed – either as “Mrs Mortenson” or by her first name - and one added the comment that “if not given would think she is a ‘snooty’ person as this is not how people act in this industry today”, two would ask immediately for her first name and if denied one “would not speak to her again”, one said that title was

not important and one would ask a colleague as they would probably have forgotten her name. One participant did not answer the question.

The table below shows a breakdown of ethnicity, age, and gender and indicates that those who accept the use of titles are likely to be older. Of all male participants 10 of the 36 who completed the questionnaire were happy to use a title, similarly with the female participants showing 6 out of the 14 content to use titles. This indicates that one-third of participants demonstrate a tendency toward higher power distance in this situation. Two-thirds of participants showed low power distance and there was an even distribution in terms of age, gender and ethnicity.

Table 8. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of high or low power distance attitude toward immigrant colleagues by addressing them using a title

High Power Distance32%					Low Power Distance68%				
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha		
*(- 1)	5	(10%)	11	(22%)	6	(12%)	28	(56%)	
Gender	M	3	M	7	M	3	M	23	
	F	2	F	4	F	3	F	5	
Age	Y = 0	O = 5	Y = 3	O = 8	Y = 3	O = 3	Y = 11	O = 17	

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was an older male and chose to comment

* 1 person who did not answer the question was an older Pakeha male

Results changed slightly when the scenario was presented again, but this time Mrs Mortenson was a fellow New Zealander. Nineteen out of 53 participants would ask Mrs Mortenson for her first name and then call her by that name, 7 would find out her first name from a colleague and then call her by that name, 3 would call her “Mrs Mortenson” but think she is a ‘snooty person’, 12 would be happy to call her “Mrs Mortenson”, 1 participant did not comment, and 11 chose to comment. Seven

commented that they would ask her how she would like to be addressed either as “Mrs Mortenson” or by her first name, and one added the comment that if her first name was not given he would think she is a ‘snooty’ person as this is not how people act; two would ask immediately for her first name and if denied one would not speak to her again; one said that it was not important, and one would ask a colleague as she would probably have forgotten her name.

The situations measuring power distance showed a slight difference between interacting with a migrant colleague or a New Zealand colleague. The results show that those who were comfortable with higher power distance are more likely to be older participants.

Table 9. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of high or low power distance attitude toward fellow New Zealand colleagues through use of name titles

High Power Distance 29.5%					Low Power Distance 70.5%			
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	5 (9.8%)		10 (19.6%)		6 (11.7%)		30 (58.8%)	
Gender	M	3	M	5	M	3	M	24
	F	2	F	5	F	3	F	6
Age	Y = 0	O = 5	Y = 2	O = 8	Y = 3	O = 3	Y = 12	O = 18

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was older male and chose to comment

*1 person who did not answer the question was an older Pakeha male

In conclusion, results indicate that power distance does contribute a little to adjusting communication with migrant colleagues. New Zealanders are generally low power distance but do afford more power in certain situations. There is a

tendency for older male New Zealanders to be of slightly higher power distance than other participants. There is very minimal change in communication style or response whether communicating with a migrant or New Zealand colleague.

5.4.3 High and Low Context Communication

High and low context was measured by two questions from section B cross-tabulated with two scenarios from section C.

The replies to the first question on high and low context communication strongly indicate that participants use direct messages indicating low context culture. Ninety-seven per cent of participants believed “people should say what they mean”. Twenty-two participants strongly agreed, 25 agreed, five moderately agreed while only one moderately disagreed.

A breakdown of ethnicity, age, and gender is shown in the table below and makes a strong case for New Zealanders’ preference being low context communication. Among those who disagreed with the statement was a lone older Pakeha male.

Table 10. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of agreement or disagreement with the statement “people should say what they mean”

Agreement 98%					Disagreement 2%			
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	11	(21.1%)	40	(76.9%)	0		1	(1.9%)
Gender	M	6	M	29	M	0	M	1
	F	5	F	11	F	0	F	0
Age	Y = 3	O = 8	Y = 14	O = 26	Y = 0	O = 0	Y = 0	O = 1

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was older male who agreed

The second question asked participants to respond to the extent which they agreed or disagreed with the statement “when a message is ambiguous it means that person is hiding something”. Five participants strongly agreed with this statement with 1 selecting moderately agree, 12 agreed, 17 moderately agreed, 11 moderately disagreed whilst 8 disagreed with the statement.

Again results show that New Zealanders are more likely to use low context communication style, however, a higher number than in question one appear to be higher context in this situation - and among those who agreed an even distribution of participants in regard to age, gender, and ethnicity was shown. Those who disagreed with this statement, indicating either a higher context style or respect for a higher context style, were likely to be older Pakeha male participants.

Table 11. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of agreement or disagreement on how an ambiguous message is perceived

		Agreement 63.5%		Disagreement 36.5%	
Ethnicity		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)		10 (19.2%)	23 (44.2%)	1 (1.9%)	18 (34.6%)
Gender		M 6		M 17	
		F 4		F 6	
Age		Y = 3	O = 7	Y = 9	O = 14
		Y = 0	O = 1	Y = 5	O = 13

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was an older male who agreed

Two scenarios were posed for high and low context communication, the first¹¹ was directed at how participants would respond with colleagues using a high context style of communication, and the second¹² concentrating more on the directness versus indirectness of a message.

For the first question, participants were asked how they would react to a colleague from a migrant culture in a team meeting who asks a question and takes a long time to get to the point, and when finished you do not really understand what s/he meant. Thirty-five participants said they would ask her/him directly what s/he meant, and 1 participant said they would ask her/him both directly and indirectly to avoid embarrassing the person. Eleven would ask in an indirect way so as to avoid embarrassment to the person, and 3 participants would avoid answering the question and begin discussing something else. Three participants commented saying "Repeat back to them what you think they have said and get them to point out where there may have been a misunderstanding", "Paraphrase to try to gain an understanding "So what you are saying is", and one said "can't say I have been in this situation".

Results indicate that a higher number of participants would use direct communication with colleagues in this situation, with the majority of these participants being older, and a comparatively higher number of both Pakeha and Maori females, thus demonstrating a preference for a low context communication style in this situation. A quarter of Pakeha participants and over a third of the male

¹¹ Scenario 1 in the questionnaire

¹² Scenario 3 in the questionnaire

participants would use a higher context style or avoid answering, demonstrating that a higher context communication style is preferred in this situation.

Table 12. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of high or low context communication used when not understanding an immigrant colleague in a meeting

High Context				27.5%		Low Context		72.5%	
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha		
*(- 1)	4	(7.8%)	10	(19.6%)	7	(13.7%)	30	(58.8%)	
Gender	M	4	M	8	M	2	M	21	
	F	0	F	2	F	5	F	9	
Age	Y = 1	O = 3	Y = 5	O = 5	Y = 2	O = 5	Y = 7	O = 23	

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was an older male who uses low context communication
 * 1 older Pakeha male chose not to comment

On the other hand, when the same scenario was presented to participants where a New Zealand colleague asked the question, 37 would ask her/him directly to explain what s/he meant and 13 would ask in an indirect manner to avoid embarrassing the person. Two people commented “Repeat back your understanding of their question and get them to explain where you may have got it wrong”, and “paraphrase to try to gain an understanding “So what you are saying is”.

A breakdown of ethnicity, age, and gender is shown in table 13 (on the next page) and indicates minimal change with only one Pakeha female changing to a lower context style of communication when communicating with New Zealand colleagues.

Table 13. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of high or low context communication used when not understanding a New Zealand colleague in a meeting

High Context				25.5%		Low Context		74.5%	
Ethnicity	Maori			Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	4 (7.8%)			9 (17.6%)		7 (13.7%)		31 (60.7%)	
Gender	M	4		M	8		M	21	
	F	0		F	1		F	5	
Age	Y = 1	O = 3		Y = 2	O = 7		Y = 2	O = 5	

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was an older male and uses low context communication

*1 older Pakeha male did not answer the question

* 1 person did not answer the question

In the second scenario participants were asked how they would respond to a colleague who communicated with them in a very direct manner which they found offensive. When interacting with a migrant colleague 18 participants said they would tell their colleague they found their manner offensive and two selected a second option; one being they would try to avoid that person as much as possible and the other would accept that is just the way they are, six would say nothing but have negative feelings toward her/him, three would avoid her/him as much as possible and 18 would accept that this is just the way s/he is. Six participants commented as follows:

1. "Can't say I've been in this position",
2. "It depends if the communication is professional or just personal with no foundation, if it is blunt plus professional no problem, if it is blunt plus personal I would use option A above",

3. "Depends on the person either D or A",
4. "Speak to your colleague and explain what it is that offends you, talk about it",
5. "Speak back in a blunt manner", and
6. "I would ask them if they have to be so blunt, as I would find it easier to face them in more moderate tone".

The table below shows a breakdown of ethnicity, age, and gender and indicates a fairly even split between participants using high and low context communication styles, but with a slightly higher number of participants using high context communication in this situation. A higher number of older participants, 19 compared with 10 from the previous situation, preferred high context communication in this situation.

Table 14. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of high or low context communication used when responding to immigrant colleagues whose communication manner they found offensive

	High Context 54%				Low Context 46%			
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	7	(14%)	20	(40%)	4	(8%)	19	(38%)
Gender	M	4	M	11	M	2	M	16
	F	3	F	9	F	2	F	3
Age	Y = 1	O = 6	Y = 7	O = 13	Y = 2	O = 2	Y = 3	O = 16

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was older male and uses low context communication

* 1 person did not answer the question and one person chose to comment

When the scenario was presented again with the colleague being a New Zealander 21 participants would tell their colleague they found her/his manner offensive and

two selected a second option; one being s/he would try to avoid that person as much as possible and the other would accept that is just the way s/he are, 5 would say nothing and have negative feelings toward her/him, 2 would avoid her/him as much as possible, and 16 would accept that is just the way s/he are. Seven participants chose to comment as follows:

1. "Same as colleague from immigrant culture",
2. "Explain how they appear to be coming across as they might not realise",
3. "A or D (tell your colleague you find their manner offensive and accept that is just the way they are)",
4. "Discuss with them what offends you and come to an arrangement with the best way you can communicate",
5. "Speak back in a blunt manner", "I would ask him / her not to be so blunt as it is easier to take in if in a more moderate manner",
6. "Try to see and hear their side and then return to hearing what they are getting at".

A breakdown of ethnicity, age, and gender is shown in table 15 (on the next page). Among those who use high context communication, there was a significant decrease from seven to three for Maori when communicating with New Zealand colleagues. Within this change area, the numbers doubled for low context communicators among older Maori.

There was a significant change in the age range for Pakeha participants, with a doubling of numbers for the younger group. However, there was no change in the

Pakeha numbers, thereby reflecting a lower number of older participants.

Table 15. Ethnicity, age, and gender in terms of high or low high or low context communication used when responding to fellow New Zealand colleagues whose communication manner they found offensive

High Context46%					Low Context54%			
Ethnicity	Maori		Pakeha		Maori		Pakeha	
*(- 1)	3	(6%)	20	(40%)	8	(16%)	19	(38%)
Gender	M	2	M	13	M	4	M	16
	F	1	F	7	F	4	F	3
Age	Y = 1	O = 2	Y = 8	O = 12	Y = 3	O = 5	Y = 6	O = 13

*1 person who did not show ethnicity was an older male and chose to comment.

* 1 person did not answer the question

In conclusion, results show that context in communication contributed to participants' adjusting their communication when communicating with migrant colleagues. Participants generally prefer a low context style of communication and results showed almost unanimous agreement: participants believed that people should say what they mean. This was supported by two-thirds of the sample agreeing with the statement "when a message is ambiguous it means the person is hiding something", showing the preference for direct communication. However, the remaining third, who were mainly older Pakeha males, disagreed, indicating acceptance of ambiguous messages. The majority of participants, 37, were also more likely to directly ask their migrant colleagues if they did not understand what was meant, again showing preference for low context communication. However 14 of the participants would use a more indirect style to save embarrassing the person. These results were changed by one participant, who preferred to be more direct when interacting with New Zealand colleagues.

Finally the last scenario for context in communication shows important changes. If participants are spoken to by migrant colleagues in a direct manner which they found offensive, more participants - 27 - would avoid her/him, have negative feeling toward her/him or accept that is just the way s/he are, indicating a more high context and non-confrontational style. However a high number, 23, would confront their migrant colleague, again indicating low context communication. Conversely, when it was a New Zealand colleague speaking directly and in an offensive manner, the numbers changed with 27 choosing to confront their colleague while 23 would not confront them. The greatest change was for Maori, with eight Maori choosing to use direct communication and confront their New Zealand colleague, compared with one using direct communication with migrant colleagues. This indicates that, in this situation, some Maori do adjust their communication style depending on whether a migrant or New Zealand colleague is involved.

5.5 Summary

In conclusion it can be said that New Zealand employees of Excell do adjust their communication when communicating with migrant colleagues, however, it depends on the situation as to the extent to which they do so. Participants indicated low stereotypic attitudes for the most part, however, when given a particular race to comment on, the possibility of stereotyping was slightly higher. Most participants formed their own opinion about both migrant and New Zealand colleagues disregarding comments from colleagues. However, one-fifth of participants indicated they would avoid migrant colleagues. The group of participants avoiding migrant colleagues were older Pakeha males.

A group of older Pakeha males also accepted higher power distance more than did most participants. Overall, participants indicated that they were low power distance

communicators and expected to be involved in the decision-making process with superiors. However, they were prepared to allow more power when it was used by superiors. Power distance made little impact on the communication process and participants viewed power distance the same whether it involved a migrant or New Zealand colleague. However, impact on the communication process is likely to occur when participants preferring a low power distance come into contact with a superior preferring high power distance.

Finally, the results demonstrate that context in communication contributes to participants adjusting their communication style when communicating with migrant colleagues. Participants preferred a low context style of communication and believed people should say what they mean. This was supported by 73% of participants who would ask directly for clarification if they did not understand the message sent by a migrant colleague. The final scenario showed important changes with 45% of participants confronting a migrant colleague they found offensive, however, the remaining 55% would either avoid the person or accept that this was just the way they were. However, when the scenario was presented again directed at a New Zealand colleague 54% would confront the New Zealand colleague. The greatest change communicating between migrant and New Zealand colleagues was for Maori participants who were more likely to confront a New Zealand colleague than a migrant colleague.

The number of participants who would not adjust their communication is worthy of more study. As highlighted earlier in the study making no change in communication can create as much difficulty as adjusting communication. As Chaney and Martin (2004) suggest, whereas communication is a process, culture is the structure through which the communication is formulated and interpreted. Therefore, when

participants interpret messages from migrant colleagues using their own cultural structure, they are more likely to misunderstand or misinterpret the message. The results support this and have shown differences in culture have affected communication between migrant and New Zealand colleagues at Excell.

Chapter 6. Discussion

6.0 Introduction

In general we can conclude, from the main cross-cultural differences highlighted in the results thus far, that New Zealand employees are likely to adjust their communication to align with their own stereotypic beliefs and are less likely to change their communication styles to accommodate differences not customary within New Zealand culture. The importance of these findings is discussed with respect to cross-cultural communication within the Excell workplace.

Firstly, the discussion focuses on stereotypic attitudes and participants' motivation for stereotyping given a particular situation. Secondly, the level of power distance of participants is considered and discussed and the way it influences communication across cultures. In addition, politeness versus power distance and how the two interlink and may have influenced results is debated. Thirdly, the results surrounding low and high context communication are discussed and consideration is given to the way context might affect communication among colleagues at Excell when one person does not adjust her/his communication style to accommodate the other.

The following section '*New Zealand in the Theoretical Context*' the position of New Zealand within the theoretical framework presented in this study is recognised and whether participants' perceptions on stereotyping, power distance, and context are in agreement with previous research findings is considered. The theoretical model based on Hofstede's model of power distance and Hall's model of high and low context communication are discussed, in particular, the findings regarding New

Zealand dimensions are emphasised. The final two sections discuss the limitations of the study in detail and identify a number of directions for future study.

6.1 Stereotyping

Previous research has demonstrated that stereotyping is a pervasive human tendency and that in a culturally diverse setting, people routinely process personal information through mental filters based on social categories. (Cox, 1993; Lonner, & Malpass, 1994; Ting-Toomey, 1999). The findings of this study confirm this and found that participants were likely to use personal stereotyping, that is, forming a stereotype about a person through personal experiences and limited contacts with her/him (Ting-Toomey, 1999). The results suggest that participants generally do not consciously stereotype negatively, rather, if given the chance, they will find out what a person is like for themselves and make their own judgement - or believe they would. This may illustrate the statement made by Feldman, MacDonald, and Ah Sam (1980) who believe that New Zealanders stereotype on an occupational rather than an ethnic basis. Either way, once we categorise a person as a member of a particular group, that classification affects how we characterise her/his behaviour and communicate with her/him (Gandy, 1998). A good example of this is the ten participants (20% of sample) who indicated that they would avoid a migrant colleague for fear that they might not be able to understand her/him. Two important points, avoidance and adjusting communication, need to be discussed regarding this finding.

6.1.1 Avoidance

Avoiding migrant colleagues because participants fear they may not be understood is stereotyping in itself. How can they know if they will, or will not, be understood if

they do not attempt to communicate? Earley (2002) suggests that personal non-belief in one's own capability to understand colleagues from migrant cultures may lead to avoidance after experiencing early failures. Seven the 10 participants were older, which suggests they may have had little opportunity to interact with migrants until recently and be unsure of how to approach migrant colleagues. As Allport (1954), Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern (2002), and Wiseman and Koester (1993) point out, with increased cross-cultural exposure, people become more adept at communicating and interacting with migrants as well as showing more empathy toward cultural differences.

We can also draw on another explanation from Detweiler (1980) who saw a strong connection between the way in which people adapt to a new situation in unfamiliar contexts and the way they categorise a person from another culture. People who easily adapt in unfamiliar contexts are more likely to categorise in a broad sense and differences are more easily accommodated. However, if people found it difficult to adjust they were more prone to categorise in a narrower sense and were more likely to make stereotypic assertions. The seven participants who avoided communicating with migrant colleagues were older and it is likely that they are less comfortable with unfamiliar contexts, having experienced a more European-centric society for most of their lives. It could, therefore, be suggested that these seven participants would categorise in a narrow sense leading them to believe that migrant colleagues from different cultures would not understand them.

Spencer-Rogers and McGovern (2002) believe that our stereotypic beliefs are well-established sources of unfavourable attitudes towards others and are compounded if there has been little interaction or interpersonal contact. The comments from the informal interviews support this, and a common theme was that *"they don't talk to*

us so we don't talk to them" and *"I don't really have much to do with them if I don't have to"*. This comment also indicates in-group tendencies where members of an in-group consign people from different cultures to an out-group. Thomas (2002) believes that to maintain our self-image we discriminate in favour of the group with which we identify. A good example of this is the interviewees who did not talk to migrant colleagues thus assigning their migrant colleagues to an out-group. Although this study was conducted at Excell avoidance is likely to be a problem for other multicultural workplaces given that 20% of this small sample avoided migrant colleagues. For organisations this may be of concern and, as Oakes, Haslam, and Tuner (1994) suggest - when we hold a stereotype of a person we use it and, if we believe that stereotype, the belief will always influence our perception of that person.

Fiske (1998) suggests that outgroups are evaluated negatively, stereotyped and homogenised. Therefore, if we believe in a negative stereotype, it is likely that that belief will prevent us from communicating with migrant colleagues and discouraging interaction, thus fixing the stereotype. The comments made during the informal interviews *"they don't talk to us so we don't talk to them"*, *"nobody liked him – he was a bit of an ###"*, and *"I don't have much to do with them if I don't have to – the girls upstairs told me they keep making mistakes"* supports this. However, the results of the questionnaire contradict this belief and 80% of participants indicated that for the most part they did not stereotype negatively and did not avoid migrant colleagues.

6.1.2 Adjusting Communication

The results provide support for the premise that stereotyping contributes to New Zealand employees adjusting their communication. These results are not startling,

nevertheless they do confirm that by avoiding their migrant colleagues those who do so have adjusted their communication, that is, not to communicate with them. This could be problematic, especially, if participants are in management positions where it is crucial for effective communication to take place in order for the organisation to be successful. As many researchers (Gudykunst & Kim, 1994; Kim, 1991; Landis, Bennett, & Bennett, 2004; Wood, 1999) point out, inaccurate stereotypes lead to inaccurate predictors of others' behaviour, misunderstandings, and decreased effectiveness in communication. Although this study did not differentiate participants by position, if any of the participants who chose avoidance have managerial responsibilities, ineffective communication is a likely problem for the organisation.

Another key point which was raised in the informal interviews was "*of course we speak to them differently*" which raises a further issue of stereotyping. Our stereotypes create expectations and as Gudykunst et al. (2005) believes "often lead us to misinterpret messages we receive from people who are different and lead people who are different to misinterpret the messages they receive from us" (p. 3). Although not conclusive because the particular question was not asked, there is an assumption that if New Zealand colleagues communicate differently to migrant colleagues from the way they communicate with New Zealand colleagues, this could lead to migrant colleagues feeling disrespected, especially if they are fluent in English. A good example of this was highlighted in the interviews when one participant said "*Of course we speak to them differently so they will understand*". Another example could be communicating with a colleague by speaking very slowly and loudly because her/his appearance leads one to believe s/he is a migrant (*Managing Diversity*, 1999) however, s/he may be fluent in English, or born and bred in New Zealand.

6.1.3 Stereotyping by Ethnicity

When participants were given a particular ethnicity to comment on (Once a Chinaman always a Chinaman), the numbers who demonstrated stereotyping tendencies changed from 20% to 28% and this is worthy of discussion. Smith and Bond (1993) suggest that when we see obvious physical differences in a person we automatically assign her/him to an out-group and, furthermore, may see interacting with her/him as disloyal to one's own in-group, thus increasing anxiety and "the probable outcome of such an encounter is avoidance" (Smith, & Bond, 1993, p. 233). The findings of this study offer support to Smith and Bond's theoretical proposition and found nine of the 10 people, who would avoid communicating with a migrant colleague, also believed *once a Chinaman always a Chinaman*. Although the question (once a Chinaman always a Chinaman) only indicates the possibility of stereotyping when cross referenced with other questions on stereotyping strongly suggests that they do adjust their communication because of stereotyping.

Participants who agreed with the statement indicate that they believe people do not change and their perception and stereotype of a Chinaman will affect the extent that communication is likely to be adjusted. How we adjust our communication towards a specific ethnicity, because of stereotypic beliefs held, is worthy of more in-depth study especially for organisations that employ large numbers of specific groups of migrants. A good example of this that supports further study, from this research is the comment by the CEO who said *"From experience I have found that there are certain cultures that do not fit in very well at Excell... therefore for I am very wary of taking those people on"*.

Avoiding communication poses potential problems for some work-places, such as Excell where efficiency and/or success depend on communication and interaction between colleagues and the consequences being that the safety of workers is compromised, or there is a lack of timely information leading to inefficiencies.

The third question in the questionnaire gauged whether or not stereotyping was a factor in adjusting communication, and focused on the influence colleagues had on participants. It appears that when a colleague stereotypes a migrant colleague by telling participants that “they’re from overseas and a bit thick”, participants were more likely to ignore their colleague’s comments and give the migrant colleague the benefit of the doubt and try to understand her/him. This seems to contradict the fact that we are more likely to trust our own colleagues’ judgement (in-group member). However, the results did show that participants were slightly more likely to believe their own colleague when s/he stereotyped a fellow New Zealand colleague saying “they’re from up north and a bit thick”. Lustig and Koester (2003) may be of assistance here, explaining that, “stereotypes based on second-hand opinions – that is, stereotypes derived from the opinions of others or from media – tend to be more extreme, less variable from one person to another ... are more resistant to change than stereotypes based on direct personal experiences and interactions” (p. 152). As this comment suggests, if we know our colleague is not likely to have had much interaction with migrant colleagues, we are nevertheless likely to be influenced by her/him.

6.2 Power Distance

New Zealand is considered an egalitarian society and this is supported by researchers such as Beamer and Varner (2005), Moran and Reisenberger (1994), and the results of this study also support this. In a democratic society, decisions

are made by the group resulting in members having greater commitment to the decision; and leaders guide rather than control (Chase et al., 2000). Low power distance is supported by the first set of results for power distance which show that participants strongly felt they ought to be involved and consulted in the decision-making process with their managers. In saying that, 20% of participants in Excell were in the higher power distance category and a slightly higher number of older men fell into this group, possibly indicating a different life experience wherein hierarchy was expected and/or reflecting the cultural change in New Zealand over the years. This was also reflected in the earlier statement from Feldman et al. (1980), in the stereotyping discussion, who believed New Zealanders were likely to stereotype by occupation, but as the results of this research show, 20% of older male participants indicated that they stereotype by ethnicity - which may indicate a generational change as it is 26 years since the original research was published.

What is not clear is what type of decisions participants were thinking of as this was not specified in the questionnaire. Many of the participants work autonomously and have expertise in what they do and, more often than not, managers are somewhat removed from their situation, therefore, this context could be the basis for the strong inclination for being consulted in the decision making process and may not reflect other multicultural organisation contexts.

In New Zealand within the Maori culture, decision-making is based on consultation, discussion, and consensus (Walker, 1992; Tremaine, 1990). Although three Maori participants agreed that managers should make decisions without consulting employees, this may indicate acceptance of hierarchy rather than decision-making style. Consultation when making decisions is in direct conflict with most of the migrant workers found at Excell, who are from high power distance cultures and

whose “cultures are more likely to prefer an autocratic or centralised decision-making style” (Lustig & Koester, 2003, p. 119).

Power is accepted in some situations, and 23 participants agreed that it was necessary for a manager to use power and authority when dealing with subordinates. The present study provides support for previous research by Jago and colleagues (1993) who found, that for some managers, they were “more likely to become autocratic in scenarios in which subordinate conflict was likely” (cited in Dorfman, & House, 2004, p. 61). What may be of interest to this discussion is the change of terminology used for question one and question two in the questionnaire for power distance. Question one used the term *employees* and question two used the term *subordinates* and this change of terminology might have affected how people answered the question (and is an area that would need clarification in further future studies). As Pennycook (1994) suggests, language is complex and political words continually raise the issue of who is being represented.

As Ng and Burke (2004) point out “those individuals high on power distance are more accepting of strong hierarchal structures and status differentials, and thus have lower expectations of fair treatment” (p. 318). This leads to the likelihood that participants preferring high power distance would not need to adjust their communication with migrant colleagues who come from a higher power distance culture. However, 28 participants in Excell disagreed, demonstrating that they were less likely to accept unequal distribution of power in the workplace. Fifty five percent of participants indicated a preference for lower power distance whilst 45% of participants indicated preference for higher power distance, showing that employees ranged along the continuum with some being at opposite ends. As a result there is potential for possible conflict between colleagues who are at either

end of the continuum. This conclusion is supported by Taylor (1993) who points out "when workgroups are diverse and the power distribution is heavily skewed in favour of a certain group or groups, it will be more difficult for members of different culture groups to work harmoniously together and this may hamper organizational performance" (p. 189).

The second question of the questionnaire, measuring power distance, investigated the extent to which power distance affects our communication through status by use of title, and showed some extreme results from total acceptance of using a title to never speaking to that person again if she wanted to be addressed using her title. What we need to be aware of in this discussion is how New Zealanders use titles. An example of this would be the discussion appearing in the *New Zealand Herald* in the first week of June 2006 regarding the use of the title of "Dr" prefacing reports by the TV 3 medical journalist, Dr Lilian Ing. The discussion included the controversial use of the title "Dr" not commonly used by professional people in New Zealand (New Zealand Herald, 5 -10 June 2006). In hierarchical societies titles are critical and show respect for a person of higher stature than oneself, but in egalitarian societies (such as New Zealand) people acknowledge titles only out of politeness and/or respect in terms of age and experience, or familiarity with the person.

The findings of this study also provide support for Beamer and Varner's (2005) theoretical concept that egalitarian societies, prefer a collegial to an authoritarian tone in business and this is made easier with modern English usage ("plain English") which does not distinguish between the familiar and formal mode of address in speech. Therefore, when New Zealanders work with colleagues from cultures where status and titles are important, it is likely to cause friction and

consequently they will adjust the way they communicate with these colleagues. For example, participants commented *"if denied I would never speak to her again"* when asked about the use of titles and another said *"that is not how people address each other in this industry / time"*. This comment has raised an interesting point by referring to what is acceptable in this specific industry. Like national culture, organisations have their own culture which draws from both national and industry culture (Beamer & Varner, 2005; Clampitt, 2001; Capon, 2000). What is an acceptable communication in one industry may not be acceptable in another and is worthy of further industry-based research.

The comment made in the informal interviews where participants felt that some migrant colleagues look *"down on us as if we were just workers"* can be linked to power distance. In low power distance societies each individual is respected and appreciated for what s/he has to offer and expects access to upward mobility in both her/his class and jobs (Carl, Gupta, & Javidan, 2004). As the results indicate, two-thirds of the sample would not be comfortable using titles and having to use titles could result in their feeling as though they were *"just workers"* and not equals.

Follow up questions showed that interviewees were thinking of Asian and South African colleagues who were in positions of authority. The cultures mentioned are more likely to be high power distance and this may explain why the interviewees were feeling that they were being treated with little respect. High power distance cultures see power as a basic factor in society and superiors consider themselves different from subordinates, and subordinates consider themselves different from superiors (Gudykunst, Lee, Nishida, & Ogawa, 2005). At Excell equality is promoted (*Excell Policy*, 2005) showing low power distance, therefore colleagues from high power distance cultures are in conflict with the organisation's values. A

good example to support this is the comment by the CEO who said *"Where I have noticed problems is at the management level. People of different cultures are not a problem at the workers level but I have had problems at the management level. I have found the problem is mostly to do with power and authority and how they treat their staff"*.

This conclusion is also supported by Fox's (1993) concept of *cultural overlap*. "Cultural overlap refers to the extent to which the norm sets of two or more culture groups are similar" (p. 171). He goes on to say that members from non-majority cultural backgrounds would find it more difficult to assimilate.

Respect is shown in an informal way in New Zealand. Showing respect was indicated in the results from eight participants who would enquire as to the way Mrs Mortenson, from the scenario in the questionnaire, would like to be addressed and then address her as she wished. In New Zealand the tradition of showing respect is changing and cultural rules are not so clear any longer. What was once seen as rude, calling a person by her/his first name, especially an older person, is now becoming the norm and is expected.

As one of the participants put it, when he was talking about using titles to address a person *"it's not how we do things around here"* when talking about a migrant colleague. With the exception of one participant, there was no change in people's communication whether they were speaking with a migrant colleague or New Zealand colleague, thus showing that the use of titles is acceptable for those participants from higher power distance but not acceptable for those of lower power distance no matter whom they are addressing. We can conclude from this that communication adjustment takes place when two people at opposing ends of the power distance continuum interact and neither is willing to accommodate the

other, resulting in either one person not communicating, avoiding, or perceiving the other person in a negative way.

6.3 High and Low Context Communication

If we use this sample to portray New Zealanders, we could say that New Zealanders believe that *people should say what they mean*, with all participants, bar one, agreeing with this statement. Ninety-nine per cent of participants agreed indicating that they are from a low context culture. This result provides support to DeVito, O'Rourke, and O'Neil (2001) who believe that in much of New Zealand society we are taught to be direct. However, it is important to note that both high and low context communication does occur in every society (Chase et al., 2000).

As mentioned above, the results show this sample as preferring low context. Yet if we look at their workplace, they work with colleagues who are Asian, Indian Fijian, and Pacific Islands, who are more likely to be high context. This was reflected in the informal interviews where New Zealand employees commented that they sometimes found messages from migrant colleagues difficult to understand as the message itself was confusing and they were *"not sure what they're getting at"*. Often this resulted in the New Zealander ignoring or avoiding that person and as Harvey, & Griffith (2002), point out "failure to effectively communicate in intercultural relationships - whether with one's employees, interorganizational partners, or customers - can hamper relationship development, thus diminishing value delivery" (p. 456). A good example of this was brought up by one of the interviewees who said *"we just get on with it, most people don't have a choice; we are just put into teams and are expected to work together ... sometimes there is a bit of grief, but it is usually with the temps and then we just tell the temp agency we don't want/need them anymore"*. He went on to say that everyone is busy with their

work and does not have time to try to decipher what a migrant colleague is saying who is difficult to understand.

Further investigation of the above comments revealed that the employees interviewed were thinking of Pacific Island or Asian colleagues particularly when they commented on not understanding the message. A good example of this is a comment made by the interviewees who said *"Sometimes it annoys me, especially when they just nod when you tell them what to do. I don't know if they really understand"* and *"The girls they work with told me they keep making mistakes – but they always say they understand"*. As identified earlier in the study, the Asian and Pacific Island people are more likely to be high context communicators, thus their communication style may be the challenge when encountering their New Zealand colleagues. As Hall (1994) suggests, without knowing the codes of another culture's communication style there is more likelihood of misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Also, without knowledge of these codes, we try to explain that other's behaviour through our own cultural guidelines, which may be inadequate, and it is likely to lead to an unfavourable personality attribute about the other (Smith, & Bond, 1993).

If New Zealand colleagues do not adjust their communication, there is more scope for misunderstandings and loss of face or offence to be taken by high context colleagues with whom they work, thus contributing to negativity between colleagues and ultimately the breaking down of workplace relations and communication. Comments from the informal interviews support this saying *"some of them (migrant colleagues) always say "yes" even when they don't understand"*. In the literature review the concept of 'face' was discussed and this comment is likely to be a way of saving face for the migrant employee. Beamer and Varner

(2005) suggest that by expressing agreement a person discounts the ability to cause loss of face. They go on to say that indirectness should be used if delivering any suggestion of weakness or criticism. Gudykunst et al. (1998) explain that in high context cultures a direct or confrontational style of communicating can be perceived as highly threatening and unsettling to one's own face. From this study we might assume that migrant workers at Excell are more likely to have to adjust if they want to fit in, especially, if direct communication causes them to lose face. Chase et al. (2000) also support this view that migrants are more likely to adjust, and explain that when migrants join the workforce they are keen to fit in and work hard to adjust.

What is interesting here is that Maori are perceived to be higher context than Pakeha but, in this case, were found to be low context thus bearing out Hall's (1976) original findings, that New Zealanders in general are low context. This could be also explained by in-group attitude and by the fact that when they are in the workplace, some Maori are more direct, but when in their own environment they revert to a higher context communication style. This finding is also worthy of further study for understanding how any culture, not just Maori, adjusts the communication style to the situation in order to be accepted.

Further investigation at Excell did result in some participants using a higher context style but again this was not particularly true for Maori. When participants were asked if *a message is ambiguous, does this mean that the person asking it is hiding something?* - there were a significant number who disagreed, showing a propensity for a higher context style where messages are viewed as more ambiguous by low context communicators. The shift to higher context was mainly from older Pakeha males at Excell and seems to contradict writings by Gray (2002)

who believes that men are task-orientated and like to get straight to the point. However, it appears from the results and the discussion in this research, that any shift to higher context is from older Pakeha participants and this links back to the argument that it may be linked to the difference in generation and upbringing.

Further high context tendencies were found in the replies to the questionnaire when participants needed to clarify a question from a colleague in a meeting. Results showed that 14 participants would ask for clarification in an indirect manner to avoid embarrassing the person. Thus we can say that these participants, in this situation, use high context style and would match the style of most of the migrant colleagues found at Excell. This result might also be explained using politeness theory and "evidence is accumulating that in various cultures", both high and low context, "persons vary the politeness of their behaviour toward another as a function of the same relationship or variables (Smith, & Bond, 1993, p. 137). However, a greater number would ask directly what their colleague meant. Using such a direct communication style in a multicultural workplace may lead to loss of face for indirect communicators because of the manner in which they respond to direct confrontation, especially in front of a group, and may result in communication breakdown or eventually the resignation of the high context person. As Dhal (2000) explains it is not only loss of face but the high/low context concept may also play an important role in the difficulties encountered when a person from a high context country communicates with a person from a low context country. The remarks made in the informal interview where participants said, about their migrant colleagues, at times they "*were not sure what they're getting at*" provide support for Dhal's explanation. Further comments from the interviews showed that if interviewees found it hard to make sense of what their migrant colleague meant they were likely to ignore or avoid that person in the future.

The final scenario in the questionnaire also confirmed that both high and low context communication do occur in a society (Chase et al., 2000) and, from this research, we can conclude that it is very much dependent on the situation. New Zealanders showed both low and high context tendencies when having to confront a migrant colleague who spoke to them in a blunt way that they felt was offensive. Ting-Toomey (1985) and Chua and Gudykunst (1987) found that members of low context cultures are more likely to use confrontational strategies in conflict situation while high context cultures tend to use non-confrontational and indirect communication strategies more than members of low context cultures. Half the sample, used a higher context style in this situation, ranging from avoiding the colleague, saying nothing but having negative feelings toward them, or accepting that was just the way they were. What is of concern for the workplace is the issue of avoidance and, depending on the interaction required, how it might affect communication and interaction within the workplace. In saying that, "organisations often operate in a variety of contexts, having a number of different subcultures ... and thus working in one part of the organisation, one should not presume to know the context of the whole organisation" (Korac-Kakabadse, et al., 2001). Conversely, interacting with a high context and high power distance colleague using a low context style could also cause complications, especially, if that colleague is in a management position where s/he might not find that behaviour acceptable.

When the scenario was presented again, this time the colleague was a fellow New Zealander there was no change for Pakeha, but significant change for Maori participants. The results showed that Maori were fairly tolerant of migrant colleague's speaking to them in a blunt manner. However, this changed significantly if it was a fellow New Zealander. This could be explained by the

discrimination Maori have experienced for years and the fight for full partnership within New Zealand society (Poata-Smith 2004; Spoonley, Pearson, Macpherson & Sedgwick, 1994) and, therefore, will not allow themselves to be treated by a fellow New Zealanders in a disrespectful way.

6.4 New Zealand in the Theoretical Context

New Zealand is placed the fourth lowest in Hofstede's power index scoring 22, meaning that New Zealand is low power distance (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 44). The highest country on the index was Malaysia with 104 and the lowest was Austria with 11. Although the sample from this study was small, the responses from participants indicate that New Zealanders continue to prefer low power distance. In low power distance cultures employees express a preference for a consultative style of decision making and this was supported by participants in the questionnaire, with 74.6% of participants indicating that a manager should consult with staff when making decisions. However, 45% of participants indicated that a manager should have some power and authority when dealing with subordinates, thus showing movement to higher power distance for certain situations. There was little tolerance from participants regarding the use of titles, although it was slightly more acceptable to call a migrant colleague by her/his title than a New Zealand colleague; 68% of participants would not accept having to call their migrant colleague by a title and 70.5% of participants indicated that they would not call their New Zealand colleague by a title either. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) summarise low power distance as where there is limited dependence of subordinates on bosses, a preference for consultative decision making, and subordinates will easily approach and contradict their bosses.

The second main theory used in this study was that of Hall's high and low context. Context in communication relates to how much context is needed to get the message across. New Zealand is considered low context and preference is for direct messaging, use of nonverbal vocal expression, with words chosen for their particular meaning. However, DeVito, O'Rourke, and O'Neil (2001) in their discussion on how cultures differ, point out that Hall's research in New Zealand used a sample of mostly Pakeha people and the collectivist nature of Maori was not reflected in his research. Nevertheless the participants in this study appear to support low context communication style with 98% of participants believing people should say what they mean. The responses to the scenarios in the questionnaire also indicated a strong sense of low context, with 72.5% of participants asking directly for clarification when they did not understand a migrant colleague - which increased by 2% when dealing with a New Zealand colleague. Forty-six per cent were prepared to confront a migrant colleague whose manner they found offensive and 54% of participants would confront a fellow New Zealand colleague in a similar situation.

Why is this important to this study? Many of the migrant cultures in New Zealand are high power distance and high context cultures, therefore, these dimensions are likely to contribute to communication misunderstandings in the work environment. The indication is that if participants of this study do not adjust their communication, it will mean that either migrants will need to adjust their communication to local situations or that misunderstandings are likely to happen.

6.5 Limitations

6.5.1 The sample size

Although the sample size was relatively small and the results showed that New Zealand staff at Excell did adjust their communication, in order to attain a better picture of the extent to which the participants adjust their communication when communicating with migrant colleagues requires a larger sample size which would yield more accurate results.

6.5.2 Participant confusion over the use of two scenarios in the questionnaire

In the methodology section I briefly mentioned the limitations of the particular questionnaire style used for this study. The limitations were that to measure the extent to which the participants adjust their communication it was imperative that the same scenarios were presented twice: once when communicating with migrant colleagues and once when communicating with New Zealand colleagues, however, this did create some confusion. I speculate whether - had I not been there to answer their queries participants would have thought they had received two of the same questionnaires, and recognise this as a weakness of the questionnaire.

6.5.3 Perception from participants of who and what constitutes a migrant

Although I explained to participants what I meant by *migrant* I was concerned that participants may have been thinking of Asian only. Firstly, because there is a large Asian settlement in the area where many of the participants work and the settlement is not far from the depot, and secondly, Asians have been given a lot of bad press of late. However, I spoke to several participants to quell these doubts and they appear to have interpreted the classification correctly.

6.6 Future Study

Studies on culture are ongoing, largely because people, national and organisational cultures are forever changing. The findings of this study suggest a number of directions for future research and in many regards this study has raised more questions with respect to the role of cross cultural communication in a workplace context than it answers. Further study areas that have been highlighted in this study include:

- The extent of communication and/or interaction avoidance with migrant colleagues due to stereotyping or challenging encounters experienced. Twenty percent of participants avoided migrant colleagues because of stereotypic beliefs held, however the reasons were inconclusive and this is worthy of further study.
- How dimensions of culture affect the communication practices in different industries. An interesting comment made by a participant when talking about use of titles indicated that the "use of title was not acceptable in this industry". Research about how dimensions of culture impact communication in certain industries is worthy of more study.
- The extent to which employees adjust their communication with a migrant colleague by differentiating participants by occupational position held. That is, does the position held affect the communication style with migrant colleagues compared with New Zealand colleagues? In this study we did not differentiate participants by position; however, from some of the results it would be interesting to conduct research on how cultural dimensions impact on communication within different levels of an organisation.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

7.0 Introduction

This exploratory research has been an attempt to understand how New Zealand employees of Excell adjust their communication when communicating with migrant colleagues. Excell is one of many multicultural organisations in Auckland which have to contend with communication across cultures. The findings suggest that the cultural aspects of stereotyping, power distance and context in communication contribute to participants' adjusting their communication when communicating with migrant colleagues. The findings also suggest a number of directions for future research with respect to cross-cultural communication in the organisational context and are highlighted in the conclusions following.

The research showed that the dimensions of stereotyping and context in communication are more likely to have a greater impact on the extent to which participants adjust their communication when communicating with migrant colleagues whereas results for power distance show that participants are less likely to adjust their communication style to accommodate migrant colleagues. The following paragraphs deal with each dimension separately.

7.1 Conclusion to Stereotyping

This research accords with previous research in that expectations of how a person should behave and appear are based on our own cultural expectations of how a person should behave in a certain situation. When a colleague does not behave in the expected way, we stereotype her/him as odd or different and may be less inclined to communicate with her/him, or communicate with her/him in a style that

reflects the stereotypic belief held and are more inclined to assign them to an out-group. One of the more important findings of this study regarding stereotyping is that 20% of participants would avoid communicating with a migrant colleague because of stereotypic beliefs held. Although the participants did not actually say they stereotype, this result has been inferred from their answers collectively. Avoiding communicating with migrant colleagues shows an adjustment of communication: communication is not likely to take place between these participants and migrant colleagues. The main group of participants avoiding migrant colleagues were older Pakeha males and it is inconclusive if this was because of generational or cultural changes. Not communicating with migrant colleagues is an easy option but is not effective in a workplace situation and might lead to serious consequences. Further study of the extent of communication and/or interaction avoidance with migrant colleagues due to stereotyping is needed to understand how stereotyping impacts communication in the workplace. When migrants look or act differently from the host culture it is easy to stereotype and, without understanding the migrant in context, these stereotypes are often inaccurate and impact on the working environment.

7.2 Conclusion to Power Distance

Behaviours associated with high power distance are not easily accepted in New Zealand and can contribute to stereotyping as well as having an impact on communication with migrants. Overall, the study suggests participants preferred low power distance and expected to be involved in the decision-making process with superiors. However, when it came to power as authority being used by superiors more power was acceptable. As with stereotyping, it was a group of older Pakeha males who accepted higher power distance than most participants, perhaps indicating behavioural changes because of the different values of their

generation. In general, power distance made little impact on the communication process and participants viewed power distance in the same way whether it was exhibited by a migrant or New Zealand colleague. Even though participants indicated that they did not adjust their communication, impact on the communication process is likely to occur when participants preferring a low power distance come into contact with a migrant superior preferring high power distance. Further study to determine the extent to which employees adjust their communication with migrant colleagues because of the position they hold and the status expected may be helpful for organisations that experience problems between migrant and New Zealand staff.

7.3 Conclusion to Context in Communication

Finally, the study demonstrated that context in communication contributed to participants' adjusting their communication style when communicating with migrant colleagues. Overall, participants preferred a low context style of communication and believed people should say what they mean. A significant finding regarding context emerged from the final scenario regarding how a participant would respond to a colleague s/he found offensive. Forty-five per cent of participants would confront a migrant colleague they found offensive. However, the remaining 55% would either avoid her/him or accept that is "just the way they are", again showing adjustment of communication. However, when the scenario was presented again directed at a New Zealand colleague, 54% would confront the New Zealand colleague - a change of 9%. The significant finding was that Maori participants were more likely to confront a New Zealand colleague than a migrant colleague, therefore, adjusting their communication to accommodate migrant colleagues.

7.4 Last Words

Effective communication is important in any workplace, especially a multicultural workplace where misinterpretations and/or misunderstandings are likely to occur more often because of cultural differences. Our culture does impact the way we communicate with others and unless we consciously think about why the other person acts in the way they do we are likely to judge them using our own reference which can easily lead to misunderstandings. In the workplace we are often too busy to take time to understand a migrant colleague and as this study suggests often it is easier to just avoid them. As the CEO commented, "I am aware, through experience that particular cultures do not fit in well at Excell because of a clash of cultural values", demonstrating that culture does affect the way we communicate with others and suggesting that people from these cultures are less likely to be employed because of prior experiences.

However, it is important to remember that communication adjustment is not always negatively based as in avoidance, but can have a positive focus for example, when Maori colleagues adjusted their communication style to accommodate migrants and this should be borne in mind when considering further studies.

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Appendices

Appendix I Questionnaire

Appendix II Ethics Application

Appendix III Letter to participants

Appendix IV Notes from Informal Interviews

Appendix I – Questionnaire

Communicating across cultures questionnaire

Section A

Please circle

1. Ethnicity: New Zealand Maori New Zealand European New Zealand Maori/European

2. Age: 20-24 25-30 31-35 36-40 41-45

3. Gender: Female Male

4. How often do you have to interact with colleagues from immigrant cultures?
- Every day Frequently Occasionally Rarely

5. Does Excell promote equal opportunity no matter who you are?
- Strongly agree agree moderately agree moderately disagree disagree strongly disagree*

- | 6. | Does | Excell | value | cultural | diversity? | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| | <i>Strongly agree</i> | <i>agree</i> | <i>moderately agree</i> | <i>moderately disagree</i> | <i>disagree</i> | <i>strongly disagree</i> |

Section B

Please answer the following question honestly. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling:

Strongly agree, agree, moderately agree, moderately disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

7. I avoid speaking with colleagues from immigrant cultures because they won't understand me.

Strongly agree agree moderately agree moderately disagree disagree strongly disagree

8. Do you agree with the saying "Once a Chinaman always a Chinaman?".

Strongly agree agree moderately agree moderately disagree disagree strongly disagree

9. Managers should make decisions without consulting employees.

Strongly agree agree moderately agree moderately disagree disagree strongly disagree

10. It is frequently necessary for a manager to use power and authority when dealing with subordinates.

Strongly agree agree moderately agree moderately disagree disagree strongly disagree

11. People should say what they mean.

Strongly agree agree moderately agree moderately disagree disagree strongly disagree

12. When a message is ambiguous it means that person is hiding something.

Strongly agree agree moderately agree moderately disagree disagree strongly disagree

Section C

Please read the following scenarios and circle the answer that best describes your response when communicating with colleagues from immigrant cultures.

1. You are in team meeting and your colleague begins to ask a question and is taking long time to get to the point. When s/he finally gets to the point you don't really understand what s/he means. Do you:

- a. Ask her/him directly to explain what s/he means again because you didn't understand.
- b. Ask in an indirect way so s/he doesn't feel embarrassed to give more information
- c. Avoid answering and begin discussing something else
- d. It would depend on who it was (please comment below)
- e. Other (please comment below)

2. You have just been introduced to your new manager. She seems a very approachable person and you think you will get on well. She was introduced to you as Mrs Mortensen. You wonder what her first name is. What happens next?

- a. The next time you speak with her you ask her what her name is and then call her by that name.
- b. Find out what her name is from another colleague and then call her by that name.
- c. Continue to call her Mrs Mortensen but think she is a 'snooty' person.
- d. Are happy to call her Mrs Mortensen.
- e. Other (please comment below).

3. Your colleague often communicates with you in a very direct manner. You sometimes feel offended by this. You don't think s/he means to offend you but every time you come away feeling upset. What happens next?

- a. You tell your colleague that you find her/his manner of speaking offensive
- b. Say nothing and have negative feelings toward her/him each time s/he speaks with you.
- c. Avoid her/him as much as possible.
- d. Accept that is just the way s/he is.
- e. Other (please comment).

4. You have a brief conversation with a colleague. S/he is very hard to understand, and you're not sure what s/he is saying. You recall another colleague telling you this person is from 'overseas' and is a 'bit thick.' S/he seems a nice enough person. How do you react?

- a. Agree with your other colleague that this person is a 'bit thick'.
- b. Give this colleague the benefit of the doubt and listen carefully and try to understand what s/he means.
- c. Make a mental note to yourself that you will try to avoid this person.
- d. Other (please comment).

Please read the following scenarios and circle the answer that best describes your response when communicating with fellow New Zealand colleagues.

1. You are in team meeting and your colleague begins to ask a question and is taking long time to get to the point. When they finally get to the point you don't really understand what they mean. Do you:

- a. Ask her/him directly to explain what s/he means again because you didn't understand.
- b. Ask in an indirect way so s/he doesn't feel embarrassed to give more information
- c. Avoid answering and begin discussing something else
- d. It would depend on who it was (please comment below)
- e. Other (please comment below)

2. You have just been introduced to your new manager. She seems a very approachable person and you think you will get on well. She was introduced to you as Mrs Mortensen. You wonder what her name is. What happens next?

- a. The next time you speak with her you ask her what her name is and then call her by that name.
- b. Find out what her name is from another colleague and then call her by that name.
- c. Continue to call her Mrs Mortensen but think she is a 'snooty' person.
- d. Are happy to call her Mrs Mortensen.
- e. Other (please comment below).

3. Your colleague often communicates with you in a very direct manner. You sometimes feel offended by this. You don't think they mean to offend you but every time it you come away feeling upset. What happens next?

- a. You tell your colleague that you find their manner of speaking offensive
- b. Say nothing and have negative feelings toward them each time they speak with you.
- c. Avoid them as much as possible.
- d. Accept that is just the way they are.
- e. Other (please comment).

4. You have a brief conversation with a colleague. They are very hard to understand, and you're not sure what they are saying. You recall another colleague telling you this person is from 'up north' and is a 'bit thick.' They seem a nice enough person. How do you react?

- a. Agree with your other colleague that this person is a 'bit thick'
- b. Give this colleague the benefit of the doubt and listen carefully and try to understand what they mean
- c. Make a mental note to yourself that you will try to avoid this person
- d. Other (please comment)

Appendix II –Notification of Low Risk Research



Massey University

3 October 2005

Mariska Mannes

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Re: Communicating Across Cultures in the New Zealand Workplace

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 3 October 2005.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Massey University Human Ethics Committees' Annual Report.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by a campus human ethics committee.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research."

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Ethics & Equity), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz."

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority, or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to a Campus Human Ethics committee. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Sylvia V Rumball
Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Ethics & Equity)

cc Ms Marianne Tremaine
Department of Communication and
Journalism
PN254

Assoc Prof Frank Sligo, HoD
Department of Communication and
Journalism
PN254

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council



Appendix III - Copy of letter to participants

Good morning Marion, can you please forward this message on to staff and ask them to let their staff on the ground know. I have attached questionnaire (pdf format) if people can't make it and want to fill it in. I may come in earlier and try to capture a few people. Thanks for your help.

Good morning All

Mariska here. Once again I would like to ask you for help with my research. This time I am writing my thesis to complete my Masters degree. This study is only concerned with **Maori and Pakeha New Zealanders** and explores the extent we adjust our communication style when we communicate with colleagues from different cultures. This research is important to understand how we interact with colleagues and whether it affects our workplace. It is ground breaking research in New Zealand and you can be part of it. The questionnaire is anonymous and completion of the questionnaire implies consent. It will only take you approx 15 mins to complete. All I ask is that you answer honestly. I will be at Excell with questionnaires (or download and print attached) between 2:00pm - 4:00pm on Friday in the training room. Please pop your head in. Can you please pass this message to your workers also. Once again thanks for your support.

Take care, have fun!

Kind regards,

Mariska Mannes



Appendix IV – Notes from Informal Interviews

Summary of Interview with CEO (key points)

Well as you can see Excell is quite multicultural now. It's always had different cultures, meaning Maori and Pakeha, and later Islanders. This area (East Tamaki/Otara) has always had lots of Maori and Islanders. And between the Maori and Pakeha there has been a fairly even split on the ground (meaning labourers) but probably more Pakeha in the office. But that has changed, have a look around, you will see different people everywhere.

I try to take the good out of the cultures especially the "family" or collective of Maori and use those values to promote and build a family type culture here. When the organisation's values align with theirs' I think everything works better and they are more comfortable. For example, this year we took all the workers and their families to Rainbows End. It was much more constructive then the BBQ, we've held, in previous years where everybody just got drunk – and they drunk as much as they could because they felt they were **owed** it. But taking them to Rainbows End really worked. They felt as though they were valued and inviting their families there also, was a real bonus to them. But I think it is important that the families are involved. We need to promote team work and that "we are all just one big family".

We often have Maori (Kamatua) speaking at the meetings or when people leave. I know when the previous CEO died Excell got a Maori priest to bless his office and workers were allowed to attend his tangi etc. There is a big Maori factor here.

In saying that it does not matter where they come from or what race they are as I promote a team environment and that we are all in it together and have to work

together. If we don't work we don't get paid! If there are any problems, the team leaders must deal with it. If it got out of hand then I would step in, but that has never happened. We work on qualifications not race here at Excell. Everyone needs to support each other.

Where I have noticed problems is at the management level. People of different cultures are not a problem at the workers level but I have had problems at the management level. I have found the problem is mostly to do with power and authority and how they treat their staff. At the management level I have intervened. So now when we interview for management positions, we ask questions such as - Have you worked with people from other cultures? Have you managed people from different cultures and does your management style change? How do you relate to people from different cultures? From experience I have found that there are certain cultures that do not fit in very well at Excell. We have ended up taking a person on and then they are gone within six months. They just did not seem to fit into the Excell culture and upset a lot of staff. Therefore, I am very wary of taking those people on. It is just not the right environment for them. I have also found that some cultures do not get on, so we do have to be aware where we employ them.

We do not have any specific policies addressing culture and I don't think we need that, because our policies quite clearly state that everybody is to be treated fairly and given a fair hearing. There are policies on racial and sexual harassment, and they very clearly state that any harassment is not tolerated. Although I am aware that there are some cultural practices, for example, (M) in the workshop prays several times a day. But until now that has not affected his work or the efficiency of the workshop.

The staff survey done recently showed that workers liked Excell because of the team environment and because everyone helped each other and looked out for each other. This is really great to hear as this is the type of environment that we have been trying to foster.

As I say we are all in this together and must support each other. I will not be here for much longer but I would hope that the next management team will also be accepting of the different cultures.

Informal Interview with two staff (key quotes and opinions)

Do you think culture is respected at Excell?

- Never really thought about it. We just get on with it. Most people don't have a choice; we are just put into teams and are expected to work together. Everybody's pretty good though. Sometimes there's a bit of grief, but it's usually just with the temps and then we just let the temp agency we don't want/need them anymore. But everyone just works together. I sometimes take a bit of time to get to know them and their history, it's interesting. The Maori aspect is respected. I remember when (M) had a disciplinary hearing he had a Kamatau sit in and at one of the meeting there was a karakia.
- Yeah I think so; everyone seems to get on alright. We have to really, we don't have a choice who we work with. It's (Excell) always been cultural, by that I mean Maoris and Pakeha's and Islanders. Although there are more here now. I know one girl who had a real problem. They discovered that she racist and didn't want to work with some of the girls. (What happened) She had to sort it out herself; there was no help from the company.

Do you know of any policies pertaining to culture?

- No, but I think there is something in our contract. They always promote equality between Maori and Pakeha. As I said before (M) had a Kamatua come to his meeting, most the Pakeha's have a representative. And when I sat in on (I) disciplinary meeting I made them talk slowly and in plain English so he could understand, instead of the management mumbo jumbo. We brought up some of the cultural aspects that may have contributed to this incident and we worked it out. So I think they do understand different cultural behaviours and take them into account. But they certainly told him it was not acceptable. I know, we (Maori) are allowed time of to attend a tangi, that's accepted.
- Yes, there are policies about discrimination and treating everyone the same.

Do you think training would help?

- Yes, it might be helpful sometimes. Especially for (M) who gave a ham to (M) at Christmas. Wouldn't have happened if he had known. I think it would be good as we would understand each other better and it might be interesting. Sometimes I don't know what to say to them or if they will understand so we don't talk to them. Bit silly really, now that I think about it.
- Yes I think it is good to know about other people. I try to take time to talk with them but that doesn't happen often, usually too busy. Any training will help us work and understand each other better. It would be a good idea.

Summary of Informal Employee Interviews

(Key quotes and opinions from the interviews)

Do you work with other cultures?

- Yes our team's multicultural and then there's the guys in the workshops. We sometimes have to send them messages.
- Yes I work with (T) who's from Tahiti and (K) whose Maori and (P) whose from Samoa and we sometimes have a smoke with (A) she's from South Africa.
- Yes we've got all sorts, Poms, Scots, Indians, a South African and couple of Maoris in our team.
- Yes, Maoris, Islanders and an English chap.
- Yes mostly Islanders, but I see (S) and (M) in the workshop all the time, I think they're from Fiji.

Do you have any trouble understanding these colleagues?

- (S) in the workshop is really hard to understand, he speaks so fast and I hardly understand his accent – sometimes I wait until he is not there and then go in.
- That South African chap, the one that used to be in the workshop, he's not here now – didn't last long actually – nobody liked him – he was a bit of an #*#*#*.
- They keep to themselves; I don't really have much to do with them if I don't have to. The girls they work with told me they keep making mistakes – but they always say they understand. That's what they told me anyway, I don't really know them but I have heard them speaking in their own language. Let them be I say.
- Often see (L) and (A) talking and laughing together – they're both South African. To be honest when those two get talking together I find it a bit hard to keep up. It's just their accent. I think it sometimes sounds a bit snobby. But they're really nice,
- I quite like the Scottish chap but when he gets going I have no idea what he's saying. It's quite a charming accent though. He gets a bit grumpy though – then we all avoid him 'cause nobody knows what he's saying when he goes off.

- Most of the Islanders I work with are really quiet; I don't think they really understand me. I think most of them that work here don't have a good grasp on English. They work hard though but always talking to each other in their own lingo. Sometimes it annoys me, especially when they just nod when you tell them what to do. I don't know if they really understand but I let them just get on with it.
- (M) in the workshop is really quiet and he never looks at me when we're speaking, bit weird that. But I only speak to him if he's fixing my gear. He's got quite an accent to, not as bad as (S) though. I remember when the Workshop manager gave him a ham for Christmas (M is Muslim), he does for all his staff - didn't really go down that well. Gotta learn I suppose, but what a cock up.
- Yeah, she's sometimes really abrupt and I don't know almost rude sounding. I don't think she means to be, but I stay out of her way, especially when she's stressed.
- She's funny and has lots of stories, we're really lucky that she's with us. I think it her accent that makes her so funny,
- Sometimes I find it difficult to understand what they're saying. They don't speak good English you know. Bit of a problem safety wise. But we're just told to work with them, so we just do as we are told. Only really talk to them when I have to.

Do you speak with them differently?

- No, not really, oh, but I suppose sometimes I speak a little bit more clearly and slowly when giving instructions to the temps. Most of them are Pacific Islanders.
- Of course we have to speak with them differently so they will understand. Especially the two Asian girls upstairs. You've got to speak slower and tell them more than once.
- No, I just speak to them as I speak with everyone else.
- I try not to, but sometimes I slow down a bit. I remember a time when (F) didn't know what "geezer" meant. It was quite funny really.
- No, they can all understand English.
- Yeah, sometimes I have to speak in simple English, but they get it in the end.

Appendix V – Results of Questionnaire

Results for Section A and Section B														
Ethnicity	Age	Gender	Section_A4	Section_A5	Section_A6	Section_B1	Section_B2	Section_B3	Section_B4	Section_B5	Section_B6	SB2_Comment	SB3_Comment	SB6_Comment
0	5	2	2	3	4	6	1	3	2	2	3			
1	2	1	3	3	2	2	2	5	6	1	3			
1	6	1	1	1	1	6	6	6	2	1	2			
1	6	1	1	2	3	5	5	6	4	1	1			
1	4	1	1	3	3	5	5	6	4	2	4			
1	5	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	3			
1	4	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1			
1	5	2	2	5	3	5	2	6	4	1	1			also selected "Moderately Agree"
1	6	2	1	3	3	5	3	4	2	2	2			
1	6	2	3	2	1	6	5	6	5	1	2			
2	6	2	1	2	3	3	4	6	3	2	3			
2	5	2	3	2	3	5	5	5	5	3	5			
2	4	1	1	0	2	6	6	6	6	1	5			
2	2	1	1	3	4	6	1	5	2	2	2			
2	6	2	1	2	2	5	3	5	5	3	2			
2	6	2	3	2	3	5	6	4	3	1	5			
2	4	2	2	4	3	4	1	1	4	4	5			
2	6	2	1	3	3	6	5	4	5	2	4			

Results for Section A and Section B														
Ethnicity	Age	Gender	Section_A4	Section_A5	Section_A6	Section_B1	Section_B2	Section_B3	Section_B4	Section_B5	Section_B6	SB2_Comment	SB3_Comment	SB6_Comment
2	2	1	1	2	2	5	7	3	3	2	2	Never heard that saying		
2	3	1	1	1	2	5	7	7	5	2	3		Depends	
2	2	2	1	2	2	6	6	3	5	1	5		Depends on situation	
2	6	2	3	2	2	5	5	5	3	1	4			
2	5	2	2	1	1	6	5	3	1	1	5			
2	3	2	1	2	2	3	3	5	4	1	3			
2	3	1	3	3	3	1	3	3	4	2	4			
2	6	2	2	1	1	5	2	5	5	2	2			
2	5	1	1	2	2	6	5	3	3	2	4			
2	3	2	2	2	2	6	3	3	2	1	2			
2	1	1	1	2	2	5	5	4	4	2	4			
2	6	2	1	2	2	5	2	5	2	2	2			
2	6	1	1	3	2	5	5	4	3	3	3			
2	4	2	1	2	2	6	6	6	3	1	3			
2	4	1	1	2	2	5	3	4	2	2	3			
2	4	2	1	2	2	6	6	5	4	1	4			
2	4	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	2	4			
2	1	2	1	2	2	5	2	6	0	2	3			

Ethnicity	Age	Gender	Section_A4	Section_A5	Section_A6	Section_B1	Section_B2	Section_B3	Section_B4	Section_B5	Section_B6	SB2_Comment	SB3_Comment	SB6_Comment
2	6	2	1	1	3	6	5	3	3	2	4			
2	1	2	1	1	2	5	5	6	5	1	1			
2	6	2	2	1	2	5	5	5	2	1	5			
2	6	2	2	3	3	5	5	6	5	2	3			
2	4	2	1	2	3	3	2	4	3	2	2			
2	3	2	3	5	5	2	3	5	3	2	1			
2	2	2	2	1	2	4	1	3	4	1	4			
2	1	2	2	2	3	5	4	5	5	2	5			
2	3	2	4	2	2	4	4	5	5	1	3			
2	6	2	1	3	5	3	2	4	3	1	3			
2	5	1	1	3	3	6	3	4	4	1	2			
2	6	2	1	1	3	6	6	5	2	2	3			
2	4	2	1	2	3	6	5	4	4	2	4		Depends on circumstance	
2	6	2	2	2	2	6	5	5	5	2	2			
2	5	2	2	2	2	4	3	6	5	1	3			
3	1	2	1	1	1	6	6	6	5	3	3			
3	3	2	1	2	3	5	3	2	4	2	3			
0=None; 1=NZ Maori; 2=NZ European; 3=NZ Maori/European	1=20-24yrs; 2=25-30yrs; 3=31-35 yrs; 4=36-40yrs; 5=41-45 yrs; 6=45+yrs	1=Female; 2=Male	1=Everyday; 2=Frequently; 3=Occasionally; 4=Rarely	0=None; 1=Strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Moderately agree;4=Moderately disagree; 5=Disagree; 6=Strongly disagree										

Results for Section C												
Ethnicity	Age	Gender	Migrant Colleagues-1	Migrant Colleagues-2	Migrant Colleagues-3	Migrant Colleagues-4	NZ-colleagues-1	NZ-colleagues-2	NZ-colleagues-3	NZ-colleagues-4		
0	5	2	a	e	a	b	a	e	a	b		
1	2	1	a	a	a	b	a	a	a	a		
1	6	1	a	d	d	b	a	c	a	b		
1	6	1	a	d	d	b	a	d	d	b		
1	4	1	a	e	a	b	a	e	a	b		
1	5	1	a	e	b	b	a	e	a	a		
1	4	2	c	a	b	a	b	b	d	b		
1	5	2	b	d	a	b	b	d	a	b		
1	6	2	a	d	b	b	a	c	a	b		
1	6	2	b	d	d	d	b	d	e	b		
2	6	2	c	b	a	b	b	b	a	b		
2	5	2	a	b	a	b	b	b	a	b		
2	4	1	a	d	d	b	a	d	d	b		
2	2	1	a	a	d	b	a	a	d	b		
2	6	2	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a		
2	6	2	a	a	a	b	a	a	a	b		
2	4	2	e	a	e	b	b	a	b	a		
2	6	2	b	e	e	b	b	e	e	d		

Ethnicity	Age	Gender	Migrant Colleagues- 1	Migrant Colleagues- 2	Migrant Colleagues- 3	Migrant Colleagues- 4	NZ- colleagues- 1	NZ- olleagues-2	NZ- colleagues- 3	NZ- colleagues- 4		
2	2	1	a	a	a	b	a	a	a	b		
2	3	1	b	a	d	b	a	a	d	b		
2	2	2	a	a	a	b	a	a	a	b		
2	6	2	a	d	d	b	a	e	e	b		
2	5	2	a	d	d	b	a	d	d	b		
2	3	2	c	a	a	b	a	a	a	b		
2	3	1	a	d	d	b	a	d	d	b		
2	6	2	a	f	f	f	a	a	a	b		
2	5	1	a	e	d	b	a	e	d	b		
2	3	2	a	a	d	b	a	a	d	a		
2	1	1	b	e	a	b	b	e	a	b		
2	6	2	b	d	a	b	b	d	a	b		
2	6	1	a	d	c	c	a	c	a	b		
2	4	2	e	e	e	b	e	e	e	b		
2	4	1	a	b	b	b	a	b	b	b		
2	4	2	e	a	a	b	e	a	a	b		
2	4	1	a	d	b	b	a	d	b	b		
2	1	2	a	d	d	b	a	d	d	b		
2	6	2	a	d	b	b	a	d	b	b		
2	1	2	a	a	c	b	a	a	c	b		
2	6	2	b	d	a	b	a	d	b	b		
2	6	2	a	a	b	b	a	a	d	b		
2	4	2	a	b	a	a	b	b	a	a		
2	3	2	a	e	d	b	a	b	d	c		
2	2	2	b	a	a	b	b	a	a	b		
2	1	2	b	d	e	b	a	a	e	b		

0=None; 1=NZ Maori; 2=NZ European; 3=NZ Maori/European	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	Ethnicity	
1=20-24yrs; 2=25-30yrs; 3=31-35 yrs; 4=36-40yrs; 5=41-45 yrs; 6=45+yrs	3	1	5	6	4	6	5	6	3				Age	
1=Female; 2=Male	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2				Gender	
(refer to questionnaire)	b	a	a	a	a	b	a	a	a				Migrant Colleagues-1	
	b	e	a	e	e	a	d	e	a				Migrant Colleagues-2	
	d	e	c	e	d	a	d	d	d				Migrant Colleagues-3	
	b	b	c	b	b	b	b	a	b				Migrant Colleagues-4	
	b	a	a	a		b	a	a	a				NZ-colleagues-1	
	b	e	a	e		a	d	e	a				NZ-olleagues-2	
	d	e	c	e		a	d	d	d				NZ-colleagues-3	
	b	b	c	b		b	b	a	b				NZ-colleagues-4	

Comments from Participants								
Ethnicity	Age	Gender	SC1_Comment	SC2_Comment	SC3_Comment	SC4_Comment	Comment_1	Comment_2
0	5	2		Title is not important				Not important to me
1	4	1		Ask them what they would like me to call them				Ask them what they would like me to call them
1	5	1	Also selected option B	I will ask her when being introduced, I don't wait	Also selected option C	Also selected D, If I still don't understand him/her I will ask them to send me an e-mail or write it down (Ha..Ha..) they speak better on paper		I will ask her when being introduced, I don't wait
1	5	2			Also selected option C			
1	6	2				Look at the bigger picture and try to figure it out from there		
2	4	2	Can't say have been in this situation		can't say been in this position			
2	6	2		Ask her what name she prefers to be called by	It depends if the communication is professional or just personal with no foundation, if it is blunt + professional no problem, if it is blunt + professional would use option A above	Overtime however the colleague would have to demonstrate that they add value		Ask what name she prefers to be called by
2	6	2						Ask her if she minds being called by her first name
2	5	1		Ask what she would like to be called				Ask what she would like to be called
2	3	2						
2	1	1		Ask her if she would prefer me calling her Ms Mortenson or her first name				Ask her if she would prefer me calling her Ms Mortenson or her first name

2	4	2	Repeat back to them what you think they have said and get them to point out where there may have been a misunderstanding	Next time you speak with her, ask for her first name and ask if it is OK to address her this way	Speak to your colleague and explain what it is that offends you, talk about it		Repeat back your understanding of their question and get them to explain where you may have got it wrong	Ask for her first name and if it is OK to address her this way
2	4	2	Paraphrase to try to gain an understanding "So what you are saying is"	And how she would like to be addressed			Paraphrase to try to gain an understanding "So what you are saying is"	And ask her how she would like to be addressed
2	6	2		Depends what she looks like				Depending on looks
2	4	2						
2	3	2		Probably forgot her name, ask her colleague what's her name				
2	2	2			Also selected option D			
2	1	2			Speak back in a blunt manner			
2	6	2		ask immediately for first name and does she mind being called by that name. if first name use is denied then never speak to her again				ask immediately for first name and does she mind being called by that name. if first name use is denied then never speak to her again
2	4	2		first time I meet ask her how she wishes to be addressed. if she says Mrs Mortenson then option C as this is not how people address each other in this industry / time			page missing	page missing
2	6	2		Ask her if she would prefer to be called Mrs Mortenson or by her Christian name	i would ask them if they have to be so blunt as I would find it easier to face in more moderate tone			Ask if she would prefer to be called Mrs Mortenson or by her Christian name
2	5	2						
3	1	2		Ask if she minds being called by her first name	Depends on the person either D or A			ask her if she minds being called by her first name
0=None; 1=NZ Maori; 2=NZ European; 3=NZ Maori/European	1=20-24yrs; 2=25-30yrs; 3=31-35 yrs; 4=36-40yrs; 5=41-45 yrs; 6=45+yrs	1=Female; 2=Male						