Exploring the Barriers to Intercultural Communication among the Students at the University of Lahore

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Abstract: The aim of the study was to explore the barriers to intercultural communication among the students of The University of Lahore in Pakistan. The study was based on qualitative and quantitative research. The data was collected by conducting interviews, and questionnaires were circulated among the students of The University of Lahore. The research revealed that the students at The University of Lahore faced barriers in their intercultural encounters. The barriers mostly faced by the students were anxiety, assuming similarities instead of differences, language problems, stereotypes and prejudice, and misinterpretation of non-verbal communication. Ethnocentrism, one of the major barriers, was not faced by any student of the university. These problems in intercultural communication at the university occurred due to the different cultural, political, and historical backgrounds of the students. The strategies that help in making intercultural communication are acknowledging the differences, focusing on behavior, promotion of tolerance, and development of intercultural sensitivity.

Introduction

Pakistan is an Asian and intercultural country where multiple cultures live and interact with each other. People living in such a country face many difficulties and problems because of different cultural values and traditions. Culture is defined as " that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a human as a member of society." Gkrimpizi et al. (2023) state that Culture is an important characteristic of human beings that differentiates them from animals. The development of a culture is very important in this context. Communication is the best way to develop a culture and a culture is transferred from one generation to the next through communication (Gudykunst and Kim, 1992). When two or more cultures start developing at the same place, it results in problems and misunderstandings in communication. Intercultural communication is a type of communication in which people belong to so many different cultural references that they may start perceiving themselves as belonging to different cultures. This discipline is not a new one. It has been taking place since the beginning of human existence. Intercultural communication reflects the association between people belonging to different cultures (Gudykunst and Mody, 2002). The modern world is a global village. There is not a single culture, nation, or group that can be anonymous (Samovar and Porter, 1997). The number of intercultural interactions is increasing day by day among people who belong to different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Intercultural communication is based on intercultural associations in the fields of education, science, business, and mass media (Allwood, 2003). It is important to highlight the fact that intercultural communication takes into account the sharing of information between the representatives of several cultures, i.e., communication between individuals who identify themselves on the basis of communication (Samovar and Porter, 1997).

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Intercultural communication is a type of communication that results in difficulties of different cross-borders and cultures. The variation in cultures results in misunderstandings and hurdles that cannot be prevented and are sure to have occurred. People who belong to different cultures are not willing to communicate. Rather, they are reluctant, and in this way, big communication gaps are created between them. Barna (1994) has classified the barriers in intercultural communication as six stumbling blocks that cause frustration and misunderstandings in intercultural encounters. These are anxiety, assuming similarities instead of differences, ethnocentrism, language problems, prejudice and stereotyping, and misinterpretation of non-verbal communication.

The study focused on these intercultural barriers among the students of The University of Lahore. University is a place where people come from different areas belonging to entirely different cultures, and they face barriers while interacting with one another. The students are not aware of the values, norms, traditions, and behavior of other people's cultures. To enhance the cultural fluency of students, they should have sufficient knowledge of other cultures, and they should respect their values, norms, cultural and traditional behavior.

The data was collected from university students using two methods: interviews and questionnaires. The classification of barriers in intercultural communication given by Samovar and Porter (1997) was chosen to identify the barriers the students face in intercultural encounters. The research highlighted not only the hurdles faced by the students but also the strategies to overcome them.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To describe how the students face the barriers in a university in their intercultural encounters,
2. To determine the frequency of the occurrence of barriers in intercultural communication faced by the students,
3. To suggest possible strategies for promoting intercultural communication adapted by the students.

Research Questions

The study tried to find out the answers to the following research questions:

1. How do the students face the barriers in a university in their intercultural encounters?
2. What is the frequency of the barriers faced by students in intercultural communication?
3. What strategies could be adapted by the students to promote intercultural communication?

Significance of the Study

The research is a significant piece of work for multiple reasons. First, it explored the barriers to intercultural communication that were faced by the students of the university. Second, it enabled us to highlight the reasons for the barriers to intercultural communication. Third, it helped to take the necessary steps to avoid those blocks and misunderstandings the students faced in intercultural communication to make the activity of teaching and learning fruitful. Finally, this research can be helpful in studying barriers to intercultural communication that occurred among the students of The University of Lahore in general for the future.

Delimitation of the Study

It was impossible to cover all the cultures for studying the barriers to intercultural communication. University is a place where people come from different areas, belong to different cultural backgrounds, and have different beliefs and values; therefore, the University of Lahore was selected for the purpose of collecting data.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that was followed in order to carry out the research was the model presented by Samovar and Porter (1997). According to this model, there are six barriers to effective intercultural communication. The model is illustrated as follows:

1. Anxiety.

2. Assuming similarity instead of dissimilarity.
3. Ethnocentrism.
4. Language problems.
5. Stereotypes and prejudice.
6. Misinterpretation of Non-verbal Communication.

Literature Review

Cultural misunderstandings arise due to the wrong perception of the values, norms, and beliefs of a culture for the person who belongs to another culture. Samovar and Porter (1997) presented a model that shows misunderstandings could occur in intercultural communication when there are a variety of cultural differences. The first barrier in intercultural communication is the anxiety. It is sometimes called tension or stress. It is a state in which a person is nervous or concerned because of unawareness of what he is expected to do. It means a person feels inconvenienced when one does not know how to behave in a certain situation. It results in the failure of communication. Sugawara and Peterson (1994) carried out a survey in which 168 employees of Japanese companies worked with 135 employees of American companies in the United States. Among all, 8% of employees in the United States felt uncomfortable with the English spoken by the Japanese employees. 19% of the Japanese employees felt that they were poor in speaking English. 20% of them felt nervous while interacting with the employees of the U.S. 30% of the Japanese employees felt impatience with their speech while interacting with the employees of the U.S. 60% of them claimed that language was a major problem in communicating with the employees of U.S that made them stressed throughout their conversation.

The second barrier in intercultural communication is assuming similarity instead of dissimilarity. It is a situation in which a person in a different culture behaves the way he or she behaves in his or her own culture, and this situation creates a lot of problems. For successful communication in a different culture, it is necessary to become aware of the laws, rules, values, and traditions of the other culture. It is a situation when one considers the other cultures the same as his own culture, Boucher (1974). In 1997, an incident took place in New York with a Danish woman when she left her 14-month-old baby alone in a stroller outside a Manhattan restaurant while she was inside. The people in the restaurant got worried about the child and immediately called the police. The woman was put in jail for two nights for leaving her child alone outside the restaurant. The woman told the New York City police that it is a common practice in Denmark. She assumed that this would also be a common practice in New York, and that was how she was caught up in a problem. The third barrier to effective intercultural communication is ethnocentrism. It is an idea that one considers one's own culture, nation, group, or race better than others. It refers to making judgments about another culture by standardizing your own culture negatively. One feels his culture is superior in comparison to another's culture. Another term used for ethnocentrism is the cultural relativism. It refers to the concept of inequality, which means that everything is not equal. One should not judge a culture without knowing the behavior of those people in their cultural context. It also reflects the way in which a person studies his culture and is ready to reexamine his cultural behaviors by learning other cultures (Cohen, 1998). All humans are, to some extent, ethnocentric, falling somewhere on a scale between "low" and "high" ethnocentricity (Neuliep, 2012).

The fourth barrier in intercultural encounters is language problems. Jandt (2000) defines language as a set of symbols that are shared by the members of a community to communicate their meanings and experiences. The important factors that create difficulties in translation are the unavailability of equivalences in vocabulary, idioms, grammar and syntax, experiences, and concepts. The Indonesian students feel uncomfortable while studying other languages because the Indonesian language lacks gender. The fifth barrier in intercultural communication is stereotypes and prejudice. Samovar and Porter (1997) define stereotypes as extrapolated, second-hand thoughts on the basis of which one makes sense of what goes on around us, whether or not they are accurate or fit the circumstance. Stereotypes are stumbling blocks for communicators because they interfere with the objective viewing of stimuli. A person has a definite stereotypical prepossession regarding a person belonging to a particular culture, and later, he evaluates, according to this preconception, whether or not the reason for the behavior of that person according to that preconceived idea about him.

Prejudice refers to a gap that is created because of the feelings of hatred one keeps for a particular class, religion, group, cast, or race, Jandt (2010). In UAE, some people from developing countries such as India and Pakistan working together with the citizens of UAE were considered to belong to a lower status, and due to that,,thereyise a communication gap between them. Non-verbal communication is the sixth block of intercultural communication. It is a type of communication that takes place without the use of words or sentences. Rather, gestures, body language, eye directions, and proximity play an important role in non-verbal communication. It may create many misunderstandings while communicating among people because body language, gestures, eye directions, silence, clothing style, and all other means of non-verbal communication are interpreted differently according to different cultures (Keles 2013).

Methodology

The study was based on both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. It was qualitative research as it illustrated the different types of barriers in intercultural communication and how the students in a university face the barriers in their intercultural encounters. It was quantitative research because it showed the possible frequency of occurrence of the cultural barriers faced by the students.

Participants

It was impossible to cover all the universities from Pakistan or even Punjab only for the data analysis. So, for conducting interviews, 30 students were selected, and questionnaires were filled by 100 students of the university who belonged to different cultures for the analysis of the data.

Data Collection Tools

Interviews and questionnaires were used for the collection of data. Interviews provide a deeper understanding of those phenomena that cannot be measured statistically (Ajmal et al., 2023; Rida & Ghani, 2022). Interviews with 30 students of The University of Lahore who belong to different cultures were conducted in order to get detailed information about their intercultural interactions and the problems they face while communicating. Sarwar and Ghani (2024) state that the quantitative approach helps to measure the responses and perceptions of the people statistically, which contributes to the generalizability and validity of the results. Questionnaires were self-designed and circulated among 100 students of The University of Lahore to show the possible frequency of occurrence of intercultural barriers faced by the students.

Procedure

The participants for both the interviews and questionnaires were informed before that it was only for the purpose of conducting small research, so they participated willingly and accordingly. The interviews were conducted by dividing the participants into groups who share more or less the same cultural background. This arrangement made the conduction of interviews feasible and convenient, resulting in a clear analysis of problems and hurdles faced by the people during intercultural communication. All the protocols for conducting interviews were followed properly so that all the interviewees felt comfortable and were provided with the required data. The interviews were recorded using manual tools, and each of them was transcribed according to the required format for the analysis. Each interview was analyzed to explore the barriers faced by the people of The University of Lahore while communicating with each other. The interviews were conducted individually, and the barriers one felt in his/her intercultural communication, according to his/her experience, were recorded. Questionnaires were circulated among 100 students. The items for the questionnaire were based on statements with five suitable options. The questionnaire can be seen in the appendix.

Data Analysis

The data was collected from the students of The University of Lahore to explore the barriers to intercultural communication. The data was collected in two ways:

1. Interviews.
2. Questionnaires.

Interviews of the thirty different students were conducted in order to examine their experiences in the other cultures and what they felt after coming to an intercultural society. The experiences taken from their interviews are shared according to the barriers they faced.

Barrier of Anxiety

A Punjabi student shared her experience of anxiety in the culture of the university. She felt herself under some stress or tension all the time as she was not aware of the values and traditions of the new culture. She was unable to communicate well, not only in a formal setting but also in an informal setting as well. In a classroom, she remained conscious most of the time because of her different language. She felt that she could not speak English well and was unable to communicate her ideas and thoughts. She used to stay silent most of the time in class.

Barrier of Assuming Similarity Instead of Dissimilarity

A student who belonged to the Chitrali culture experienced this barrier of assuming similarity instead of dissimilarity when he came to The University of Lahore. He wanted to shake hands with her female university fellow. The female fellow hesitated to shake hands with him, and the other people around looked at him with astonishment and made negative gestures. When he was asked why he did so, he explained that it is very common in his culture to shake hands with female fellows, cousins, friends, and relatives. He assumed it to be the same practice in this culture as well, but it was not a common practice at The University of Lahore, so he faced such a problem.

Barrier of Language Problem

Many students face the problem regarding the use of language. A student who belonged to the Sindhi culture faced a lot of difficulties after coming to a multicultural place. He shared his experience that while interacting with his fellows at the start, he was unable to communicate because of the difference in dialect, accent, pronunciation, vocabulary, and style.

Barrier of Stereotypes and Prejudices

A female student who belonged to the Shina culture in Gilgit shared her viewpoint that people there have a stereotype of the people who belong to Punjabi culture. She shared that people think that Punjabis are so mean and rigid in nature. They are just available for their own need of time; otherwise, they do not share a healthy relationship with people of other cultures. After coming to the University of Lahore, she had a different point of view regarding this stereotype.

Barrier of Misinterpretation of Non-verbal Communication

A student belonging to the Balti culture shared his very interesting experience after coming to the university. When he was having tea at a café with his friends, one of them showed him a "thumbs up." He felt very bad about his friend's actions, and there was a quarrel between them. His friend explained to him that "thumbs up" does not mean anything bad or negative; rather, it is a gesture of "all is good" or "well done," used in the sense of appreciation. The student who belonged to the Balti culture then clarified his reason for anger, which is that it carries a bad and negative connotation in his culture.

An interesting result was found that all the students shared their experiences of facing one or the other barrier, but no one felt that their culture was better than that of the others. No one experienced the barrier of ethnocentrism.

The above-stated analysis was carried out on the basis of the theoretical framework selected for the current study. There were some other barriers as well, most frequently faced by the students studying at The University of Lahore, where they found an intercultural environment around them.

Barrier of Physical Appearance

A student from Nigeria shared his experience with his physical appearance, which is that he has a very dark complexion. Other students never did the group-assigned task with him, and he had to do it alone.

He faced difficulty in communicating with people of other cultures as they were not friendly with him, and it took him a long period of time to get accepted as a part of their culture and develop friendships with him.

Barrier of Proficient Speaking Skills

A male student who belonged to south Punjab told about his problem of having less proficiency in speaking skills while communicating with other students belonging to different cultures, especially when speaking the English language. As he belonged to south Punjab from a backward area, he was unable to speak with proper accent and pronunciation. He shared that he always felt shy and reluctant while communicating with the students who were capable of speaking good English because they themselves were never comfortable with him, resulting in an obvious communication gap.

Barrier of Political Situation

A female student from Khyber Pakhtun Khawan shared her experience of facing difficulty in communication when she was surrounded by people who belonged to the political party of her opposition. Though there are no political biases practiced in the educational institutes, she felt reluctant to communicate with other students, who made her feel different from them because of culturally based political differences.

Barriers to Gender Biases

Pakistan has a culture that is gender biased. Even within different areas of Pakistan, it is practiced fully. A student from Sweden faced many problems after coming from an entirely different situation and environment. He expressed that once at a café standing in the queue, everyone was supposed to be dealt with accordingly, but the person there was serving the females first because everyone was there to get the food. Pakistan has a culture in which gender bias is practiced, due to which people feel difficulty in communication with people of different cultures. One student shared his experience of belonging to another country where there was no gender discrimination. When he tried to communicate with the female fellows in his class, they were more reluctant to talk to him.

The results of questionnaires filled by the students of The University of Lahore are given as follows:

Role of Multiple Cultures in Intercultural Communication

Among all the students, 80% felt that different cultural backgrounds create problems in intercultural encounters, whereas 20% of students remained neutral to this idea.

Attitude of People

80% of students thought that others' behavior was positive towards them as they belonged to a different culture, but 20% of students had a point of view that they experienced an unexpected behavior.

Relationship among Fellows

All the students (100%) belonging to different cultures shared that they share healthy relationships with other fellows in the university.

Difficulty in Getting Understood by Others

70% of students faced difficulty in making their viewpoint understood by other people, 20% of students felt no barrier in conveying their information in intercultural interaction, and 10% of students had an opinion that there is no difficulty in such a course.

Each Culture has its Own Gestures

70% of students came across the fact that the gestures vary from culture to culture, and 30% of students remained neutral to this point of view.

Understanding others' Ideas is Problematic

80% of students felt that there was a problem in understanding others' points or ideas, 10% of students remained neutral, and 10% of students faced no problem in understanding others.

Multicultural Society Causes Anxiety

All the students (100%) shared the fact that they felt anxious after coming to the university.

One Values his Culture more than the Others'

10% of students considered their culture superior to others, whereas 90% of students did not think so.

Stereotypical Thoughts in Intercultural Communication

70% of students have been stereotyped many times, 20% of students remained neutral, and 10% of students thought that they had not been stereotyped in an intercultural society.

Misinterpretation of Others' Views

90% of students felt that they, at times, misinterpret what others say. 10% of students remained neutral on this theme.

Gender Dominant Culture Creates Problems in Communication

95% of students were of the view that gender dominance is practiced and creates problems in communication. 5% of students remained neutral to this point of view.

Racism / Physical Appearance Acts as an Intercultural Barrier

85% of students faced the problem of communicating with others on the basis of racism or physical appearance. 10% of students remained neutral to this idea, and 5% of students did not feel racism was a barrier to intercultural communication.

Inefficient Speaking English Language

90% of students thought that a lack of proficient speaking skills, especially speaking the English language, behaves as a barrier to effective communication. 10% of students did not feel the need to have better speaking skills to make successful communication.

Lack of Confidence is Highly Required to Comfortably Communicate in an Intercultural Environment

95% of students felt that confidence is vital for interacting with people who belong to different cultural backgrounds. 5% of students remained neutral to this point.

Discussion

At university, people come across different cultures and share different values and beliefs. When different cultures start existing in a place, intercultural communication takes place between the people living there. This gathering of multiple cultures creates problems in intercultural encounters because it is quite difficult for one to exist in such an atmosphere where everything is different from one's culture. The study showed that people keep positive attitudes and behavior toward others in an intercultural society. The results revealed an interesting fact that in an intercultural society, people maintain healthy relationships among themselves. The research examined the fact that students in a university felt difficulty in both understanding others and making themselves understood by other students or people.

University students who belong to different cultures share the problem of having different meanings of gestures and body language in other cultures. The study highlighted the fact that the students experienced anxiety after coming to an intercultural society because they were unaware of the way how to act or behave in an unknown culture. The research explored that only a few students consider their culture

superior to others' culture, and most of them do not consider their culture superior to others. The results declared that less than half of the students had been stereotyped in the university.

At the University of Lahore, the data that was analyzed through interviews and questionnaires revealed some interesting and unexpected results that not only explored the barriers in intercultural communication but also explained some strategies to overcome those barriers. All the students face problems with intercultural communication. The barrier that was faced mostly by the students was "Anxiety." Students, when it comes to a new culture, are in trouble with how to survive in that culture as it is something entirely new and different. He remains anxious all the time. The second barrier faced by students in the university is the barrier of "Misinterpretation of non-verbal communication." New students are not familiar with the gestures, body language, eye contact, and other non-verbal signs used in communication. This creates a hurdle in the course of communication. The third biggest barrier that is experienced by the students in the university is "Language Problems." The problem occurs in the dialect, accent, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, structure, and phonological difference. He does not know the language and its features used in the other culture and feels hesitation in using his own because that language is unknown to the people of the other culture.

The fourth most common barrier experienced by the students is "Assuming similarity instead of dissimilarity." It, at times, creates a very horrible situation, due to which conflicts and confusion may arise in an intercultural society. When a person is not familiar with the values and traditions of another culture, such problems are more likely to occur. The fifth barrier that is not even faced by half of the population is "Stereotypes and Prejudices." In the university, students keep positive thoughts and intentions for each other, and it is because of the educational factor that the frequency of occurrence of this barrier is very low. The most important barrier to intercultural communication is "Ethnocentrism." It is the least faced by the students of The University of Lahore. They feel other cultures are respectable and tolerate the values and norms of other cultures.

Table 1
Frequency of occurrence of barriers in intercultural communication at the University of Lahore

Barriers	Anxiety	Misinterpretation of Non-verbal Communication	Language Problems	Assuming Similarity Instead of Dissimilarity	Stereotypes and prejudices	Ethnocentrism
Frequency of occurrence	100%	90%	75%	70%	40%	00%

There were some other barriers most commonly faced by the students at The University of Lahore. The most frequently faced barrier shared by one of the students is a hurdle in communicating due to racism or physical appearance. It is a common understanding that people who belong to some other culture look different, but students experience problems while interacting in an intercultural environment. Another student expressed that a lack of proficient speaking skills plays an important role in communication, especially when it is between people who belong to different cultures. Better speaking skills make one person understood by the whole community. In an intercultural environment, a lack of communication skills creates barriers to understanding others and being understood by others as well. Political situations also act as barriers to communication, but overall, no political biases are practiced in any educational institute. Gender biases act as a barrier to communication. Many students had the same viewpoint, and one of them shared an incident as he belonged to some other country where there was no gender discrimination; when he tried to communicate with the female fellows in his class, they were more reluctant to talk to him. This behavior of the female fellows made him very astonished, but this is an issue in an intercultural society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In a university, people come from different cultural backgrounds and share their values, traditions, norms, language, and everything that is included in a culture. Intercultural communication results in a number of problems as well. These problems occur because students belong to different cultural, linguistic, social, and political backgrounds. There are six stumbling blocks that create trouble in communication in an

intercultural society. Anxiety, language problems, assuming similarity instead of dissimilarity, and misinterpretation of non-verbal communication are the barriers that were faced frequently by the students of The University of Lahore, whereas ethnocentrism stereotypes and prejudices were less likely to be faced by the students. It has been observed that the barrier of "Anxiety" has been faced by all the students in the university. "Stereotypes and prejudices" were observed to be faced less by the students than other barriers. "Ethnocentrism" was not experienced by any of the students.

The barriers that make communication difficult in an intercultural society can be lessened by following some strategies. For example, by acknowledging cultural differences, intercultural communication can be improved. The behavior that makes someone feel unwanted or excluded must be avoided. All the students must feel safe in the university. It is very important to accept the differences between people belonging to different cultural backgrounds. For example, food is an important element that reflects one's culture. It should be encouraged, shared, and accepted by other fellows. Every culture has a different sense of values, customs, and traditions, and the local ones should be observed. The status of men and women, perception of time, and emotional attachment vary from culture to culture and must be respected by other people who belong to some other culture.

Another way to make communication in an intercultural society is to develop intercultural sensitivity. In university, students should focus on productive teamwork that helps minimize differences. When people from different cultures come closer and work together, they begin to realize that the differences are not threatening. Rather, they are helpful in getting better results educationally, socially, and individually as well. Students may adopt some cultural elements of other cultures that enrich their cultural identity. Focusing on behavior plays an important role in creating a healthy atmosphere for intercultural communication. In a university, intercultural communication takes place, and all the students are included in the process. The focus on behavior helps to maintain a healthy and productive atmosphere in the class or university. The selection of words plays an important role in effective intercultural communication. If students try to make adjustments, everyone in the circle feels accepted and appreciated. Workshops can be conducted, and the stimulation of games encourages intercultural communication in a university for the successful future of the students. The promotion of tolerance for diversity and multicultural competency has been recommended to be implemented in various levels of schooling. Moreover, the university is expected to create a continuous awareness program aimed at promoting diversity and tolerance.

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Appendix
Questionnaire

Q 1: Different cultures will cause problems in intercultural communication.

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree.

Q 2: Others' attitudes who belong to some other culture are positive towards me.

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 3: I share a healthy relationship with my other university fellows.

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 4: I face many problems while making others understand myself.

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 5: The gestures of other languages are different than that of mine.

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 6: I feel difficulty in understanding others' point/message.

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 7: I experienced anxiety at many places and times after coming to an intercultural society.

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 8: I consider my cultural values to be better than the others' cultural values.

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 9: I have been stereotyped many a times.

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 10: I sometimes misinterpret what others say or feel.

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 11: I experienced that gender dominant culture creates problem in communication:

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 12: Political biasness

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 13: I have faced difficulties in communication due to Racism / physical appearance:

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 14: I mostly remained quiet because of lack of efficient speaking skills especially English language:

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree

Q 15: Confidence is highly required to comfortably communicate in intercultural environment:

a) Strongly agree   b) Agree   c) Neutral   d) Disagree   e) Strongly disagree