

(X) Graduação () Pós-Graduação

**DIFFICULTIES IN RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT
CULTURES IN THE SAME COMPANY**

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the challenges of intercultural communication in the workplace, emphasizing its relevance in a globalized context. By investigating the difficulties in interaction between Brazilians and foreigners, the study identifies the lack of integration and insertion programs as major obstacles. Presenting hypotheses about the difficulties in creating bonds and communication, the work highlights the importance of specific approaches and integration activities to overcome such barriers. Additionally, it explores cultural diversity and inclusion as ongoing processes that require effort and dedication. The research reveals the predominance of cultural, linguistic, and personal experience elements in forming bonds and communication. The results suggest that informal activities, language courses, and social events can promote a more inclusive environment. Based on quantitative and qualitative analyses, it is concluded that intercultural relationships in the workplace face significant challenges, but effective strategies can facilitate integration and promote a more harmonious coexistence. However, the study acknowledges the limitations of the sample size, emphasizing the need for further research to generalize the results and improve organizational practices related to cultural diversity and inclusion.

Keywords: Culture; Diversity; Cultural diversity; People management; Workplace relationships.

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Aranha (2009), the main characteristic that distinguishes human beings from other animals is culture. This is the essence that determines the desires and behaviors of an individual. In regard to human culture, the author (2009, p. 21) states that “every individual grows in a different environment, with its own culture, defining how they behave in relation to other individuals and what their relations with society are”. Hence, culture is not produced as if it were a rational project. In fact, its development is spontaneous, the product of the relationships of people in society through coexistence, beliefs, challenges, needs, fears, and the desires of individuals.

Culture, however, can be related to the different characteristics of a human being. The object of this study is the national culture of the country of origin of each individual.

In this sense, it is important to understand that, with the development of telecommunications, business exchanges through travel, the exchange of information and ideologies, and the dissemination of the English language, the world is increasingly integrated (Gil, 2019a). As a consequence, contact among often extremely different cultures has become more and more common also in organizational environments. Thus, it is important for companies to be prepared to welcome and know how to deal with such diversity. According to Gil (2019a, p. 36) “with globalization, management must not only make use of interpersonal abilities but also intercultural abilities”.

Therefore, it is clear that the business world is directly affected by the new globalized era. In this context, conflicts can certainly arise, since the greater the linguistic-cultural distance among members of a sector within an institution, the greater the need to find mechanisms to manage it (Rodrigues, 2010).

In addition, new forms of decision-making and leadership and management styles can present some the adversities that can in fact influence the process of integration among members of the same company with different cultural origins (Tanure & Duarte, 2012).

Thus, the management and staff of global and transnational businesses should be adequately prepared to deal with the issue. In this regard, Gil (2019a, p. 36) refers to Ulrich (2000) who states that

A business in search of creating global organizational capacities must therefore question to what extent its human resources are prepared to meet this challenge. How many of its managers have these global competencies. How many are sensitive to the culture and peculiarities of each market. How many are able to adequately represent the interests of the company to a global

audience. What percentage would feel at ease at dinner with important clients from other countries. Which incentive systems could stimulate staff to travel around the world and share ideas at a worldwide level. How the company might create a mentality that respects local conditions and at the same time promotes global thinking (Ulrich, 2000, p. 18).

With this in mind, it is possible to see if there is an adequate selection and preparation of management in these businesses. However, how does Brazilian staff feel in an organizational environment that includes collaborators from another country or from several other countries?

In this context, the aim of this study was to identify, from the point of the view of staff, the difficulties a company might face in the relationship among employees from different countries, from informal interactions to the understanding the staff has about meetings, projects, and activities. In planning the research, the expectation was that the main factors that unite people (a celebratory event, for example) and those that can make conviviality unpleasant would be found.

To carry out this study, the perception of Brazilian employees of a multinational communications company from New Zealand regarding their relationship with people of different nationalities (among Brazilians and New Zealanders mainly, but also from other places) that interact daily at work was analyzed. Since company headquarters is located in New Zealand, virtual meetings and talks need to take place, demanding contact, and interaction with people from different cultures.

Besides that, according to one of the members of the company, at least once a year, the director from New Zealand and a small staff visit the Brazilian office to check up on activities and performance. During these moments, the cultural abilities of collaborators are put to the test since they need to be used at every moment.

Human interaction can indeed be conflicting and, even among people who are part of a small social circle, misunderstandings can occur. When people with different opinions and cultures get together in the same environment, the chances of uncomfortable moments arising are greater. For example, some of the hand gestures and expansive behavior of Brazilians may be considered extremely rude and disrespectful by some Eastern cultures. With this example in mind, in a corporate environment, it is important to pay attention to the way a person reacts to a situation; if they are bothered or if they disconsider it entirely since they have gone through many similar situations that have made them become used to the fact or even allow them to overlook it.

Furthermore, a company may present a conflicting internal administration to their

foreign staff because it is ill prepared for multicultural interaction due to the number of conflicts and even wars among different nations. Hence, it is important to identify the problem (or problems) to carry out the readaptation of the company in this aspect if necessary.

As a general aim of this study, the main difficulties in the relationships among people raised in different places but who must work together was looked into, as well as which actions could create conflicts in coexistence. The specific aims were to analyze personal relationships in the organizational environment of a company in Brazil and to understand the interpersonal difficulties that people from different cultures face.

This study is justified because globalization has brought significant changes to organizational environments, with an increase in cultural diversity and the need for coexistence among people from different origins. Therefore, the personal relationship among collaborators has become a fundamental factor for the success of an organization. In addition, cultural differences can cause conflicts and relationship issues in the work environment. Hence, it is essential to study this topic to understand how people deal with these differences and how organizations can promote an environment of healthy and respectful coexistence. It is important to mention that the organizational experience of the researchers allowed them to witness situations of disrespect in relation to different cultures in the work environment. Hence, this study can contribute for the understanding of interpersonal difficulties individuals from different cultures face, and for developing strategies that promote respect for differences.

To carry out the research, we started from two hypotheses: that the main impasse companies face lies in the integration among members of different cultures due to difficulties in communicating and maintaining conversations that are not work-related; and that the lack of programs for the insertion of new cultures within the organization leads to an uncomfortable environment for Brazilians and foreigners which makes their inclusion problematic.

2 THEORETICAL REFERENCES

Diversity is the variety of human characteristics and experiences found among people. It can be defined by factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age, disabilities, social and economic origin, among others. Diversity is important for businesses since it may lead to a series of benefits, including greater creativity and innovation, better decision-making, greater satisfaction among staff, and improved service to clients. Hence, businesses that promote diversity and inclusion are better positioned for success in an

increasingly globalized and diversified world. The diversity of people from different countries is specifically called cultural diversity, i.e., the variety of cultures that can be found in the world, defined by factors such as religion, language, customs, traditions, values, beliefs, among others (Camilo et al., 2019).

Inclusion refers to the process of creating an environment in which everyone feels they are accepted, valued, and respected, regardless of their differences; i.e., it is a continuous process that requires effort and dedication. Companies must be committed to creating a work environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued. This complements diversity since it is focused on ensuring that people of different origins and experiences can fully participate in society.

Companies that promote inclusion are better positioned for success in an increasingly globalized and diversified world since there is a relationship between diversity and complementary inclusion. If diversity is the variety of human characteristics and experiences found among people, inclusion is the process of creating an environment where everyone feels accepted, valued, and respected, regardless of their differences (Amato, 2022).

Therefore, if diversity is to be truly beneficial to companies, it is important that it be associated with inclusion since a diversified company that is not inclusive may be a hostile environment for some employees, which can lead to problems in productivity, the retention of talents and client service.

Culture is a Latin word that originates from the basic economic activity of human existence, subsistence agriculture (Martins, 2014). Created by humans themselves, culture is the main characteristic that differentiates each individual and makes our society richer and more diverse. Aranha (2009, p. 21) affirms that “it provides us with a variety of emotions through daily language, through a series of words that end up designating types of emotions.”

In addition, culture encompasses different items to which it is related. Martins (2014, p. 30) states that culture comprises the distinctive elements “by which each individual refers his personal identity with the group of factors that defines it: language, space, period of time, religion, family ties, gender, specific connections, in sum, the array of intersections historically given and that is processed and incorporated subjectively by each person.”

In this sense, culture can be seen as covering national, regional, organizational, and even generational factors and hence it is always important to define what kind of culture is being described to carry out any study. Choosing between reading a book or watching a movie, for instance, is influenced by the environment in which an individual was raised.

According to Queiroz (1989), one of the greatest challenges faced by Brazilian social scientists is to understand what characterizes “Brazilianness” due to its being composed of different dimensions that

are formed by two currents: a cultural patrimony made up of elements that are harmoniously linked, remaining similar through space and time; and the division of the cultural patrimony among the vast majority of the nation’s inhabitants, in all social layers. These elements are made up of tangible assets (ways of life) and spiritual assets (ways of thinking). The totality of this cultural patrimony could present differences through time and space; though these would be superficial differences. A deep central nucleus would remain equal to itself throughout time, in every social level and ethnicity (Queiroz, 1989, p. 30).

However, Brazilian authors have different points of view about multiculturalism in the country. Mario de Andrade (2022) covers the issue in his 1928 novel *Macunaima* through his main character whose African, European, and Aboriginal origins make him culturally rich and original, alluding to most Brazilians.

Oswald de Andrade (1978), on the other hand, says that Brazil customarily adopts the traces of other countries and hence its culture is the result of so many other forced passages that mingle. Therefore, it is in these arrangements that the specificity of Brazilian civilization can be found.

In this sense, it is clear that Brazilian culture is not entirely distinct, which makes it different from that of other countries. Therefore, many concepts defined within the scope of foreign social science cannot be applied to our country. Moreover, Queiroz (1989, p. 45) posits that the use of “ideas such as national identity and cultural identity, differently from what occurs in Europe, shows the contrary, that concepts are constantly being redefined to adapt to the nation’s peculiarities.” Therefore, due to the immense cultural diversity seen in Brazil, there is no single characterization of culture that can be applied to the entire population.

Considering the issues discussed above regarding culture, it is important to understand the relationship established here in organizational and corporate business environments. With reference to this topic, some authors consider the relationship can be conflicting, as Mendes (2021, p. 12) states:

Often, cultural factors elicit possible difficulties in closing international deals. Unfortunately, not all organizations and professionals are aware of the importance of multiculturalism and are not prepared to deal with cultural differences. This results in the loss of business opportunities generated by economic and technological globalization, occasional lack of sensitivity and

multicultural knowledge.

With this in mind, it is important to highlight the reason for these possible barriers and the lack of preparedness for multicultural coexistence. Still, according to Mendes (2021, p. 22):

Culture determines which behaviors, language, symbols or principles are acceptable to the members of a specific culture, and these characteristics vary from one country to another. Hence, these characteristics can turn out to be obstacles to international business since individuals in a given culture can judge the characteristics of other cultures negatively.

Martins and Garcia (2011, p. 3) refer to the conflict caused by the interaction of people from different cultures:

When people from different cultures confront each other, they often have different expectations of how to deal with the conflict, starting with the definition of the contentious problem, its triggering event, and to how they see the resolving goals.

Thus, multicultural sensitivity, conceived as the capacity to understand and respect cultural diversity in a world where people from different cultural origins increasingly interact; in other words, to acknowledge that there are different cultures with their own beliefs, values, behaviors and norms, and to adapt one's behavior according to these differences, is important in a number of contexts, including work, school, community and personal life. At work, multicultural sensitivity can help foster a harmonious and productive work environment, where people from different cultures can work together effectively. However, having multicultural sensitivity demands more than academic and linguistic knowledge, it is also essential to have a cultural background. Indeed, when learning a new language, we also learn about a new culture which allows for a more harmonious environment among interlocutors (Mendes, 2021). Furthermore, it is equally important to highlight the resistance in accepting new cultures when taking international negotiations into consideration.

The impact of these cultural factors on business deals arise as far as human beings struggle to accommodate the culture of the "other" regarding these dimensions within their own culture, and are inclined to consider the culture of the other as wrong and theirs as right. Being prepared for the peculiarities that arise with multicultural relationships helps to overcome this "cultural myopia." In fact, a good international agent does not belong to a specific country – they should be a global citizen, geocentric (Mendes, 2021, p. 15).

Moreover, there are activities found only in multinationals precisely because they require a distinct form of management. To mention a few, there is the management of expatriates, job or country turnover programs and the coordination of international efforts for training (Hiltrop, 2002).

According to Fosslein and Duffy (2020, p. 138), “communication is one of the most powerful tools to achieve change.” Hence, the importance of having an environment that fosters communication and, mainly, can rely on people who are ready to communicate efficiently.

However, according to Milliken and Martins (1996), there is a tendency in groups with greater cultural diversity to establish more formal and less frequent communication when compared to less diverse groups.

On the other hand, it is noticeable that Brazilians do not find it difficult to establish these relationships. In a study conducted by Videira and Queiroz (2017), the influence of the relational capacity of Brazilians in work relations was analyzed. The results showed that, in general, Brazil has a culture of good hospitality and relationships and a propensity for mobilization, indicating a tendency for easy interaction with other nationalities.

New Zealand, the country of origin of the company that is the object of this study, was a British colony in Oceania. It developed an inclusive relationship with the native Maori people and learned to promote sustainable development, respecting nature. Excellence in infrastructure, public safety, and the offer of tourism with a wealth of attractions were only consolidated after decades of work. The country is known for its care in managing public resources, offering quality educational exchanges, and for being open to entrepreneurship. Currently, it is part of the Community of Nations, which means its governor general responds directly to the monarch of the United Kingdom, and is a reference to countries that must balance economic development with social justice. The culture of New Zealand is vibrant and diversified, made up of a combination of European, Maori (a Polynesian people that arrived in the islands of New Zealand around the 13th century) and other worldwide cultural influences. It is safe to say that New Zealanders are welcoming, respectful, passionate about nature, have a good sense of humor and an easy-going attitude. They are known for their optimism and positive attitude. They always see the good side of things and are always willing to try new things (Gomes, 2016).

3 METHODOLOGY

Gil (2019b, p. 10) explains that the word method comes from the Greek and means “the path to reach an end”, referring to “the set of basic rules used to develop an investigation with the aim of producing new knowledge or correcting and integrating prior knowledge.” Hence, we can say that the role of method is to guide academic research in order to minimize error. The author also states that

Methods are classified into two large groups: those that provide the logical bases for scientific investigation, and those that clarify the technical procedures that can be used. This classification presents similarities to that of Trujillo Ferrari (1982, p. 23) which addresses the general and discreet methods, and to Lakatos (1992, p. 81), which refers to approach methods and procedural methods (Gil, 2019b, p. 18).

To conduct this study, an exploratory research was carried out, one which, according to Gil (2022, p. 41) “[...] has the purpose of providing greater familiarity with the problem, with the aim of making it more exact or of building hypotheses.” In this kind of research, a plan that facilitates the collection of data must be followed, though it can be modified to take into account the needs of the researcher. According to Gil (2022, p. 41),

Planning tends to be somewhat flexible since there is an interest in considering the most varied aspects relative to the phenomena being studied. Data collection can take place in different ways, but generally involves 1) bibliographic research; 2) interviews with people who have had practical experience with the issue; and 3) the analysis of examples that enhance understanding (Selltiz et al., 1967, p. 63).

The research strategy was a case study (Martins, 2008) consisting of the deep investigation of a phenomenon or specific social unit (a company from New Zealand) with the aim of understanding its nature and its relations with the context in which it finds itself. According to the author, a case study is a qualitative research method which involves collecting and analyzing non-numeric data, such as textual, visual, and audio data which is collected from primary sources such as interviews, observations, and the analysis of documents; or secondary sources such as books, articles and reports. This research strategy is often used in academic research in the applied social sciences, especially in Management, and is justified for several reasons, including the investigation of complex and multifaceted phenomena, the comprehension of the context in which the phenomena occurs, and the possibility of generating insights and new theories.

The technical research procedures initially were the bibliographic research, in search of topics in books; other scientific research and articles; and a survey, consisting of the direct questioning of people whose behaviors we wanted to find out about. Hence, based on the theoretical references, a questionnaire with closed questions and 3 open ones was sent to the members of the company. This questionnaire was sent as a link via WhatsApp to the Brazilian employees.

According to Gil (2019b, p. 43), the universe “is a defined set of elements that has specific characteristics”. Therefore, the universe of the research is the staff at the company that will not be identified in this study. It must be made clear that the company selected for this study was chosen due its convenience to the researchers. It is a manufacturer of radiocommunication technological equipment with headquarters in New Zealand, offices in the United States to attend the North-American market, and in Sao Paulo, Brazil to attend Latin America.

The employees who responded to the research work at the Brazilian office. Of a total of 22 employees in the office in Sao Paulo, 20, all Brazilian, answered the questionnaire, which represents 90.90% of the workforce of the referred office. The research was conducted in July and August 2023. This survey did not involve any type of intervention regarding the collection of sensitive data, nor did it present risks to participants. Furthermore, respondents were not identified individually, therefore, the confidentiality of all and of the organization itself was ensured. For this reason, obtaining the registration or evaluation of the Research Ethic Committee was not required, as stipulated by item I, single Paragraph of Resolution no. 510 of the National Health Council (CNS, 2016), which describes the specific ethical directives for human and social sciences and specifies that unidentified participants in a public opinion survey do not need registration nor evaluation by the CEP/CONEP system.

Nevertheless, both questionnaires and interviews were answered only after signing an Informed Consent Form (TCLE) developed according to the format of the informed free consent process for participants. Thus, the survey was conducted in accordance with the following ethical guidelines: information (participants were informed about the objectives of the survey, the procedures involved and potential risks), consent (participants gave their free and informed consent to participate in the survey) and confidentiality (data collected was treated as confidential). In sum, the lack of an Ethical Appreciation Certificate is justified.

4 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

According to Gil (2019b, p. 74-75), “to be significant, data obtained must go through a process of analysis and interpretation.” Therefore, all data was analyzed with the aid of the Canva platform, which allows for the development of graphics and tables.

Of the 20 respondents, 75% (15) declared that they were male; the remaining 25% (5), female. 60% (12) of the individuals answered the questionnaire stating they were part of the X Generation (born between 1965 and 1980), 25% (5) were Generation Y (1981 – 1996), 10% were Baby Boomers (1946 – 1964), and only 5% (1) was Generation Z. All respondents were born in Brazil and their native language is Portuguese; while 75% (15) informed they had children.

In addition, we could verify that most of the employees at the company that answered the questionnaire have graduate degrees, representing 55% (11) of answers, 40% (8) have undergraduate degrees and 5% (1) finished high school.

As for the positions of the respondents, 40% (8) are senior professionals; 15% (3) are junior professionals; 15% (3) are managers; 10% (2) are directors; 5% (1), an intern; 5% (1), a young apprentice; 5% (1), a full professional; and 5% (1), a supervisor. As we can see by the results, there is a predominance of senior employees at the company, representing almost half of the total (40%).

As for the sector in which the respondents work at the company, 20% (4), financial operations; 15% (3), projects; 15% (3), marketing and sales; 15% (3), general administration; 15% (3), logistics; 10% (2) legal; 5% (1), Network Operation Center.

In terms of national culture, customs and behaviors are very important and regarding this issue, mainly when taking into consideration endo-marketing, knowing the preferences of collaborators as to the most important holidays celebrated becomes relevant, as seen in Table 1. As can be observed, the commemorative date that staff considers essential is Christmas, with a total of 90% of votes; followed by the New Year, with 80% of votes. In this question, more than one alternative could be chosen.

Table 1: Which holidays do you think are essential to be celebrated?

Holiday	Christmas	New Year	Easter	Carnival	Independence Day	June Feasts
Percentage	90%	80%	50%	10%	30%	15%
Number	18	16	10	8	6	3

Source: research.

When asked what they most loved about their native country, Brazil, participants in the

research expressed the results found in Table 2, highlighting climate/temperature and food, which are pointed out respectively by 75% and 70% of participants.

Table 2: What do you most love about your country?

Answer	Climate	Food	Traditional Feasts	Diversity	People	Customs	Economy	Public Policies
Number	15	14	11	10	10	4	1	1
Percentage	75%	70%	55%	50%	50%	20%	5%	5%

Source: research.

When asked about what made Brazil a unique country, respondents indicated results found in Table 3, with the vast majority (75%) saying that it was the people.

Table 3 – What makes Brazil unique as a country?

Answer	People	Daily customs	Food	Climate	Celebrations	Language	Public Policies	Culture	Landscapes
Number	15	10	8	6	4	4	4	1	1
Percentage	75%	50%	40%	30%	20%	20%	20%	5%	5%

Source: research.

Besides these more idiosyncratic questions, they were also asked what each most admired about Brazil, countries in Europe and those in Asia, to obtain a comparative vision, data that can be seen in Table 4. Food and diversity stand out in Brazil, with 75%, while safety is mentioned in Europe, with 85% and Asia, with 65% of preferences.

Table 4: What do you most admire in different countries?

	Brazil		Europe		Asia/Oceania	
	Number.	Perc.	Num.	Perc.	Num.	Perc.
Food	14	70%	7	35%	10	50%
Traditional feasts	10	50%	1	5%	8	40%
People	10	50%	5	25%	10	50%
Public Policies	1	5%	9	45%	6	30%
Cultural Diversity	17	70%	3	15%	5	25%
Economy	1	5%	14	70%	8	40%
Daily Customs	1	5%	3	15%	8	40%
Freedom, Respect, Discipline	1	5%	1	5%	1	5%

Source: research.

Results in Table 4 demonstrate that people have different opinions about what they most

admire in their native countries and in other countries. We can infer that this is due to their personal experiences (they tend to value things that they are familiar with, such as culture, language, etc.), their beliefs and values (they tend to admire things that are aligned with their own beliefs), and information they have access to (people with limited access to information about other countries may base their opinions on stereotypes). On the other hand, people who have traveled or lived in other countries can admire things that are different from what they are used to.

Table 5 synthesizes data from answers pertaining to the organizational environment and shows that 85% of respondents have frequent direct or virtual contact with foreigners in daily dealings at the company. Also, 90% consider they have friends at work, of which 60% state that have friends only with people of the same nationality, while 40% state they have friends from different nationalities. We would like to point out that 35% (7) of the respondents say they have already worked in four or more multinationals, 25% (5) in at least three, 15% (3) in up to two, and 25% (5) only at the company under study.

Table 5: Questions about the organizational environment of inclusion, diversity and integration

Question	Yes	Num.
In your daily activities at the company, do you have frequent direct or virtual contact with people of other nationalities?	85%	17
Do you consider you have friends at work?	90%	18
Are your friends at work, if you have any, the same nationality as yours?	60%	12
Do you think it is easier to bond with people of the same nationality as yours?	65%	13
Do you think communication among members of different nationalities in the work environment is very difficult?	65%	13
Do you notice if there are activities held in your work environment to encourage integration among and knowledge about different cultures?	60%	12
Do integration and inclusion activities for team members work?	80%	16

Source: research.

For the open question “Explain why you consider it to be easier to bond with people of the same nationality as yours,” a word cloud was developed, as seen in Figure 1, synthesizing the perceptions of employees. Observe that the respondents who agreed that it is easier to bond with people of the same nationality stated that the main reasons are customs, culture, and language. Indeed, these three elements are basic facilitators during the first contact to establish communication, since people who speak the same language, for instance, find it easier to understand each other. Besides, people who share the same customs are more likely to find common interests and to identify with each other.

Thus, it was observed that, for most of the respondents, there are difficulties in bonding with people from different cultural backgrounds than their own. The main reasons are the different customs practiced and the language spoken. Hence, hypothesis (1) is true, since 65% of the total represents the majority of the population. On the other hand, nothing was said regarding the trouble in keeping up conversations that are not work-related, precisely due to the difficulty in keeping up a simple conversation in the first place.

Those who answered that they do not see a difference in bonding said, on the other hand, that Brazilian culture plays an important role in making this easy. According to answers, the openness and charisma that are typical among those of our nationality makes the process simpler. Likewise, it was mentioned that the affinity you build with people goes beyond your background and hence they did not see any difference.

As for communication, those who stated they found communication with other nationalities very difficult said it was due to the different languages as well.

It was also observed that 35% of respondents hold positions as supervisors, managers, director, and president. This is the same number representing those that find no difficulty in communicating and bonding with other nationalities. Therefore, we can see that the highest positions are occupied by people that have the greatest intercultural abilities, and that those in lower positions face more difficulties.

Furthermore, we observed that the percentage of answers stating there is no trouble communicating represents the same as those who have worked in 4 or more multinationals, indicating that having worked in different companies and environments makes integration more natural.

Also, we noticed that 40% of respondents stated that there are no integration activities for foreigners in the work environment. However, the remaining 60% say there are, and only 7.7 % of these say they are not effective. Hence, it is clear that not all the company members participate in these activities. This might also be one of the reasons they find it harder to communicate.

However, as Figure 6 demonstrates, integration activities do take place and, because of that, hypothesis (2) cannot be corroborated. And, in addition, we can perceive that the greatest impasse for this company is precisely language fluency since it was also stated that the use of a country's typical expressions makes understanding conversation more difficult.

In sum, with this study, we could perceive the importance of learning and becoming fluent in other languages, mainly English. It was demonstrated that without this primary ability

being well-developed, it is impossible to bond or become friends with people that are not the same nationality as yours.

Hence, it is understood that for most participants, the relationship between Brazilians and foreigners is superficial due to a difficulty in communication. This is why finding a celebratory date or other event to bring people together was not a relevant aspect for this research.

This study raises even more questions and doubts and leads to a reflection. For those who are fluent in the language, do prejudices end up making relationships more distant? Are companies prepared to deal with conflicts related to xenophobia? What are the main advantages of offering different language courses in the company? What are the advantages and disadvantages of hiring people who never experienced the environment found in a multinational company?

With these questions in mind, the author expects this issue to become the object of more comments and studies with the purpose of making communication and coexistence among different national cultures increasingly simpler and richer for all involved.

Therefore, we expect that the results obtained in this research will have the potential to suggest new studies and findings in other multinational companies that deal with the same situation.

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