

# Dissertation Submission

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**Title: Exploring the role of communication barriers in Negotiation  
processes in multi-cultural environments: Case study of Irish  
Multicultural Companies**

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November – 2020

## **Declaration**

I, Deborah Gonçalves Valeriano declare that this dissertation is my own work and that this work has not been submitted in any form for the purpose of any other degree program or diploma certificate at any educational institute except Independent College Dublin. All information that has been driven from unpublished and published work of other authors and researchers has been properly acknowledged in the reference list that is given in the bibliography section of this document.

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## **Abstract**

Primary research focuses on the effects and challenges of communication barriers during negotiation processes in culturally diverse organisations. The research also explores various challenges that persist in Irish organisations when it comes to maintaining a highly diverse workforce and explores different techniques that are employed by these organisations to resolve these issues. Moreover, the research relies on primary collected data and qualitative research for which 10 participants are interviewed. The research was focused on Irish organisations and collected data from 10 professionals that have been working in a highly diversified organisation for at least 2 years to understand the challenges and issues that they have identified. After conducting a literature review, that analysed exiting data found in journal articles, case studies and other credible resources the research relied on primary data collection to discuss the identified areas of study. The research has shown that development and enforcement of comprehensive policies, technological driven training and development and adaption to new technologies and improving employee engagement are some of the most common ways that Irish companies are addressing the issues of communication barriers effecting the negotiation process in a diverse environment. The three themes identified in the research include language barriers, stereotyping barriers, conflicts, and disputes due to lack of communication, and enforcement of the mutual benefit policy.



# **Introduction**

## **Background and Context**

The diversity in the social, political, economic and geographical fabric around the world is known as multiculturalism (Barkai, 2007). Multicultural organisations (MCOs) can be witnessed in every economic field of the world. Since the existence of multiculturalism is prevalent; it has led to the integration of diverse cultures in MCOs (Gelfand & Brett, 2004; Groves, et al., 2015). The number and size of MCOs are accelerating in Ireland as well. Therefore, the variety in the customers, stakeholders and marketing techniques is visible (Bederman, 2010). Any enterprise that offers the opportunity of work to employees from diverse cultures is called a multicultural organisation. These organisations serve as a collective platform that caters for the employment needs of people belonging to different cultures. In the current times MCOs are providing employment opportunities to a larger percentage of job seekers in the world's economy (Appadurai, 2000). Since a multicultural workforce is a valuable asset for the companies, due to their specific and general skills, the understanding of their cultural norms and values becomes mandatory.

With the increased cultural diversification in Irish firms, the challenges pertaining to negotiation within organisations are intensified (Jeong, 2016). There are different factors that makes the negotiation process difficult in a multi-cultural environment including communication barriers such as language barriers, complications in communication, differences in beliefs and customs etc. These communication barriers make the process of negotiation overly complex and difficult (Nowicki, et al., 2019). Resultantly it effects the overall organisation culture and employee relations. In various parts of the world, the recognition and understanding of the cultural values of the employees facilitates the employee management for the recruiter (Hofstede, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary for management to overcome communication gaps and hindrances. In addition, it is essential to prevent communication lapses. It is considered essentially important to address the communication barriers in the negotiation process in order to ensure effective negotiations in the organisation.

The increasing interest in negotiation literature has induced theorists to give various definitions of the term. Zartman describes negotiation as an activity between members that results with an agreement of mutual gain. For Ferraro, negotiation is “a process between people who share some common interests, people who stand to benefit from bringing the process to a successful conclusion.” The comparison between the two definitions will reveal the development of the negotiation concept, its functions and dimensions. Zartman believes that it is a means to solving problems, while for Ferraro with negotiation a better co-operation can be developed among groups.

As mentioned before negotiations are part of every culture and sometimes the process of negotiation can break down when there are clashes of culture during the process. For example, diverse individuals coming from different cultures will find it harder to negotiate and find a common ground as compared to those who come from the same cultural backgrounds. This is one of the major ways, international negotiations between governments and other sensitive platforms require the appointment of highly skilled and experienced diplomats that are able to perfectly negotiate terms between two parties (Caputo, et al., 2019). This research focuses on the negotiation process amongst the diverse residents of Dublin’s real estate sector. It has been observed that the real estate market of Ireland has changed drastically over the years and as a number of immigrants comment, the country has increased, so has the average rent price for residential units. The influx of immigrants in Ireland has increased since the economic boom of 1980 and now students that are more international are coming to the country to seek higher education. This has contributed to the property crises that the country currently faces (Kelly, 2017). One of the major reasons behind the rising rent in Dublin, Ireland is limited residential units and a lack of effective negotiation abilities of the immigrants. This has contributed to the rising rental prices in urban cities.

The study focuses on the negotiation process in a working environment; these negotiations can range from planning and discussion on internal matters as negotiation processes with new potential hires during interviews and other job placement related discussions. These negotiation techniques and

processes will also highlight cultural aspects and communication barriers to see how these factors can influence the overall negotiation process.

## **Problem Statement**

Cultural diversity has increased in Ireland in recent decades which led to a high influx of a diverse workforce in companies operating in the country. Communication barriers in the Negotiation process among multi-cultural organisations can affect the productivity of employees and organisations. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the role of communication barriers in the negotiation process. Exploring the role of communication barriers and factors related to it will help in developing effective negotiation techniques which can help organisations to overcome communication barriers in negotiations. The research also helps identify the main forms of communication that are used during these negotiations and how different communicational forms contribute to harmony in social interaction amongst diverse employees.

## **Research Aims & Objectives**

The aim of the study is to investigate the role of communication barriers in negotiation processes in a multi-cultural environment. The research focused on multi-cultural companies in Ireland.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify negotiation techniques and processes employed in Irish multicultural firms
- To identify how communication barriers can affect the negotiations process in diverse working environments.
- To investigate the effectiveness of different negotiation techniques that can help overcome communication barriers.
- To provide recommendations that can help improve negotiation processes in multicultural organisations.

Chapter one will discuss relevant existing literature that will explore how negotiation processes are concluded in a multi-cultural society and how effective negotiation processes can be in diverse organisations. Chapter one will also identify and explore different communications barriers that effect the overall negotiations process which will help determine the main causes of negotiations falling apart. Moreover, chapter 1 will also identify and explore different negotiation techniques. Chapter 1 is followed by the research methodology (Chapter 2) that will outline the overall structure of the research. Identified data analysis methods in chapter 4 are utilised in chapter 3 where primary collected data has been analysed followed by the discussion in chapter 5.

## **Scope of the Research**

The research focuses on identifying how communication barriers can affect the negotiations process in a multi-cultural working environment and seeks to identify different techniques on how this can be resolved. The research does not aim to analyse why communication barriers persist or how they can affect the overall negotiations process, to keep the overall scope of the study on a singular area the focus is on the “how” rather than the “why”.

In order to evaluate why communication barriers can affect negotiation processes, there will be a need to increase the sample size and conduct both qualitative and quantitative research. This would have been time consuming and would require face-to-face interactions as well as visiting different organisations in-person which is not possible due to Covid-19.

# **Chapter 1: Review of the Literature**

## **1.1. Negotiation Process in Multi-Cultural Society**

In order to understand how negotiations are conducted in a culturally diverse society or a diverse organisation, there is a need to evaluate existing literature and researches that has focused on this area and have thoroughly analysed how effective and ineffective negotiation processes go in a diverse environment. This will help in the overall data collection and analysis efforts as it will provide some contextual background that is backed by existing literature which is essential for evaluating newly collected primary data.

Negotiation processes generate from the interaction between the negotiating parties. Largely the objective of negotiators is to shape their strategic choices. For a joint gain either an integrative or distributive approach is adopted (Jeong, 2016). The researchers have declared that the frequency of negotiation processes is directly correlated to joint gains. People in various cultures employ different languages to design negotiations with specific goals. However, in multicultural societies it is more relationship focused and affects the framework of the interlocutors' thoughts and behaviours. Beckett (2020) attributes negotiation to be the process which contributes in building, maintaining and restructuring relationships. Negotiators can have both relational and outcome goals. The negotiation process becomes more complex when it occurs in a multicultural environment. Tadmor et al. (2010) claim that despite various definitions of negotiation, one thing is common that negotiation is a process. Communication styles adopted by the interlocutors are defined as tactics that are employed to achieve certain goals. Consciously or unconsciously, tactics are used in combination to form a strategy.

Successful intercultural negotiations start with the notion that all people are the same and belong to a culture that endows specific characteristics to them. Purushotam (2000) declared that though people have multi-pigmented skin, different languages, clothing and lifestyle, but possess similar desires for recognition and conflict resolution. It is observed that whenever there is intercultural interaction, power defines the procedures and outcomes (Jeong, 2016). As people become familiar with the cultures they

become aware of cultural differences that lead to efforts of proving superiority of a culture in the negotiation process.

Beckett (2020) declared that multicultural society develops when people from various regions of the world gather in one landscape. Since each segment is part of a particular culture, so maintains its uniqueness for the short or long term. However, the regular negotiation processes move the cultural groups to adapt to the dominant culture to some extent. Therefore, to gain the approval of the host country both the emigrant and immigrant have to compromise on the identity and values in the negotiation process. The need for survival induces the people to adopt forms of negotiation that are acceptable in multi-cultural societies (Cojocaru, 2010). In the context of larger exigencies, negotiation is embodying a voluntary character rather than a conflicting one. In management of collective identities, the acceptance is of one's cultural existence. Within the context of a multicultural society where the endeavours is to adjust with other members, one has to adjust one's identity that is expressed in intercultural dialogue (Cojocaru, 2010). Negotiation processes in a confused and mixed way is present in everyday dialogue for the individuals. Doerfel (2005) states that particularism does not endow universalism to any culture but requires recognition from the other cultures. The desire of acknowledgment motivates the members of the society to engage in a dialogue with others. The negotiation is a process of identifying each other. The negotiation process can be initiated when the members of the society are willing to challenge their social practices and reshape their viewpoint. The negotiation process leads to changes in cultural forms and values. Brett et al. (2007) observed that cultures apprehensive to change are static and destined to extinct. The negotiation paves the path for progressive initiative for achievement of universal values. However, the risk of interruption in the negotiation process is always there when the minority rejects to assimilate or the dominant culture tries to impose its identity and values on the members of other cultures.

The dominant political group and integrated minorities form the physiognomy of a multicultural society. When the political community is stable, willing to recognize the cultural minority and grant it the right to express its viewpoint, with the undercurrent desire of assimilation (Ward, 2018). However, if the

dominant culture is threatened by the ruling intentions of the immigrant group the recognition is either absent or defective. A dialogue is possible only if both parties have something in common. The similarity in any two cultures would be the need to be acknowledged by acknowledging others. Indeed, diversity induces the people to broaden their perspective and find a common basis. However, Viola et al. (2015) proposes that multiculturalism leads to segregation when every cultural group initiates its own institutes and bodies. The UK has denied embracing multiculturalism by not allowing ethnic minorities to practice their identities and values. Likewise, the French political and social model requires every citizen to adopt French characteristics. However, the intercultural approach in Ireland emphasizes the integration of all national groups in society, providing them opportunity for expression and negotiation (Ayerbe & Bojikian, 2011). Negotiation falls in between multiculturalism and assimilation which enhances the ability of quick understanding and active participation of the members.

## **1.2. Communication Barriers in a Multicultural Society**

There is a need to identify different barriers and reasons behind ineffective negotiations and identify how negotiations fall apart. One of the major identified reasons behind ineffective negotiations is communication barriers. Therefore this section focuses on identifying different types of communication barriers that persist in a multicultural society. After identifying these barriers, it will become easier to conduct data analysis and help identifying different kinds of communication barriers that are present in diverse Irish organisations.

Multicultural communication is based on the dynamics of communication across cultures. It is based on exploring what happens when people belonging to different cultures meet and what happens when people belonging to a variety of cultures gather less than one umbrella (Sael, 2019). The quality of communication is hampered due to communication barriers while interacting with people belonging to different cultures. These factors include

1. Ethnocentrism and Relativism of Culture
2. Incompetency in Understanding the Cultures

3. Ethical Prejudice and Harassment
4. Lingual Divergence

### **1.2.1. Ethnocentrism and Relativism of Culture**

Relativism is concerned with the study of values and interests in different cultures. It is the evaluation of the cultures on the standards of right and wrong. This approach acts as an obstacle for other cultures when it comes to cultural norms (Fallace, 2019). Since the prevalent viewpoint is that the customs belonging to other cultures are inappropriate.

Ethnocentrism is based on the mind set of people who believe that their culture and traditions are right and superior to any other (Yongkun, 2018). All people are ethnocentric to some extent. The norms, culture, and traditions that are different from the norms, traditions, and culture of the society are considered unusual, abnormal, and unacceptable by society.

### **1.2.2. Incompetency in Understanding the Cultures**

A particular culture may demonstrate the behaviour and attributes of people that are similar but not all individuals belonging to one particular culture need to be the same. The stereotypes are developed among the people when it is presumed that certain norms, values, or attributes belonging from one particular culture define the people belonging from that culture (Intezari et al, 2017). The main reason for developing stereotypes is limited knowledge related to cultural diversity. Understanding different cultures mean being aware of the individuals belonging from different cultures might have some resemblance and variations from the culture of the society.

### **1.2.3. Ethical Prejudice and Harassment**

Discrimination is eliminating the people or being hurtful towards people belonging from different cultures or has any other differences. It is important to develop business communication between different genders and provide a clear understanding related to the remarks and actions to avoid sexual



harassment (Ben-Asher, 2018). Sexual harassment is the unacceptable and undesirable behaviour against which legal action can be taken by both genders.

#### **1.2.4. Lingual Divergence**

Language can play the role of a challenge rather than opportunity in conversation. The most challenging difference in a multicultural society is the elimination of the language barrier. When the communication process occurs in lingual groups other than English, it could lead to misunderstanding among people. While communicating with a large number of people who speak a different language other than English, creates misunderstanding among people. Cultural conflicts are the reasons for differences in the values and norms of the behaviour of people belonging to a different culture. A person tends to act and behave as per the culture; however, the behaviour and attitude can be interpreted from the opposite point of view by a person who does not belong to the same culture (Lyausheva et al, 2020). This situation creates misunderstandings among the people and arise to conflict. Often people believe that their behaviour and beliefs are the norms, often forgetting about the diversity and multicultural environment of the society.

There are three dimensions of cultural conflicts. The two dimensions are content and relational, which every culture conflict has, however, the third dimension is about a friction of cultural interests. The third factor is considered as the source of conflict between the groups because the individual identities are determined by it (Mello & Rentsch, 2015).

There are three signs to identify cultural conflicts. Mostly complicating factors are active in the background of the conflicts. Multiplicity of the cultures generates different behavioural expectations towards the members of other cultural groups (Sarr & Manninen, 2019). The content and relational issues can be rooted in cultural differences if the conflict does not resolve in time. Even if the issues of disagreement are insignificant there are broader chances that the conflict can reoccur and raise the strong emotions. Learning about cultures can help to prevent cross-culture conflicts. Cultural understanding can be developed by reading the relevant culture, engaging in a communication with members of other

cultures, training sessions and learning about the previous experiences with certain people. The knowledge can be obtained through training programs, general reading, communicating with the people belonging to different cultures, and learning from the experiences of people (Murdock, 2016). For conflict resolution, people should understand the aspects related to cultural education and understanding of different cultures. Culture awareness should be developed among people through a broad knowledge of the values and beliefs of other cultures. Other cultures should not be analysed through the prism of cultural stereotypes.

### **1.3. Multi-cultural disputes and Negotiation**

In order to understand the negotiation process in a multicultural environment, there is a need to also emphasize upon the potential disputes that can arise during the negotiation. This helps in addressing specific issues and disputes that can come up during the negotiation processes not only in Ireland but at any other diverse place of employment. For this reason different theories, models, and research articles have been reviewed to develop understanding of how multicultural disputes can affect the overall negotiations process.

As stated by Groves, et al (2015) while living in a multi-cultural society, the disputes and conflicts are inevitable. The mediator is responsible to reconcile the disputes and conflicts in an area where they agree mutually to a resolution. To navigate the clients to a resolution that is comfortable and amicable, it is important to identify the issues of conflict for the individuals who are diverse culturally (Appadurai, 2000). It is pertinent to gain understanding of the cultural background and anticipate how it could affect the issues leading to the conflict. For mediators who practice in the areas where cultural diversity is eminent, the understanding of differences of culture is a key to strategies of negotiation employed to reach consensus and agreement (Andy, 2016).

According to Barkai, (2007) Cultural diversity affects disputes and mediation is required to navigate parties to reach a solution. For example in family mediation involving Asians and Latin Americans, it is important to identify that these cultures advocate the fundamental role of child rearing to the mother.

Historically, in such cultures, the predominant role is of the father's to fulfil financial responsibility for the family. A mother is considered a caretaker and decision maker for the child. The legal system therefore assigns the primary role of decision-making to the mother of the child. However, in certain cultures, the mother is asked to remarry to provide the child with financial care due to social stigma. The preconceived cultural assumption is quite difficult to steer them towards concepts such as shared responsibility of parenting and equal time-sharing. Knowing the cultural background and preparing for such notions allow mediators to know the conflict that could arise in the mediation process between clients from such backgrounds (Bederman, 2010; Bult, et al., 2016).

To resolve conflicts in a multi-cultural environment, the Thomas-Kilmann model is used having 5 approaches to resolving a dispute in a multicultural environment (Thomas, 2008). The first strategy is avoiding. It is important to use an avoiding strategy by trying to ignore or sidestep the conflict hoping it would resolve or dissipate itself. Another strategy of negotiation is accommodating, where it resolves disputes essentially including steps to satisfy the concerns of other parties or demands at the expense of own desires and needs. Another strategy is compromising where it involves finding an acceptable resolution, which will not entirely but partly fulfil the concerns and desires of all parties involved irrespective of race, culture, or geographic location (Hofstede, 1980). Moreover, competing strategy uses dispute resolution to satisfy own desires at a cost of other parties involved. The last strategy is collaboration. It involves finding a solution to a problem or dispute to satisfy the concerns entirely of all the parties involved. The model uses two dimensions of people such as cooperativeness and assertiveness. Assertiveness includes taking risks to satisfy needs while cooperativeness includes action taking to satisfy the needs of the other party (Shell, 2001; Bult, et al., 2016).

The attitude of negotiation in a multicultural environment also plays a significant role that could be a win-win attitude or win-lose attitude (Barkai, 2007). Because of differences in culture, personalities, or both, the individuals and communities appear to make a deal with two attitudes either a process in which both gain positive outcomes or win-win solutions and the other is a struggle where one side of the party wins and the other side loses having a win-lose relation (Ayerbe & Bojikian, 2011; Barkai, 2007). Win-

win solutions are more collaborative and effective. Both parties become happy and form a good relationship with one another. Another type of negotiation process affecting culture is personal style having a formal or informal type of negotiation (Appadurai, 2000). Personal style concerns the way negotiators talk to others, interact, speak, etc. culture influence and personal style of negotiation. It was found that German individuals use more formal style as compared to Americans (Brannen & Salk, 2000). A negotiator with formal style focuses on addressing other parties by avoiding personal anecdotes and refrain from questions touching on family life or private life of the people who are involved in the negotiation (Sedgwick, 2007). On the other hand, the negotiator with informal style starts discussion informally and interacts with others seeking to develop friendly relationships with other team members. Each culture has its own formalities with its own special meanings. They are another source of communication with the people who share the culture (Slater, 2001). For example, Americans call someone by their first name as an act of friendship and it is considered to be a good thing with them however, Japanese people find it offensive and disrespectful (Jalilvand, 2015).

Another type of negotiation affecting multi-cultural people is building an agreement through either bottom up or top down processes. Negotiating the lives, culture, businesses, etc. is an inductive or a deductive process. It starts from agreement of principles to reach specific terms or top-down (Deductive) or it begins with agreement on specifics such as quality, price, delivery, or other aspects of living and combining these values or factors to reach consensus or contract is another type or bottom-up (Inductive). Different cultures have tendency to focus on one approach over the other. French, Indians, Argentineans use deductive approaches while Americans, Brazilians, and Mexicans use inductive approaches for negotiations (Barkai, 2007; Baker, et al., 1996).

A research article supports that certain cultures are more risk averse than others. The culture of negotiation affects the willingness of one side to take risks and to divulge information, tolerate uncertainties, try new approaches, in a proposed set of actions. Americans are risk takers by comparison whereas the Japanese focus on needing large information and intricate processes of decision-making, having the tendency of being risk averse (Appadurai, 2000). Additionally, in a research, it was found

that negotiating styles such as personalities has a broader range of variation. The negotiating traits can also be used to form a continuum having the purpose to identify negotiating traits affected by culture to show possible variations that traitor factor may take (Barkai, 2007; Appadurai, 2000).

#### **1.4. Negotiation Techniques in Cross-Cultural Organisations**

Finally, different negotiation techniques have also been identified while reading up on existing literature that is focused on negotiation processes in culturally diverse environments (Ayerbe & Bojikian, 2011). Business organisations are aware of the fact that they need to involve different kinds of negotiations to carry on the organisational functions smoothly. The companies have to engage in negotiations both with the shareholders and stakeholders (Bederman, 2010). The studies reveal that despite various kinds of negotiations, the organisational culture and socio-cultural background of the employees influence the negotiations greatly. The facts of the negotiation can be divided into two types: information regarding the interest of the negotiator and information about their ability. In any type of negotiation inclination and authority information is indispensable, since the inclination determines the probability of the integrative compromise that emerges from distributive bargaining (Brannen & Salk, 2000). Information collection is a complicated process because power is demonstrated during the negotiation process. Moreover, it is observed that most of the perceptions embody some kind of bias. The negotiator can assume that he has more authority than the target negotiator or in some cases may be influenced by the argument of the other party. The representatives can be affected by other variables as well. Inducement, ingratiation, verification and requests are the factors that can prejudice the perceptions of the negotiator. In successful integrative negotiation not only the resource formation but the ability of the interlocutor to understand the agreement points and mutual beneficial gains is essential. When the negotiator has clear perception of personal and target interests he can reach a more integrative outcome. Additionally, the information about the level of urgency leads to sympathetic as what is the preference and what is not (Jeong, 2016). The information about the interests of the members also reveals the significance of the subject under negotiation. The interest of the negotiators is evident when during the dialogue

judgement errors are ignored so that the communication process can be continued smoothly (Andy, 2016).

The role of the cross-cultural management is to develop various stages i.e. planning, understanding the viewpoint of the participants and foreseeing the outcomes if the negotiation fails.

#### **1.4.1. Preparing to negotiations**

The participants of the negotiation whether employer or employee invest a great amount of time in preparing for the dialogue with the opposite party. The negotiators should be proficient in the issue to be discussed in the communication (Andy, 2016). They should have up to date knowledge of the latest and correct facts and figures to successfully argue for their interests. In the case the target party does not agree with the personal interests, the persuasive statistics could be employed to bring the members into agreement (Barkai, 2007). Hence, it is highly recommended to collect the related information in preparation stage of any negotiation. Furthermore, the preparation is an ongoing process since after completion of one phase of negotiation planning for the next phase starts. When the negotiation ends up in a mutual interest the preparation for the next argument begins.

#### **1.4.2. Knowing the interest of Parties**

When the negotiator is well aware of the interest of the other party, it is easier to convince them as the perspective of the target negotiator is manipulated for personal gain (Ayerbe & Bojikian, 2011). Though it requires a lot of effort and time in identifying the interests of the other members, once the knowledge is gained it can be greatly helpful in achieving mutual goals. Integrative and distributive are the two types of negotiation (Brannen & Salk, 2000). The distributive negotiation strategy brings forth a winner-loser relationship, while in integrative bargaining both groups are co-operative and ends up in a win-win outcome. In this agreement every member gains protection for its interests without hindering the other members and the differences are reconciled for the greater interest of the negotiators (Appadurai, 2000).

### **1.3.3. Understanding the consequences**

In a deadlock the negotiators can work for other options. The third party can be called in so that the intensity of the dispute can be mitigated and the parties can be engaged in negotiation until they reach a substantial outcome (Andy, 2016). Conciliation is the form of third party involvement wherein the continuous efforts are put in with the objective to bring into agreement the conflicting members. In some cases, the third party involvement can take the form of mediation wherein every member is convinced to arrive at a mutually beneficial outcome. Arbitration is another type of mediation when the third party takes the decision for the conflicting members. Usually, the third party is impartial and is selected with the mutual agreement of the negotiators (Barrett, et al., 1999). Therefore, there is higher probability that the participants will agree with the decision of arbitrators. Mediation and arbitration are now widely used to resolve employee's clashes. Unions are also useful in settling disputes with individual employees. In labour management issues, the labour mediation or arbitration is employed, since it has proved to be more effective and timely than other strategies. If the collective bargaining disputes are taken to court, it would prove expensive and time consuming for all the parties involved (Andy, 2016).

The intercultural differences between the employees and employers in MCOs can crop up many problems. The behavioural expression of one culture could be misinterpreted by the other cultural members. Therefore, it is indispensable to be aware of the cultural norms and values of other members before starting a negotiation process (Barrett, et al., 1999). It is recommended to hire consultants who could provide in-depth information about the particular characteristics of the culture. To avoid any complications in the negotiating process, the employers tend to hire consultants with cultural as well as legal awareness so that he could guide both in cultural and legal disputes. The misunderstanding in cultural interpretation can affect the negotiation process and the outcomes (Bult, et al., 2016). At times even in the members of the same culture the misunderstanding can crop up but the probability of discordancy is higher in representatives from various cultures. In this scenario, to avoid the possible clash in multicultural organisations the understanding and recognition of the other cultures is essential.

In the absence of this knowledge the symbols and gestures can be misperceived, influencing the positive progress of the negotiation (Barrett, et al., 1999).

Culture is a variable that can influence the negotiation process. The beliefs and values of the culture can have both the stronger or weaker impact on the dialogue. The theorists believe that group membership and culture can not only determine the approach of the negotiation but can also affect the outcomes (Barrett, et al., 1999). The possession and responsibility attached to the cultural members' shapes the communication process and its results. In the whole accountability, group consequences and cultural process the approach-oriented mediation is omnipresent. In international business communities, the negotiation is extended to other organisations or enterprises emerging from different countries and looking for similarities (Brannen & Salk, 2000). Theorists have enlisted many factors that can influence the negotiators' approach. These factors include availability of alternatives, the confidence of negotiators, the background of the clash, ethical values, available timeframe, discipline, political attachment and cultural gap. The style and behaviour of the negotiators reflect the policy, geography and religious background of the cultural group. The difference in preference, understanding, and behavioural attitude can lead to conflicts in most of the cases. Whenever, the private interests and unprincipled behaviour is at stake the friction may occur (Thomas, 2008). The business negotiations differ from the cultural negotiation on the basis of financial aspects, legal complications, ideological difference and uncertainty. Not only the culture but cultural expectations greatly influence the business negotiations. The theorists declare that the underpinning of any business culture are the time-tested and traditional practices along with the gradually evolved over years thinking mode that establishes the corporate culture in the country. Moreover, the cultural interest creates communicating rate differentials (Brannen & Salk, 2000). Thus, the knowledge of the culture and its negotiating strategies plays a crucial role in the success of any dialogue. The behaviour of the negotiator is determined by the attitude of the target negotiator, his learning level and evaluating capacity. Therefore, the misunderstanding on one part can result in disappointment. However, in some cultures the negotiation is both compulsory and comfortable (Ayerbe & Bojikian, 2011).



## **1.5 Cultural Communications Barriers in the Workplace**

Cultural factors can play crucial role as invisible barriers when it comes to communication and affecting the negotiation processes. In the face of increasing globalization, companies need to focus on removing invisible barriers to improve and enhance effective cross-cultural communication. Removing these barriers has become essential in order to promote a productive and inclusive organisational environment and develop a culture that signified diversity (Barrett, et al., 1999). It also creates opportunities to develop the organisation and broaden its geographical perspective. When people from different countries, races, values, and every corner of the world come together, many issues can arise. Working in a multicultural team presents many challenges, disagreements and conflicts. These challenges and conflicts have some impact on individual and organisational performance (Brannen & Salk, 2000). In a multicultural internal environment, companies need to find solutions to improve communication and bring more transparency and clarity in the negotiation processes. Cross-cultural exchange must be effective in avoiding disagreements and conflicts in order to achieve business goals. In this cultural exchange, people from different cultures communicate with each other. To be effective in intercultural communication, companies need to understand the obstacles associated with the intercultural communication process and find ways to overcome these obstacles in order to be effective in intercultural communication (Appadurai, 2000).

Following are different ways identified by Ayerbi et al. (2018) to resolve cultural communicational barriers in the workplace

### **1.5.1 Misunderstanding**

Misunderstandings are the biggest obstacle to communication in a multicultural environment. This is common among people of different cultures with different values and beliefs. Differences between different cultures lead to a high degree of fear and anxiety, leading to misunderstandings (Bult, et al., 2016). During the overall tenure of the employee these misunderstandings can cause fear and uncertainty that can limit the employee to work at their full capacity and to the best of their abilities.

### **1.5.2 Norms and Roles**

In addition to misunderstandings, cultural and organisational norms are culturally defined rules that determine acceptable and appropriate behaviour. Someone who sets their own rules and expects others to do the same. Each culture has its own standards and each has its own acceptable and appropriate behaviour. People who work in a multicultural environment usually do not understand the norms of other cultures and therefore take corresponding actions (Andy, 2016). Roles are compensation criteria that apply to a particular group. In certain cultures, men, women, children, parents / guardians, husbands, and wives are assigned different roles. These roles vary from culture to culture, and multicultural teams have multiple role conflicts. This leads to further anxiety and disrupts the communication process.

### **1.5.3 Beliefs and Values**

Beliefs and values vary from person to person. In the global working community, everyone's beliefs and values depend on their culture. To communicate effectively, there is a need to understand the main beliefs and values that transcend culture.

### **1.5.4 Stereotyping**

Paying attention to the judgment of the person is crucial while working in a culturally diverse environment. Inadequate information about people can lead to unwise decisions about cross-cultural communication. Cultural stereotypes exaggerate or over-generalize views of people, leading to increased fear. Everyone stereotypes other individuals or groups of people. Stereotypes usually result from fear of the group in which we are stereotyped and lack of knowledge of the group. These stereotypes are the main reason for conflicting cultural differences and are misleading (Spangle & Isenhart, 2002). Stereotyping has been also identified as one of the key causes that can lead to communicational barriers which can affect the negotiation processes as a whole. Both intended and unintended stereotyping can derail the negotiation process if not resolved.

### **1.5.5 Ethnocentrism**

According to Ayerbi et al. 2011, Thinking of our own culture and the behaviour of our group as the norms of all other groups. Our own cultural experience inadvertently makes us feel that our culture is unmistakable and distinctive. This ethnocentrism raises the fear and level of anxiety at the workplace as it promotes the idea that what everyone else does is wrong or not the norm. At work, ethnocentrism is directly proportional to the degree of fear and levels of anxiety. Members of multicultural teams face many problems due to ethnocentrism (Tinsley, 2001). Therefore there is a need to focus on self-reflection when it comes to determining what the actual norms of the culture are and what are just personally perceived norms.

## **1.6 Overcoming Cross Cultural Barriers**

### **1.6.1 Measures to overcome barriers in cross-cultural communication**

Cross-cultural communication skills allow organisations to achieve their goals with due consideration of the values, norms and beliefs of those affected by their activities. Business organisations need to develop cross-cultural capabilities in their organisational structure to overcome the above barriers to cross-cultural communication. Cross-cultural ability is defined as the ability to participate in a series of activities, the core of which is a common communication rule. This ability is supported by knowledge, skills and attitudes (Ward, 2018). Successful development of cross-cultural capabilities requires three pillars. These factors that enable orderly cross-cultural communication are cross-cultural sensitivities, cross-cultural perceptions, and cross-cultural abilities. The key aspect of intercultural communication is identified as intercultural sensitivity.

This aspect needs to be developed so that individuals can understand the differences between other cultures. By developing cross-cultural sensitivities, individuals can acquire self-image, neutrality and self-ownership. The cognitive aspect of cross-cultural communication is called cross-cultural awareness. Cross-cultural awareness means not only increasing cultural awareness, but also increasing self-awareness. Employees need to be aware and aware of the differences between cultures. Differences

in values, beliefs, opinions and interpretations. Employees need to undergo basic cross-cultural training to be sensitive to cross-cultural training in the workplace. Employees need to be aware and aware of the differences between cultures (Andy, 2016). Differences in values, beliefs, opinions and interpretations. Employees need to undergo basic cross-cultural training to be sensitive to cross-cultural training in the workplace. Employees need to be aware and conscious of the differences between cultures. Differences in values, beliefs, opinions and interpretations. Employees need to undergo basic cross-cultural training to be sensitive to cross-cultural training in the workplace. This can help develop negotiations skills of on-board employees and promote according future negotiation activities with both internal and external stakeholders of the organisation.

It has been observed that, language barriers are the biggest problem for multicultural teams. Language training should be provided to those who have many opportunities to interact with foreigners. Organisations need to claim the mutual benefits of all cultures in the workplace. Employees who enjoy the same benefits as other cultural backgrounds face a win-win situation. Companies need to focus on establishing a new corporate culture. A generally accepted culture in which one understands and respects the values and beliefs of another (Barkai, 2007). Senior managers need to work to create an organisational environment that is free of conflicts and differences. Through cross-cultural knowledge training, we will improve the cross-cultural abilities of our employees and comply with the policy of mutual benefit. This is a mutually beneficial situation for cross-cultural people in the workplace. People with cultural abilities means learning to overcome many cross-cultural obstacles.

## **Chapter 2: Research Methodology and Methods**

### **2.1 Research Methodology**

The research methodology is aimed at exploring the role of communication barriers in Negotiation processes in multi-cultural environments. The research question nature and the subject under consideration determine the research methodology or research strategy according to Denzin and Lincoln (2015). The purpose of this research is to explore and understand the meaning of constructed hypotheses i.e. the communication barrier in the Negotiation process. The research purpose was not to offer the whole ultimate truth about the topic of research but to explore a particular way of looking at and deriving meaning from the under investigation phenomenon (Snyder, 2019). By focusing on how communication barriers effect the negotiation barriers rather than why they effect the process, it keeps the overall scope of the study focused on a single element. This is required as the nature of the study is academic and there are time constraints and limited resources to work with. As a methodology for this research, a qualitative research approach was chosen because it enhances both the perception and the interpretation underlying human interaction. In-depth interviews were taken to collect data. The following paragraphs outline a detailed rationale for selecting the appropriate approaches and methods.

### **2.2 Research philosophy**

The research concentrates on the philosophy of epistemology, based on analytical methods. Epistemology examines the nature and extent of existence and true belief (Wilson and Hollinshead, 2019). It evaluates the essence and application of cognition to concepts such as reasoning, interpretation and reality (Kumar, 2019). This discusses how awareness and questions about specific information criteria can be generated. Epistemology has numerous branches which include historical perspectives, essentialism, constructivism, perennialism, idealism, progressivism, rationalism, empiricism etc. The current research focuses on the branch of interpretivism. It aims to gauge a subjective meaning of a social phenomenon. The reason for selecting such a philosophy was to attain understanding of the

research question from the individual's perspective and generate common themes from them. This allows the researcher to concentrate on the situation details, the context behind those details, subjective interpretations and motivating action.

### **2.3 Research approach**

For the purpose of this research, an inductive approach was used. Under this approach, researchers start with specific observations that lead to the development of generalized research theories and conclusions (De Costa, et al., 2019). The primary reason behind the inductive approach was the context in which the current research question was constructed. The inductive approach is also best suited for small size samples producing qualitative data, which is the methodology of this research. The major weakness of the inductive approach, however, is that it produces a wider range of theories and conclusions based on few observations, which in turn challenges the reliability of research findings (Snyder, 2019).

### **2.4 Primary research**

The two major forms for data analysis are the primary and the secondary data collection methods. Participants themselves provide the primary evidence, such from the interviews or surveys (De Costa, et al., 2019). Primary data collection is the assessment of individual perspectives and their direct opinions. The primary method of collecting data was selected for this research. Data is primarily collected from first-hand sources by a researcher using methods such as surveys, interviews, or experiments. It is gathered directly from primary sources with the research project in mind (Wilson and Hollinshead, 2019). The reason behind using primary data collection is that it provides more credibility to the report because the data is collected by the researcher and it is verified. This also helps to use the latest data in making conclusions and produce more accurate and up to date results.

### **2.5 Qualitative data analysis**

Qualitative research is described as a method of research that focuses on the collection of data through conversational communication and open-ended communication. This perspective is not only

about "what," but rather about "why" people think so. Denzin and Lincoln (2015) define qualitative research as a multidimensional method of research that includes a naturalistic and interpretative approach to subjects. A holistic view of the phenomenon under investigation is given to the multiple facets of qualitative research. The principles that underlie qualitative research are provided by Denzin and Lincoln (2015):

- The qualitative research method is a holistic approach which takes a broader view and starts to seek the whole phenomenon for understanding.
- Qualitative research focuses on understanding a certain social environment, and not necessarily on predicting this situation.
- Qualitative research requires analyses that take time; ongoing data analyses are required.
- The researchers must be made into a qualitative research design tool. It also includes room for the researcher's own preferences and ideological preferences to be described.
- The design of high quality research includes informed consent decisions and addresses ethical concerns.

The goal is explorative and descriptive rather than explanatory in qualitative research (Wilson and Hollinshead, 2019). The aim of this study was to study the role of communication barriers in negotiations in the multicultural environment of Ireland's multicultural society. Qualitative research was considered appropriate for this research project because it would directly assess the opinions of the participants and would provide first-hand knowledge about the research question. The objective of the research was to explore a specific significance without making the results the absolute truth. Discourses analysed the various constructions presented in this study relating to the barrier to communication, negotiation and the multi-cultural environment (Stockdale, 2019). Moreover a quantitative approach was not used because it requires a large data set to analyse numerical data into quantitative variables and due to Covid-19 restriction it was difficult to approach the necessary number of individuals to produce accurate results that could help meet the aim and objectives of the study.

## **2.6 Data Collection**

The main method of data collection was interviews in this study. An unstructured approach to interviews was taken so that the participants could openly answer their perspective on the research question and this approach enabled the study participants to understand the problem from their own perspectives. In-depth interviews were used for this research with the sample size of 10 participants. Through in-depth interviews, the aim is to detect the emotions, feelings and views of participants in a research. In addition, unstructured interviews provide flexibility in the flow of the interview so that conclusions are made which were not originally intended to be drawn on a research topic. There is, however, a risk that the interview may differ from the research objectives and goals set out above (Snyder, 2019). For the data collection tools, the research involved the use of the unstructured questionnaire, which was used for the researcher as an interview guide. The following are a few examples of questions contained in the unstructured questionnaire:

1. What do you think are the most common and most occurring Disputes in a Multi-cultural Environment?
2. How many times you have faced Communication Barrier in Multicultural Society?
3. What are the current issues in the Negotiation Process in a Multi-cultural Society?
4. What is the role of communication barriers in Negotiation processes in multi-cultural environments?
5. What are your thoughts about Irish Multicultural society and the communication barriers in them?

## **2.7 Sampling Criteria**

It is very important for researchers to connect to particular individuals and groups to produce relevant data. Through using the process of convenience sampling method, researchers reached out to



company executives in community engagement, communication and negotiation experts. The researcher selected this sampling technique because it is conveniently accessible, non-randomly and provides the ease of the data collection. The sample size for this research was 10 participants. Those participants that had the availability of Internet and social networks were included in the study, because the interviews were conducted online.

## **2.8 Data Analysis**

Qualitative data is often contextual, subjective and typically consisting of detailed knowledge in the form of words. Thematic analysis includes reading a large number of transcripts to look for similarities or differences and then identify patterns and create categories. The data in this research was analysed through thematic analysis. The thematic appreciation analysis would be used as a method to analyse the personal interpretation of individuals in the field of communication and negotiations pertaining to multicultural barriers. A special type has significance in qualitative research. The thematic analysis is a qualitative data processing tool. It is also used in a variety of documents, including interview transcripts.

## **2.9 Ethical guidelines**

The most important ethic followed in this study was objective analysis and accurate reporting. Researchers must not use plausible or incorrect knowledge just to draw the conclusion. Researchers must record any detail in the study in order to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. If a person is asked to serve as a peer reviewer, they should be very careful and take the time to examine them in detail, instead of being biased and superficial. The Guidelines for protecting confidential information like personal data; personal information etc. was protected through the provision of informed consent.

## Chapter 3: Data Presentation

Data was collected from 10 interviews transcripts of the interviews are included in this chapter.

### Transcripts:

#### Interviewee 1:

- What challenges does your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?

Often organisation find it hard to even address that cross-cultural issues that persist in some organisations. That's why they are unable to devise proper strategies to resolve them. As a result this leads to poor employee motivation, lack of communication at different organisation levels and leads to confusion that can result in delays and losses.

- How does communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affect the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?

While working in culturally diverse organisation, there are certain things that we have to look at. First, we need to make everyone comfortable and facilitate each other and secondly we need to need to ensure that everyone is treated in the same manner. In this regard, often communication barriers such as language disparities and even cultural values can interfere with it, as employee find it harder to communicate with each other and communicate their concerns and that leads to lower productivity.

- What kinds of Communication barriers affect negotiation processes in your organisation?

In multinational organisations with diversified workforce distribution, the differences in language are inevitable and cultural differences influence communication between people with different identities that could lead to communication barriers and reluctance to interact.

- What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater for communication barriers?

At the organisation I work at, I do not really know what negotiation strategies or techniques are being used, but I would like to say HRM works closely with employees that are facing communication barriers and tries to resolve them with employee training and development.

- How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?

To seek effective negotiations in multicultural environments in workplaces, I believe a win-win approach is a frame of mind that every employee in a workplace should possess irrespective of the cultural background or language difference.

## **Interviewee 2:**

- What challenges does your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?

Poor communication and lack of interaction among team members causes conflict, which decreases employee morale and productivity of the employees...”

- How do communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affect the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?

It keeps employees from performing at their very best so it can be said that their overall productivity is largely impacted due to the communication barriers that are not addressed by the organisation, either through training or integration of technology.

- What kinds of Communication barriers affect negotiation process in your organisation?

I believe that almost every kind of communication barrier effects the overall negotiation processes in not just mine but every organisation but also in our daily lives. Linguistic barriers, emotional barriers, cultural barriers, physical barriers and most important perception barriers can disrupt the whole negotiation process.

- What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater for communication barriers?

My organisation has invested significantly in an employee recruitment and training program that has helped address these basic issues in a comprehensive manner. Through effective policy and procedures that have taken years to implement, we have been successful in resolving communication barrier issues at our offices but we do realise that it is a continual effort.

- How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?

We currently rely on policy, procedure, and training to resolve not just communication barriers issues but other organisational concerns as well. Now I believe we need to find new, innovative and technology driven solutions for overcoming arising issues such as communication barriers.

### **Interviewee 3:**

- What challenges does your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?

I have worked in HR and I know that one of the most common issues that persist today is communication barriers. While recruiting new employees and conducting performance reviews, it was difficult to understand if the employees lacked confidence, were unable to communicate or negotiate due to communication barriers, or were simply not suitable for the job.

- How do communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affect the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?

When employees with different experiences and different cultural backgrounds work together, they often fail to accept or understand the differences in personalities of one another; this is when problems and conflicts arise.

- What kinds of Communication barriers affect negotiation processes in your organisation?

In a cross-cultural environment, the value judgements about people lead to unintelligence and biased choices affecting communications and decision-making. Cultural stereotyping is a barrier to effective communication

- What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater for communication barriers?

My organisation emphasizes employee development and therefore invests significantly in employee training. In addition to that my organisation also ensures that suitable hiring is concluded by the HR so at least common communication barriers do not exist.

- How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?

These techniques are largely effective, as I have seen that training and development of employees pay off in long run and sufficient amount of training can address almost every imaginable issues that presets in cross-cultural environment.

## **Interviewee 4:**

- What challenges does your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?

Lack of resources and lack of understanding can lead to severe issues during cross-cultural negotiation.

- How do communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affect the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?

I believe that if you are unable to communicate, you are unable to contribute to idea generation, contribute to improving productivity, contribute and facilitate the growth of the company and grow as an individual. Therefore, it can be said the negotiation barriers significantly reduces the overall productivity of employees and makes them feel unwanted and not valued by the company they work for.

- What kinds of Communication barriers affect negotiation processes in your organisation?

I work in a highly diverse workplace and have become accustomed to seeing some minor issues that persist at every organisational level that suggests that communication barriers are playing a role in that. Most of the time I observe linguistic and behavioural barriers that makes employees feels anxious and nervous while performing their duties.

- What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater fro communication barriers?

My organisation relies on reporting and documentation and has streamlined weekly reporting at every level of the organisation which has allowed us to adapt to a universally accepted model of communication.



- How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?

Multinational or multicultural organisations should focus on mutual benefit policies for all cultures in the workplace. Employees should get similar benefits, rewards, recognition with employees of other cultures facing win-win solution

## **Interviewee 5:**

- What challenges does your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?

Communication barriers cause misunderstandings and conflicts leading to frustrating environment of workplace and performance of employees is affected. Decision-making, negotiations, and team work is impacted negatively by poor communication.

- How do communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affect the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?

It effects the overall morale of the employee that leads to poor performance and overall lowered productivity

- What kinds of Communication barriers affect negotiation processes in your organisation?

What I have experienced with many individuals is some sort of reluctance to participate in group or team oriented tasks and attend meetings, often keeping to themselves, and does not contribute at all even though they may have some innovative solutions to the problem at hand. This leads to poor negotiation, increased time for resolution and instils uncertainty in the minds of the employees.

- What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater for communication barriers?

I am not aware of any techniques that are in place but what I have observed is that an amount of time is given to all employees during negation processes so that they can communicate freely without having the stress to make their point.

- How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?

They are quite effective, as I have seen improvements in this regard.

## **Interviewee 6:**

- What challenges does your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?

One of the most common challenges is conveying and implementing policies to all employees.

- How do communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affect the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?

It brings invisible and wicked issues to the surface that were deemed low impact at the start but end up doing serious damage.

- What kinds of Communication barriers affect negotiation processes in your organisation?

There are many issues, new recruits have a difficult time to adjust, negotiate salaries, and understand policies and other issues. Similarly, exiting employees can also face the same issues but they are resolved in much more efficient manner due to their exiting association with the organisation.

- What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater for communication barriers?

My organisation relies on training and development of employees and leverages exiting systems to develop a universally accepted model of communication (technology driven reporting) that addresses many of these issues in record time.

- How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?

Such organisations should establish a new enterprise culture and a universally accepted organisational culture respecting values, beliefs, etc. of all employees in order to avoid conflicts and disputes among multi-cultural teams. For this purpose, language training and emphasis on mutual benefits solutions for cross-cultural populations need to be followed. In this way consensus and negotiations will be successful and barriers are reduced

## **Interviewee 7:**

- What challenges does your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?

I have realised that in cross-cultural negotiation one of the key challenges is lack of trust, possibility of building long term relationship, difficulty in communicating goals and objectives, and finally it effects internal employee engagements.

- How do communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affect the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?

Cross-cultural teams' issues and barriers cause conflicts because of misunderstandings about work, poor communication, burnout, stress, and management of work becomes frustration. Also, lack of communication affects trust and lack of enthusiasm among workers in the organisation

- What kinds of Communication barriers affect negotiation processes in your organisation?

Cultural values, individual perceptions, linguistic and others are some communication barriers that effect the negotiation process especially when dealing with international clients.

- What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater for communication barriers?

For internal use we rely on training, technology, and team activities to reduce communication barriers for external negotiation we may use consultants from time to time that can help us achieve our objectives.

- How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?

So long, it has been quite effective, hiring external consultants has allowed us successfully negotiation with international clients, and we have sourced their experience for internal use as well.

## **Interviewee 8:**

- What challenges does your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?

Cultural barriers affect group behaviours in multi-cultural teams and even unintentionally, the level of anxiety in organisations, among employees, increases and multicultural teams face a lot of issues due to cultural and communication barriers...”

- How do communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affect the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?

It lowers employee morale; it instils lack of confidence and can make employees question their position to the organisation

- What kinds of Communication barriers affect negotiation processes in your organisation?

There are too many, but language barriers are on top.

- What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater for communication barriers?

My organisation has tried to adapt an informal approach when it comes to developing a corporate culture. This allows all of us the space to innovate, question, and work together that ultimately reduces the impact of overall communication barriers that exist.

- How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?



It has been very productive to say the least, by adapting an informal structure that promotes innovation and provides space to everyone to experiment and contribute. I believe that there is a need to develop a hybrid formal-casual approach to make the overall environment more productive and streamlined.

## **Interviewee 9:**

- What challenges does your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?

One of the major issues is that some employees with perceived communication barriers are reluctant to engage in team oriented tasks.

- How do communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affect the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?

It lowers employee morale, builds up fatigue and lowers the overall cumulative productivity of the employees

- What kinds of Communication barriers affect negotiation processes in your organisation?

Cultural stereotyping affects the values and behaviours of people and it leads to communication differences, usually due to variability within culture. It is because speaking, gestures, ways of communicating, etc. differ from one culture to another, which create differences in work related negotiations

- What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater for communication barriers?

Such organisations should establish new enterprise cultures and universally accepted organisational cultures respecting values, beliefs, etc. of all employees in order to avoid conflicts and disputes among multi-cultural teams. For this purpose, language training and emphasis on mutual benefits solutions for cross-cultural population need to be followed. In this way consensus and negotiations will be successful and barriers are reduced.

- How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?

In order to seek effective negotiations in multicultural environment in workplaces, I believe a win-win approach is a frame of mind that every employee in a workplace should possess irrespective of the cultural background or language difference

## **Interviewee 10:**

- What challenges does your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?

Lack of contribution on part of individual employees that effects not only them but overall productivity of the firm as well.

- How do communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affect the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?

From what I have seen it is not good, it can lead to development of false preceptions, conflicts, anxiety among employees and overall lower morale.

- What kinds of Communication barriers affect negotiation processes in your organisation?

Inter-cultural awareness can be one of the solutions results in enhancing self-awareness in negotiation process. Also, a win-win approach and extensive communication and collaboration can reduce cross-cultural vulnerability and sensitivity and they will be able to accept differences of other cultures well.

- What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater for communication barriers?

Multinational or multicultural organisations should focus on mutual benefit policies for all cultures in the workplace. Employees should get similar benefits, rewards, recognition with employees of other cultures facing win-win solution.

- How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?

These techniques have been largely effective although I do think we need to make efforts to ensure that HR develops a comprehensive selection procedure that addresses these potential issues.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis/Findings**

### **4.1 Data Analysis**

In this chapter, collected data from 10 interviewees who are managers in Irish firms has been analysed using thematic analysis. The purpose of thematic analysis is to identify similarities and repetitions in findings as the conducted interviews had open ended responses from the interviewees. Three themes have been identified from the interview data collected from managers associated with different organisations in Ireland. The identified themes are language and stereotyping barriers in negotiation, conflicts and disputes by poor communication, and Enforcement of a mutual benefit policy.

### **4.2 Thematic Analysis**

#### **4.2.1 Language and stereotyping barriers in negotiation**

The first theme identified from the interviews is language and stereotyping barriers in negotiation. The interviewees' responses showed that

Interviewee 1: "In multinational organisations with diversified workforce distribution, the differences in language are inevitable and cultural differences influence communication between people with different identity..." (2-3)

According to Sarr, et al. (2019), a diversified workforce is affected by cultural and communication barriers and there are various invisible barriers that affect business communications in the local and international environment. Language barriers are quite common worldwide and communication barriers do not only mean language barriers but also different cultures have different gestures, writing styles, ways of speaking etc. therefore, multinational organisations often face difficulties and challenges related to international negotiation, team building, industrial relations management, and interpersonal relations management (Spangle & Isenhardt, 2002). Murdock (2016) mentioned that misunderstanding due to stereotyping is one of the foremost barriers to communication in the cross-cultural workplace

environment. It is common among people of different backgrounds and cultures whose beliefs and values vary. The variation in cross-cultural communication results in uncertainty, stress, anxiety, causing disputes and conflicts among people, which affect the business processes and corporate decisions ultimately (Cojocar, 2010).

Interviewee 3: “In a cross-cultural environment, the value judgements about people lead to unintelligence and biased choices affecting communications and decision-making. Cultural stereotyping is a barrier to effective communication...” (12-14).

A research article of Hoyas et al (2020) focused on cross-cultural communication barriers and issues presenting a fine opportunity to nurture peace in organisation. The barriers of communication create unpleasant consequences if not managed well. The problems in workplaces that arise today are due to cultural stereotyping, due to high diversity imposing on communication in a multicultural environment (Lande, 2017). Moreover, cross-cultural communication gaps create uncertainty, biasness, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, caused by insufficient knowledge of culture and intercultural skills of communication. It was mentioned in the research that people belonging to different cultures being in communication need to be effective to achieve common business objectives and success. The barriers involved in negotiation and cross cultural communication processes identify means to overcome barriers to make effective communication (Menkel-Meadow & Schneider, 2014).

Interview 8: “cultural barriers affect group behaviours in multi-cultural teams and even unintentionally, the level of anxiety in organisations, among employees, increases and multicultural teams face a lot of issues due to cultural and communication barriers...” (35-38).

As stated by Hoyas et al (2020) norms and rules defined by a culture should be appropriate and acceptable to all. The individuals frame rules for themselves and expect others to do that as well. The barriers of communication in a cross-cultural environment are due to failure to understand what the person and their cultural norms are, which is why stereotyping happens for individuals. Biased behaviour is also seen towards specific group of people. Moreover, different roles vary from culture to

culture affecting organisational performance and work-related negotiations in a multicultural workplace. It further leads to interrupted communication processes and anxiety among employees who work in such organisations (Caputo, et al., 2019; Jeong, 2016).

Interview 9: “cultural stereotyping affects values and behaviours of people and it leads to communication differences usually due to variability within culture. It is because speaking, gestures, way of communication, etc. differ from one culture to another, which create differences in work related negotiations...” (42-46).

In research by Sarr, et al. (2019), it was found that stereotyping in a multicultural environment is common because oversimplified clichés about people belonging to different cultures affect work performance and productivity. There are several barriers that affect negotiations and decision-making and fairness for employees working together with their respective roles, for which learning about differences can be quite a useful point to begin with (Lande, 2017). The individuals are different from one another, not by culture and language only, but also by personalities, behaviours, beliefs, values, and attitudes. It is never easier for a person to predict the behaviour of another based on his or her nationality or beliefs (Spangle & Isenhardt, 2002). Even the social activities of one culture are different from others, which create several barriers in the workplace environment, especially in the time of globalisation where multicultural teams work together on a single project or aim to achieve common goals or objectives (Cojocaru, 2010).

#### **4.2.2 Conflicts and disputes by poor communication**

The theme from interviewees showed that poor communication cause disputes and conflicts in multicultural teams.

Interviewee 2: “poor communication and lack of interaction among team members causes conflict, which decreases employee morale and productivity of the employees...” (8-10).



It was observed in a research of Murdock (2016) that culture is an iceberg and what a person sees is behaviours influenced by values under the water line. The clashes and conflicts happen when the behaviours of people compromise the values of other. The conflicting values create disputes and challenges because there is no right way or wrong way of doing things; it is a matter of cultural norms. Communication plays a significant role in conflicts and disputes and while working in a multicultural environment, conflicts and disputes are inevitable to occur because of differences of cultural background and the values of people (Lande, 2017; Cojocaru, 2010). Both direct and indirect communication is necessary and effective to deal with workplace ethics, work-related negotiations, project management, and professionalism by speaking well and leaving no room for misinterpretation. Hoyas et al (2020) found in research of cross-cultural workplaces, where indirect communication is required by people to avoid misunderstanding and issues. Also communication is necessary to avoid vague references and an effective communication culture within an organisation promotes preciseness and clarity in information that do not allow conflicts and disputes among employees with different cultural backgrounds to happen (Caputo, et al., 2019).

Interviewee 3: “when employees with different experiences and different cultural backgrounds work together, they often fail to accept or understand the differences in personalities of one another; this is when problems and conflicts arise...” (16-17).

According to a research, poor communication leads to disagreement and disputes among workers in an organisation and the harmony and peace of the organisation is affected (Spangle & Isenhardt, 2002). Organisational culture should be quite averse to confrontation, however, in some cultures such as the culture of Ireland; the fights are a sign of trust. People from other parts of the world vary in the amount of expressions and emotions they show during professional communication, for example, British are composed whereas Italians raise their voices (Jeong, 2016; Spangle & Isenhardt, 2002). Therefore, it is necessary for the managers in an organisations to understand different cultures involved in the work, to achieve common goals and objectives so that problems and conflicts do not arise much (Spangle & Isenhardt, 2002). Also, it was found in a research that formal and informal communication play a

significant role in creating and avoiding conflicts and disputes that may cause issues related to negotiation in work, because informality is perceived as lack of professionalism whereas formal communication and gestures are perceived to be good and effective for the organisation as formality is interpreted in some cultures as a sign of stiffness, which is necessary to make work-related decisions despite having informal behaviours of employees (Menkel-Meadow & Schneider, 2014).

Interviewee 5: “Communication barriers cause misunderstandings and conflicts leading to a frustrating environment of workplace and the performance of employees is affected. Decision-making, negotiations, and team work is impacted negatively by poor communication...” (21-22).

As per Poyas et al (2020) Lack of communication in a multicultural environment causes conflicts in the workplace as poor communication leads to the spread of gossip and rumours, creating tension among employees. The resource sharing is also unequal in the organisations with limited resources such as office supplies, equipment, may experience conflict if they do not communicate their needs. In a cross-cultural working environment, the needs of employees are not fulfilled. Biased and unfair behaviour of managers towards employees of different cultural background cause conflicts (Caputo, et al., 2019). Different ideas, theories, beliefs, etc. of people regarding business operations cause conflicts. Negotiation is a process that discusses the individuals’ positions about topics and finds common solutions and approaches to reach a solution that could benefit the parties involved. Lack of communication causes loss of control over situations, authority, and responsibility management. Poyas et al (2020) mentioned that ineffective communication create differences in attitudes, understanding of people, work ethics, personal issues, and value-oriented differences. Therefore, the key role of managers is to resolve and settle differences among cross-cultural teams and employees through agreement or to compromise to avoid argument and disputes. In disagreement, individuals understandably achieve the best possible solutions for the organisation they represent in the local and international market environment (Menkel-Meadow & Schneider, 2014).

Interviewee 7: “Cross-cultural teams’ issues and barriers cause conflicts because of misunderstandings about work, poor communication, burnout, stress, and management of work becomes frustration. Also,

lack of communication affects trust and lack of enthusiasm among workers in the organisation...” (28-30).

According to research, multi-cultural teams face issues and conflicts regarding tasks, value conflict, and relationship conflict (Caputo, et al., 2019). Poor communication hinders collaboration and respect among team members especially relationships and trust is affected when multi-cultural people are involved in decision-making, work-related activities, and group workings. Poor communication and issues in communication by managers reduces work performance and productivity, which could be dealt with through negotiations and conflict-resolution tactics and strategies (Ward, 2018). The negotiation process and strategies avoid seriousness of the issue and a common consensus is achieved by individuals working locally or in a distributed team environment (Lande, 2017). As a result, employees with different cultural backgrounds, languages and communication ways avoid being provoked into emotional responses, they do not abandon value-creation strategies, and they use time effectively for mutual benefits, and use tips and strategies to resolve the conflicts of cross-cultural team members (Cojocaru, 2010).

#### **4.2.3 Enforcement of a mutual benefit policy**

Out of various solutions and techniques identified from the responses of interviews, the most common and effective way identified was enforcement of a mutual benefit policy within the organisation through which, cross-cultural barriers and conflicts can be overcome.

Interviewee 1: “to seek effective negotiations in multicultural environment in workplaces, I believe a win-win approach is a frame of mind that every employee in a workplace should possess irrespective of the cultural background or language difference...” (4-6).

According to Poyas et al (2020), various ways redefine resolution techniques and approaches to negotiations in a cross-cultural situation. One way is to adapt to new processes, negotiate issues separately, say no to where the decision goes against the values and beliefs of an individual, etc. Negotiation strategies are quite easy to minimise language and communication barriers from the way

of speaking to the way an individual meets and greets (Jeong, 2016). Sarr, et al. (2019), mentioned that Negotiations are influenced by communication barriers and both parties consider various local and foreign factors on different cultural premises where there is potential for things to go wrong. This way, a mutual benefits policy is needed by the managers to enforce in the organisations to make negotiations easier, reduce communication gaps, and improve productivity in the organisation. It is important to understand the ways through which a personal negotiation style can be accommodated in a cross-cultural setting which is vital for success in local and global markets (Menkel-Meadow & Schneider, 2014).

Interviewee 10: “multinational or multicultural organisations should focus on mutual benefit policies for all cultures in the workplace. Employees should get similar benefits, rewards, recognition with employees of other cultures facing win-win solution... (24-25).

In research by Murdock (2016), it was found that a win-win situation is an effective way to negotiate the differences and barriers of culture and communication within organisations. It is important for managers in organisations to think of mutual gain for long-term instead of short-term personal gain and set a trusting, collaborative, and cooperative tone for meetings and projects right from the beginning (Jeong, 2016). Mutual interests should be focused on instead of personal standings and positions. Moreover, a number of concerns and issues should be kept in front of managers to negotiate so that clarity is achieved and productivity is increased (Ward, 2018). Also, it was found that multi-cultural perspectives play an important role in international negotiation because wider perspectives and opinions are taken into consideration while making a decision (Caputo, et al., 2019). This is why negotiation methods and strategies are necessary to flourish cross-cultural communication as diverse plans of workforce helps in conducting global business. To promote cross-cultural communication and have positive effects on negotiation, the understanding and knowledge is required for different cultures, how cultures are perceived around the global, and the way work-activities are handled in different cultures (Lande, 2017).

Interviewee 9: “such organisations should establish a new enterprise culture and an universally accepted organisational culture respecting values, beliefs, etc. of all employees in order to avoid conflicts and disputes among multi-cultural teams. For this purpose, language training and emphasis on mutual benefits solutions for cross-cultural population need to be followed. In this way consensus and negotiations will be successful and barriers are reduced...” (25-27)

According to Poyas et al (2020), it was found that managers should learn about different cultures while dealing in a multicultural team environment and understand the expectations of individuals involved in a negotiation process as negotiations mean to reach mutual benefits for both parties so that trust and relationship development is promoted. A win-win approach is an effective strategy or technique of negotiation through which both parties irrespective of their language, culture, beliefs, and values become satisfied (Menkel-Meadow & Schneider, 2014). To achieve successful negotiation in a cross-cultural environment, the decision-making process should be explained and employees should keep the negotiation process professional no matter how challenging it may get. Some cultures during the negotiation process test others to measure the factor of trustworthiness. Others take loss of temper as a sign of disrespect and kill the process of negotiation, which is why the right technique should be selected to achieve successful negotiation (Spangle & Isenhardt, 2002).

Interviewee 10: “Inter-cultural awareness can be one of the solutions that results in enhancing self-awareness in negotiation processes. Also, a win-win approach and extensive communication and collaboration can reduce cross-cultural vulnerability and sensitivity and they will be able to accept differences of other cultures well...” (50-54).

Managers try to achieve consensus, fairness, and mutual benefit policy in workplaces for negotiations because it helps in developing humility and reliance on others for success as it develops humbleness in a strict professional environment and allow the managers or leaders to find mutually beneficial solutions for a cross-cultural team. A win-win approach or mutual

benefit policy in the organisation makes parties feel satisfied because they believe that neither of them is a loser or a winner (Spangle & Isenhardt, 2002). Claims and demands of both parties are listened to, managed, and addressed so that their satisfaction can be achieved. It is a great source to achieve success and by thinking win-win, empathy is practised. It is an effective way because it does consider differences and barriers of multicultural teams and analyses the problems from both parties' point of view with respect to their needs and concerns. Also, the win-win approach identifies the issues more than the positions involved. Further, Sarr, et al. (2019), noticed that the managers through this technique determine what results will be achieved from negotiations and whether the results are in favour of both parties and organisation or not. Similarly, high value at low risk decisions are made through enforcing mutual benefit policy in workplaces addressing the barriers and impact of cross-cultural issues while making decisions so that both parties understand each other, trust one another, and reach an agreement, which is acceptable to both parties (Caputo, et al., 2019).

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **5.1. Lack of Interaction**

From the comprehensive literature review and interview analysis, the findings showed the significance of a multicultural environment in Irish organisations and the way communication and negotiations play a key role to deal with conflicts in a multi-cultural environment. The findings of the study clearly showed that a lack of interaction among team members causes conflict, which decreases employee morale and productivity for the employees. Open and effective interaction is considered an important element to avoid any conflicts or to make the negotiation processes successful (Baker, et al., 1996). Without effective communication between team members, it is not possible to have a harmonized work environment. In a research, it was pointed out that Ireland has a long practical and theoretical engagement with the issues related to conflicts, cultural identity, and differences that have been addressed (Cojocaru, 2010). Ireland is lacking behind when it comes to managing multi-cultural environments as compared to other countries that have retreated from multi-cultural societies such as Britain and Holland as they are moving towards civic integration and such liberal nation-states are marked by de-ethnicisation in which national labels are different names for the same thing. The expressions of non-discriminatory behaviour are promoted within immigration policies, rules of citizenship, and distancing from the idea of assimilation (Jeong, 2016).

The findings further showed that when employees with different experiences and different cultural backgrounds work together, they often fail to accept or understand the differences in personalities of one another; this is when problems and conflicts arise. That is mainly because of difference of language and values. In this regard, studies have shown that language uniformity is one way through which successful communication flourishes in the organisation, which not only depends on the level of language but also, norms, values, and cultural knowledge (Caputo, et al., 2019). People from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds who go abroad and meet new people from other cultures step out of their self-reference criteria and become aware of other cultural values (Ward, 2018). The findings

and huge amount of literature on cross-cultural communications leading to effective negotiations in a workplace environment showed various aspects of successful management of multi-cultural people however, it was difficult to understand the negotiation process as it differs from person to person and the type of situations having effect on the actions of communication partners and therefore the value of negotiation process is degraded in organisations (Cojocaru, 2010).

## **5.2. Stereotyping and Misunderstandings**

Misunderstanding is another important element that was highlighted by respondents as a prominent barrier to negotiation. The findings showed that Communication barriers cause misunderstandings and conflicts leading to frustrating environment of workplace and performance of employees is affected. In order to avoid misunderstandings, cultural dimensions should be understood by the management. Hofstede and Hall mentioned about several types of cultures and put them into categories and dimensions that lack examples about behaviours of culture in different situations (Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede, 2009). The cultural diversity theory failed to explain the reasons for cultural behaviours referring to beliefs, norms, and values. Additionally, different social customs and communication styles are used rather than cultural dimensions to describe the situations where tension between two parties arises in a multicultural organisation (Barkai, 2007). Spangle & Isenhardt (2002) mentioned that out of hundreds of definitions of culture, the most common definition shows that the practiced norms, values, and beliefs of people form cultural identity of a person that leads to various generalisations, prejudices, and stereotypes, which negatively affect understanding of one culture to another. The set of codes within a culture creates challenges and barriers in communication practices and differences affect relationship and negotiations between people in an organisation (Spangle & Isenhardt, 2002).

It has been found in the qualitative data that cultural stereotyping affects values and behaviours of people and in it lead to communication differences usually due to variability within culture. Stereotyping has become a prominent barrier to negotiation in organisations (Barrett, et al., 1999). Due to technological evolution, European countries are politically merging and visiting other countries have become easier due to globalised business practices, tourism, and worldwide ease in communication that



helped in managing dispersed audience (Caputo, et al., 2019). According to Groves, et al. (2015) Culture is a product of communication and communication barriers increase challenges and issues in cross-cultural management within an organisation. The findings from the literature review showed that in a multicultural environment, people seem to be more fact-oriented and they base their behaviours and attitudes on facts, empirical knowledge more as compared to emotions, theories, and associations (Menkel-Meadow & Schneider, 2014; Barkai, 2007). According to Spangle & Isenhart (2002) the drive of personality and humour are important factors however, building a good relationship in a multicultural organisation is a primary goal of organisational managers and hence more time is invested in the promotion of communication styles, different channels, and dissemination of messages in order to improve information exchange among different personalities. From the literature review and interview findings, it was observed that indirect communication in a multicultural environment results in avoiding conflicts and disputes among people (Ward, 2018).

### **5.3. Differences in Beliefs and Knowledge**

The research findings showed that conflicts also arise due to differences in beliefs and knowledge among employees. Similarly, in a research by Cojocar (2010), it was found that a wide range of knowledge balances between people related to their relationships through speaking in turn as the aim to avoid disputes and conflicts are the products of respecting people who are elderly and have higher rank in a group and to not destroy social relations, vague communicational expressions are commonly used for negotiations. The collective attitude of a group helps in improving the negotiation process and develops harmony. It is important to develop a cultural consciousness to improve multicultural negotiations and communication within an organisation (Barkai, 2007). The mind is an abstract and complex term and to create self-awareness and understanding of a different culture, it is important to know how a culture develops. A communicative mind is developed through effective communication between two people referring to social situations in an environment like workplace (Brannen & Salk, 2000). The individuals gain knowledge from different experiences. Moreover, a communicative mind refers to communication at present. The behaviour of people towards culture and sub-culture is based

on their shared memories. It is never fixed on the other hand; in a research it was found that a culture is connected to generations and growing historically having the same values and beliefs (Gelfand & Brett, 2004).

According to Groves, et al. (2015) Cultural impact is inevitable and it can only reduce when a person carrying cultural knowledge dies and information preservation mechanisms are annihilated. However, it cannot happen and cultural information is passed on from person to person that changes group identity in a workplace environment and plays a significant role in practising organisational goals and objectives. Therefore, focusing on communication should also include a multicultural approach while working in a multicultural environment of a workplace such as a multinational corporations so that the employees are aware of cultural assumptions concerning cultural framework as well as negotiating partners (Caputo, et al., 2019).

Spangle & Isenhardt (2002) noted that the negotiation processes and styles depend on the situation or the culture one is dealing with, which could be different for different situations. However, it should be focused how the culture is impacting on negotiation because in some organisations, a more emotional and associative behaviour of negotiation is followed on the other hand, some organisations focus on more competitive approach of negotiation while dealing with cross-cultural people (Groves, et al., 2015). In international business negotiations of Irish companies, the barriers related to communication and language occur additionally, they have to have counterparts from other cultures but effective negotiations across cultural barriers expand organisational reach and bring rewards and success to the business ultimately. Still, negotiation in a multi-cultural environment can pose various challenges including stereotyping, conflicts and disputes, accidental violations of other cultural norms, misunderstanding from cultural and language barriers, etc. (Brannen & Salk, 2000).

From the findings and literature of Cojocar (2010), it was found that rather than focusing on coping with intercultural barriers, the managers should look for different ways and negotiation processes that could bridge two or more cultures and help the employees to find solutions for their issues and problems. A famous negotiating strategy followed by managers and leaders is a win-win approach or mutual

benefits approach focusing on the mid-way solution of the problems and challenges both parties are facing in order to reach consensus (Ward, 2018; Barkai, 2007). Managers while applying a win-win approach should focus on what similarities and differences both cultures have and try to accommodate similarities while negotiating. The familiar customs or shared ancestry allow the parties negotiating to understand and respect others and shared goals, experiences, and interests that make the overall negotiation process easier (Menkel-Meadow & Schneider, 2014).

From the interview findings and previous literature, the similarity has been found with respect to mutual benefits negotiation or win-win approach finding an effective and agreeable solution that leaves all parties feeling like winners. The significance of a win-win approach lies in its understanding and respect while achieving the results that both parties want. Both parties explore both their positions, their claims, objectives, and expected outcomes (Barkai, 2007). Both parties want others to consider and understand their views and expectations other than external influences, barriers, and challenges that might occur during negotiation or other consequences that may affect the process. The win-win approach is a fair way to trade and negotiate about the issues or events and provide others what they want without compromising one's beliefs, values, and objectives. As an outcome of this type of negotiation, both sides of the party should feel comfortable with the outcome (Spangle & Isenhardt, 2002).

According to Cojocar (2010) while communicating through a win-win and principled approach in mind, the managers need to separate people and culture from the problem and rather than considering other as opponent, the manager should understand his concerns, point of view ignoring cultural, and personality difference. In order to do this, perception, communication, and emotions are used putting oneself in an others' shoes so that they are placed to see a compromised solution or a common ground for the problem (Barkai, 2007; Groves, et al., 2015). As stated by Cojocar (2010) In the decision-making process during the negotiation, calmness, empathy, emotional intelligence skills should be used to understand why this debate is taking place and make efforts and flexibility by both parties to understand and be open about others' needs, concerns, and interests. Successful negotiation is achieved when communication is precise, clear, both parties are active listeners, accepting other cultures, listen

carefully and ignore cultural differences that lead to barriers and issues in negotiation process (Lande, 2017; Gelfand & Brett, 2004).

## **Conclusion**

The aim of the study was to investigate the role of communication barriers in the negotiation process in Irish multi-cultural companies. It has been found that effective communication is an important part of the overall negotiation process and there are a number of factors that affect the overall negotiation process such as communicational barriers, invisible influences, diversity, underlying conflicts, and change of perception. The research was focused on Irish organisations and collected data from 10 professionals that have been working in a highly diversified organisation for at least 2 years to understand challenge and issues that they have identified. After conducting the literature review, that analysed exiting data found in journal articles, case studies and other credible resources the research relied on primary data collection to discuss the identified areas of study.

Moreover, when it comes to the research methodology, the report is exploratory in nature and cross section study has been performed due to the academic nature of the research and strict time constraints. Furthermore, primary data collection was done using 5-structured interview questions, form interview transcripts common themes, and patterns were identified to identify three main themes. Using both primary and secondary research, collected data was analysed and discussed to achieve the identified aims and objectives of the research. The research has revealed that there are some common challenges and concerns when it comes to working in a culturally diverse environment, these issues were lower productivity, contributing to conflicts, developing communication barriers, and issues of stereotyping. At the same time, the research also revealed and helped explain a different resolution to the common challenges that can be used to further enhance the future scope of the company. The findings further showed that misunderstandings and lack of interaction also plays an important role in conflicts in multi-cultural companies. With the help of negotiation theories, the negotiation process can be improved in companies but strong cultural understanding is required to avoid such conflicts.

One of the common themes that has been identified using interviews is that many organisation rely on the implementation of policies and procedures that has helped them develop a comprehensive

communication model that facilitates in reducing the impact of communication issues. At the same time, existing studies also highlighted that implementation of policies and procedures can contribute to the continual efforts of reducing the overall impact of communication barriers while working in a culturally diverse organisation. Moreover, it has also been revealed that communication barriers can significantly contribute to lower morale of the employees, make employees anxious, and question their place at the organisation. This can affect the overall workforce productivity and even contribute to arising conflicts while promoting invisible issues that are considered to be of low impact previously. This is one of the reasons that many companies develop through selection and recruitment criteria for their HR practices that can help in reducing wrong hiring and attract talent that is best suited for the job. Finally, there is a need to develop a training and development program that is technology driven and can help streamline operations such as reporting which will ensure that a universally accepted model of communication at different organisational levels is put in place. This approach will ultimately nullify any arising issues due to communication barriers such as linguistic barriers, emotional barriers, and cultural differences and help contribute to the development of a conflict free and productive environment for all employees.

## Reflection

The experience of conducting the research and writing the dissertation has been remarkable in terms of knowledge enhancement and integration of ideas. Initially, the topic selection proved to be a difficult stage for me. It took me a substantial amount of time to choose a topic, as I was confused with different options. With some rigorous research and deliberations, I convinced myself to focus on communication barriers and negotiation processes in multicultural Irish companies. I learned a wide range of aspects of conducting research throughout the project. I got myself familiarised with many methodological choices in order to choose the best suitable methodology for this dissertation. I did not have in-depth knowledge of different methodology before starting the dissertation on and now I have learned a great deal of knowledge regarding different choices concerning data collection, sampling criteria, research approaches, and data analysis methods etc.

Another important aspect of the dissertation was time management. At many stages, it seemed to me that I would not be able to complete the dissertation on time as I was back and forth and making changes in chapters to ensure that everything is perfect and up to the mark. Therefore, I developed a detailed plan for myself which helped me complete the dissertation on time. In addition, the process has improved my pressure handling skills at initial stages I used to get under-pressure with deadlines but at later stages of dissertation I learned to manage things more effectively.

I believe that the knowledge and experience I gained, during the process, will be helpful for me in my future academic and professional endeavours. The process of conducting the research and writing dissertation has also led me to identify my potential areas of improvement. I will develop a comprehensive plan for myself to improve on my academic writing skills and time management skills.

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# **Appendix**

## **Interview Questionnaire**

1. What challenges your organisation face when it comes to cross-cultural negotiation within the organisation?
2. How communication barriers in multi-cultural negotiation in your organisation affects the overall productivity of employees and the organisation?
3. What kind of Communication barriers affect negotiation process in your organisation?
4. What negotiation techniques are used in your organisation and how do you cater communication barrier?
5. How effective are the techniques you use when it comes to multi-cultural negotiation and what changes do you think are required to overcome communication barriers in multi-cultural organisations?