The Sasak Tribe of Intercultural Communication in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the intercultural communication dynamics of the Sasak tribe, indigenous to Lombok, Indonesia. With globalization affecting cultural interactions, understanding the communication methods within and involving the Sasak people is increasingly crucial. The study uses a qualitative approach to gather data on the Sasak tribe's rich cultural heritage, which is influenced by indigenous traditions and marked by distinct language, arts, customs, and social structures.Key intercultural communication theories are applied to analyze the Sasak tribe's interactions. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory reveals the tribe's tendencies towards high power distance, strong collectivism, moderate to high uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. Howard Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory explains how the Sasak people adjust their communication styles through convergence and divergence when interacting with different cultural groups. Stella Ting-Toomey's Face Negotiation Theory provides insights into the importance of face-saving and face-giving strategies in maintaining respect and honor in Sasak culture. William Gudykunst's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory highlights the role of mindfulness and cultural empathy in effective intercultural communication. The study concludes that these theories provide valuable frameworks for understanding the Sasak tribe's cultural interactions, emphasizing the need for mutual respect and understanding in an interconnected world. By integrating these theories, we gain a comprehensive appreciation of the complexities in the Sasak tribe's communication practices, promoting effective and respectful intercultural interactions.

Keywords: intercultural communication, Sasak tribe's, Anxiety/Uncertainty Management

I.   Introduction

The Sasak tribe, indigenous to the island of Lombok in Indonesia, represents a unique cultural mosaic. As globalization intensifies, understanding intercultural communication within and with the Sasak people becomes increasingly significant. This article explores the intercultural communication theories relevant to the Sasak tribe, emphasizing how these theories help decode the cultural nuances and interactions of this vibrant communityWith cross-cultural

interactions increasing in the workplace, education, and everyday life, intercultural communication has become crucial. According to Gudykunst and Kim (2003), effective intercultural communication can enhance international cooperation, reduce conflict, and increase innovation through a diversity of perspectives. In the global workplace, the ability to communicate clearly and understand cultural differences can strengthen teams and increase productivity (Hofstede, 2001). Culture influences the values, norms, and ethics that underlie the way people communicate. Hall (1976) distinguishes culture in the context of communication as context high culture and context low culture.

II.   Discussion

a.   Understanding the Sasak Tribe

The Sasak tribe, primarily inhabiting Lombok, has a rich cultural heritage influenced by indigenous traditions This cultural amalgamation has created a distinctive identity for the Sasak people, marked by their language, arts, customs, and social structures. The Sasak language, part of the Austronesian language family, serves as a primary medium of communication and cultural expression. This research used the it is the qualitative research suggested to collecting the data from sources.

b. Cultural Dimensions Theory

Developed by Geert Hofstede, the Cultural Dimensions Theory is instrumental in understanding the Sasak tribe's cultural framework. Hofstede's dimensions—Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence vs. Restraint—provide a lens to analyze the Sasak cultural values.

1. ***Power Distance****:* The Sasak society tends to have a high power distance, reflecting hierarchical social structures. Elders and religious leaders hold significant authority, and respect for hierarchy is deeply ingrained.

2. ***Collectivism****:* The Sasak people exhibit strong collectivist tendencies, prioritizing community and family over individual achievements. Social harmony and mutual support are paramount.

3. ***Uncertainty Avoidance****:* Traditional customs and religious practices help the Sasak people navigate uncertainties, showcasing moderate to high uncertainty avoidance.

4. ***Long-Term Orientation****:* The Sasak culture emphasizes long-term relationships and perseverance, valuing cultural continuity and intergenerational bonds.

c. Communication Accommodation Theory

Howard Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) offers insights into how the Sasak people adapt their communication when interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. The theory posits that people adjust their speech, gestures, and language to either converge with or diverge from their communication partners.

1. ***Convergence***: When interacting with outsiders, the Sasak might adopt elements of the dominant language (Bahasa Indonesia) or cultural practices to facilitate understanding and build rapport.

2. ***Divergence****:* To preserve their cultural identity, the Sasak people may emphasize their language, customs, and traditions, especially during cultural ceremonies or in the presence of tourists.

d. Face Negotiation Theory

Stella Ting-Toomey's Face Negotiation Theory is relevant in understanding how the Sasak people manage face (self-image) in intercultural interactions. The theory suggests that individuals negotiate face through communication strategies based on their cultural backgrounds.

1. ***Face-saving****:* In the Sasak culture, maintaining respect and honor is crucial. During conflicts or sensitive discussions, strategies to save face, such as indirect communication and deference to authority, are commonly employed.

2. ***Face-giving***: Demonstrating respect and admiration for others, especially elders and guests, is a significant aspect of Sasak intercultural communication.

e. **Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory**

William Gudykunst's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory addresses how the Sasak people handle the anxiety and uncertainty inherent in intercultural communication. The theory posits that effective communication occurs when individuals can manage their anxiety and uncertainty levels.

1. *Mindfulness:* The Sasak people, with their strong cultural and religious grounding, often exhibit mindfulness in intercultural interactions, which helps them navigate uncertainties and engage in meaningful communication.

2. *Cultural Empathy:* Understanding and empathizing with others' cultural perspectives is essential for reducing anxiety and fostering effective intercultural communication among the Sasak.

III.   Conclusion

Theories of intercultural communication provide valuable frameworks for understanding the Sasak tribe's cultural interactions. By examining cultural dimensions, communication accommodation, face negotiation, and anxiety/uncertainty management, we gain insights into how the Sasak people navigate their cultural identity while engaging with the broader world. As globalization continues to influence cultural dynamics, these theories remain crucial in fostering mutual respect and understanding between the Sasak tribe and other cultures. By integrating these intercultural communication theories, we can better appreciate the complexities of the Sasak tribe's interactions within their community and with the global audience. Understanding these dynamics is essential for promoting effective and respectful communication in our increasingly interconnected world.

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