Chapter 7
Management in a Multicultural Environment[1]

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Abstract

Diversity management is indicated as one of the most important challenges faced by contemporary organizations (Roberson 2019; Cletus, Mahmood, Umar and Ibrahim 2018; Januszkiewicz, Bednarska-Wnuk 2017). The ability to take advantage of diversity in the development of the communication process (Okoro, Washington 2012; Evans, Suklun 2017), interpersonal relations (Mamman, Kamoche, Bakuwa 2012), and finally cooperation, is the key factor in building organizational commitment (Luu, Rowley, Vo 2019; Ghasempour, Rahimnia, Ahanchian and Syed 2020) and a competitive advantage based on social capital (Herriot, Pemberton 1995; Han, Han, Brass 2014; Walczak 2011; Aghazadeh 2004).

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the methods and tools of multicultural management in organizations including issues such as culture and multiculturalism and their impact on human behaviours in organizations, and intercultural sensitivity (Bennet, Bennet 1993; Sizoo, Plank, Iskat, Serrie 2005; Bhawuk 2009; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, DeJaeghere 2003). Based on desk research, we also indicate recommendations for managers in multicultural environments.

Keywords: multicultural diversity, multicultural management, organizational behaviour, culture in organization

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Introduction

Globalization is one of the most important megatrends of the world today. We study and work abroad, and have careers in international companies with international, multicultural management. Thus, the workplace is becoming an increasingly multicultural environment. Generally, cultural diversity broadens horizons. "The power is in the diversity." In this chapter we want to focus on the positive aspects of cultural diversity. Nonetheless, we realize that not everyone can get used to such a culturally diverse work or study environment. Therefore, in this chapter we will also try to show how to deal with problematic situations, which are the source of cultural diversity.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse descriptively the methods and tools of multicultural management in organizations, including such issues as culture and multiculturalism and their impact on human behaviours and intercultural sensitivity. Based on desk research, we also offer recommendations for managers in multicultural environments. Finally, we propose a tool for measuring skills in multicultural management.

Culture, Cultures, and Multiculturalism in Organizations

One of the basic features characterising a multicultural organization is the diversity of relationships between all its members (Kossek, Lobel, Brown 2006). This complexity arises from the nature of culture itself, which manifests itself to employees in a certain system of values (Marques 2007). This system describes what is important, which ideals should be pursued, what the symbols of values are. Moreover, it describes the accepted standards which define what is normal or abnormal, healthy or sick, beautiful or ugly, and the meaning of such notions as a good workers, punctuality, diligence and integrated behaviour models which indicate when, where and how to behave.
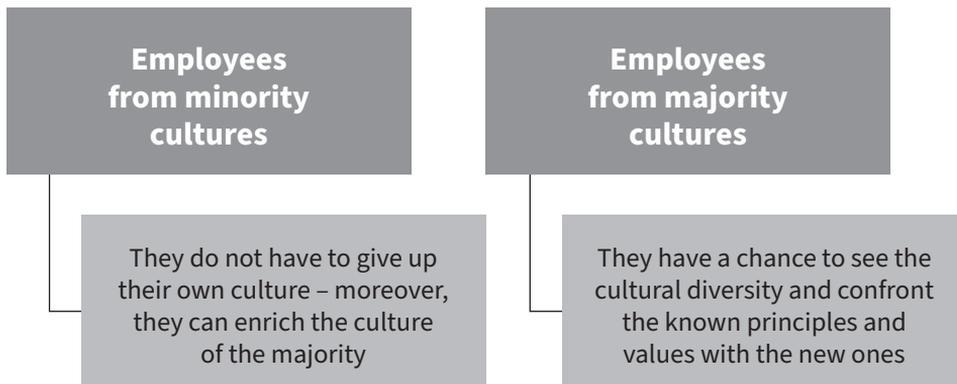
It should be noted that employees carry the culture of their country somewhat "within." They grew up in a defined set of norms and values. Therefore, in a new situation, new country, new place, they are not always aware that their behaviour is different from the standard of this organization.

Such a situation is a challenge for everyone, but especially for the manager. Management in a multicultural environment means working with a group in a culturally diverse environment, the aim of which is to ensure the effective functioning and development of all its members (Jacob 2003; Rozkwitalska 2009; Kozminski 1999). Management in a multicultural environment is directly related to managing intercultural sensitivity (awareness of differences between cultures) and the use of methods and techniques which allow to develop the potential of all group members.

It is the manager who, through the use of appropriate methods and techniques used in an organization, can create conditions in which the inter-cultural relations would fall into the following categories (Adler 1980):

- **Cultural domination** – understood as imposition of the culture of their own country onto representatives of another culture. In this case, differing models and patterns are disregarded and eliminated.
- **Cultural coexistence** – understood as a compromise between the culture of their own country and all the cultures represented by a minority. In practice, however, it is a choice that can be seen as a victory of one side over the other.
- **Intercultural cooperation** – based on an assumption that cultures can merge and complement each other. Such a choice may lead to the development of new values, and cultural diversity becomes a tool for the development of the entire group.

From the point of view of work efficiency and effectiveness in reaching goals, the most optimal action is to build intercultural cooperation since everyone gains something in such an environment (Fig. 1).

Employees from minority cultures	Employees from majority cultures
They do not have to give up their own culture – moreover, they can enrich the culture of the majority	They have a chance to see the cultural diversity and confront the known principles and values with the new ones

Figure 1. How to build intercultural cooperation
Source: Own elaboration.

In a broader perspective, it is also beneficial for society since patterns of behaviour learned at organization will be reflected in future professional and family life. It has to be noted that the establishment of an intercultural collaboration environment depends primarily on the attitude of the manager and how s/he perceives cultural differences and shapes the work environment so that the differences are an opportunity for development rather than a threat. What is more, in a multicultural environment managers should concern themselves both with minorities (facilitating the acculturation process) and employees belonging to the majority culture, who should not be passive, but rather actively participate in those activities and learn from them.

How Does Culture Affect our Behaviour?

In a foreign country, it is very easy to notice the difference between "our" and "native" behaviour. Sometimes these differences are minimal and do not affect our ability to understand the world around us. Sometimes, however, they are fundamental and may lead to misunderstandings and errors in interpreting the behaviour of others.

There are many concepts that describe the types of cultures and their influence on individual behaviour in the published sources. One of the most well-known is Hofstede's theory, and other theories built upon it. It describes the differences between cultures in five dimensions:(Hofstede, Hofstede 2007):

- individualism/collectivism – describes the ratio between the importance of the welfare of the individual vs the welfare of the group,
- power distance – describes the relations between superiors and subordinates, as well as between a government and a citizen. It also defines the degree of acceptance of social inequalities, the propensity of superiors to consult their subordinates, or the degree of authoritarian power and the expected degree of obedience to parents, superiors and the government,
- masculinity/femininity – indicates the diversity of roles between the sexes,
- avoidance of uncertainty – defined as the level of threat as perceived by members of a given culture in the face of new, unknown or uncertain situations,
- long-term orientation – describes the extent to which actions of individuals affect a short – or long-term perspective.

Study results confirm that the differences resulting from different characteristics of a culture can be seen very clearly in organizational behaviour. Table 1 shows the most typical behaviour patterns of employees from different cultures.

When working in a multicultural environment, managers should remain alert to signals sent out by their employees since sometimes "inappropriate behaviour" may be inadequate only in a given context. The experience of managers working with Asians shows that questions related to their place of residence and parents' names are the most problematic ones. Sometimes even a seemingly simple question, such as "What's your name?", can be confusing.

These problems may be related to the prevailing belief in some Eastern cultures, including in Asian and Arab countries, Caucasus cultures, or collectivist cultures, that it is the surname that speaks volumes about a person. It demonstrates belonging to a group, family, country, or clan. Such affiliation is a greater value than another personal attribute – the name. For example, in the Vietnamese culture in everyday communication (at work, at school and even at home) names are rarely used. In addition, the name almost always has some assigned meaning. It is attributed in relation to, for example, the weather on one's birthday, or it can be given in order to rhyme with the name of an older child. In China and Vietnam, names belong to a private, intimate, personal sphere – they are often used only by mothers. It stems

Table 1. Culture and behaviour

In an individualistic culture, employees:	In a collectivistic culture, employees:
• focus on ensuring their own success • focus on independence and competition • appreciate individual achievements and initiatives, • strive for independent decision-making, • believe that recognition and responsibility are individual	• understand duty and loyalty to one's own group • rely on opinions of important people • appreciate participation in group tasks and cross-team cooperation • make decisions collectivistically • believe that responsibility and fault are collective notions
In a culture with a high power distance, employees:	**In a culture with a low power distance, employees:**
• feel obliged to obey the authority • are taught to be obedient and not to ask questions (questions are considered as an attack on the authority of the managers and rules) • do not have any influence on in-group work conduct • feel bad when they have to make independent decisions alone or when they are asked for an opinion • treat their manager as a decision maker, whose authority is not to be questioned	• are not accustomed to unconditional obedience • react to commands with a natural query "why?" • are rewarded for showing initiative and asking questions • are willing to make independent decisions • expect the right to co-decide on the in-group work conduct
In a culture with a low tolerance for uncertainty, employees:	**In a culture with a high tolerance for uncertainty, employees:**
• have a need for clearly defined rules and principles • consider deviation from the rules, their lack whatsoever, a source of potential danger • build relations with others following predictable patterns • prefer imitation	• do not expect rigid compliance with established standards and principles • appreciate unconventional and unusual behaviour • are open to innovation
In a caring culture, employees:	**In an achievement culture, employees:**
• are oriented towards maintaining relationships • evaluate success through the process (how it was achieved) • do not see a strict division of tasks into male and female	• are achievement-oriented • evaluate success through the goal (what was achieved) • show high awareness of the roles and tasks assigned to genders
In a short-term culture, employees:	**In a long-term culture, employees:**
• are oriented towards seeking balance • respect tradition, which sets the framework for everyday life • appreciate and cherish rituals in relationships with others	• appreciate persistence in pursuing goals • shape relationships according to status • try to plan ahead and anticipate problems

Source: Own elaboration based on: Adler, Rosenfeld, Proctor, Skoczylas (2014), *Relacje interpersonalne: proces porozumiewania się*. Dom Wydawniczy REBIS, Poznań.

from, among others, the collective values of Asian cultures where the group is more important than the individual (Białek 2015).

Employees' behaviour in an organization and the results they achieved in the evaluation process are not, therefore, simply the result of their ability. Some features of the new culture may be a source of discomfort for people and significantly restrict presentation of their own potential. For example, some employees find it problematic to cooperate, or even stay in the same room, with representatives of the opposite sex. In the context of the manager's work, it is worth considering not only the sources of the differences, but also the consequences of seeing oneself in a certain way.

Groups and Culture

Belonging to a particular cultural group allows people to identify with it. Sociologists use the notion of "own groups" in relation to groups which we identify with, and "other groups" in relation to those which we perceive as foreign, different. Employees' perception of their own and other people's cultures is an important issue influencing work conduct of managers.

Sometimes minor differences do not seem to have much meaning. However, the division into "us" and "them" results in a specific behaviour: favouritism, glorification of one's own group and diminishing, depreciation, and even discrimination of other groups (Doliński, Strelau 2015). In a series of experiments carried out in the Netherlands, the subjects were randomly divided into two groups, blue and green: they were given either blue or green pens, and wrote on a blue or green paper. The experimenter referred to the respondents by the name of the colour of their group. While the colour categories had no psychological meaning in themselves, and group membership was arbitrary, the test subjects evaluated their own group higher that the other group. Moreover, such a biased attitude towards their own group occurred before members began to work on the experimental task (Gerrig, Zimbardo 2009). Since an individual has far more information about their group, he/she sees it as more diverse, interesting and active, whereas knowledge of the other group is poorer, most often based on stereotypes.

A stereotype is an excessive generalisation or belief about the characteristics of a group. It results in the attribution of the same, identical characteristics to all group members, regardless of actual differences between them. The emergence of representatives of different cultures in an organization means the appearance of such specific, generalised ideas about their representatives. From the point of view of managing, it may result in a situation in which stereotypes become grounds for prejudice and, eventually, discrimination. Motivated by those wrong impressions, not only may employees avoid contact with representatives of other groups, but also act to their disadvantage. It is only natural, then, that conflicts emerge. In such
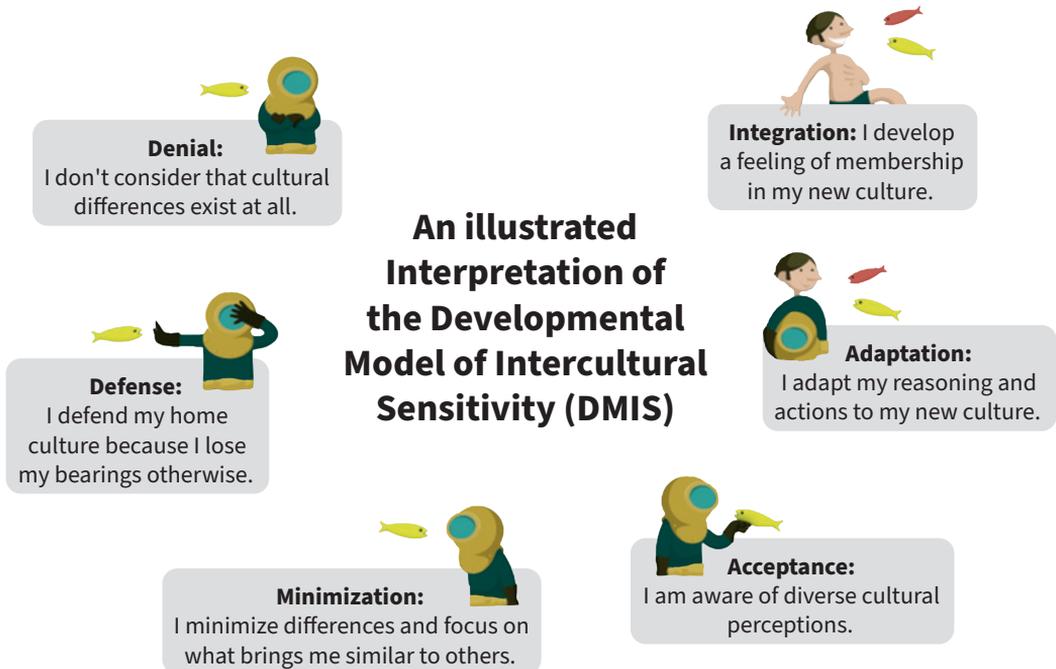
a situation, the primary challenge for the manager is to create an environment in which employees perceive their individuality, reaching beyond stereotypes.

It requires the use of specific management methods and techniques. Study results have shown that it is not enough for representatives of different groups to meet, since it will reduce neither prejudice nor hostility. In summer 1954, Muzafer Sherif and his colleagues arranged a summer camp for two groups in Robbers Cave State Park. The groups called themselves "The Eagles" and "The Rattlers." Each group developed camp bonds, e.g., boys swam, wandered, and prepared meals together for about a week, unaware of the existence of the other group. The process of getting familiar between the two groups was based on several competitive activities, e.g., football matches, tug of war, and more. Fierce competition between the groups developed right from the start; they burned each other's flags and looted houses. There was even a riot-like fight for better food during a reception (Sherif 2015; Sherif 1988; Gerrig, Zimbard 2009). The experiment debunked the idea that contact alone is enough to reduce prejudice between different groups (*contact hypothesis*). The boys participating in the camp did not like members of the other group more only because they spent time together (Sherif 1988). Managers' actions aimed at combating prejudice and increasing work effectiveness in a multicultural organization have to focus on developing personal interactions in the pursuit of common goals. They should support employees in developing their sensitivity to other groups, including those composed of employees from different cultures. A study by Elliot Aronson and his colleagues is an example of a method of a teaching practice in a multicultural environment. Fifth-grade pupils of primary school were set in conditions that required them to rely on each other instead of competing in order to learn the assigned material. The method was called "jigsaw" since each of the students received only a portion of the material constituting the whole. The task required each student to master their part to the extent that they were able to pass it on to others. The final results were evaluated on the basis of the collective outcome. In that case, the contribution of each student was indispensable and valuable. Such an arrangement makes the entire group interested in all the knowledge acquired by its members. Therefore, they become engaged in the activity and encouraged others to work harder (Aronson et al. 1978).

Intercultural Sensitivity

Milton Bennett created a Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) which describes the increasing growth of competence in intercultural relations while the experience of cultural difference by the people becomes increasingly complex (Bennett 2004).

In his model, Bennett presented six stages of increasing sensitivity to cultural differences. Each stage is a subsequent step in the development of individual
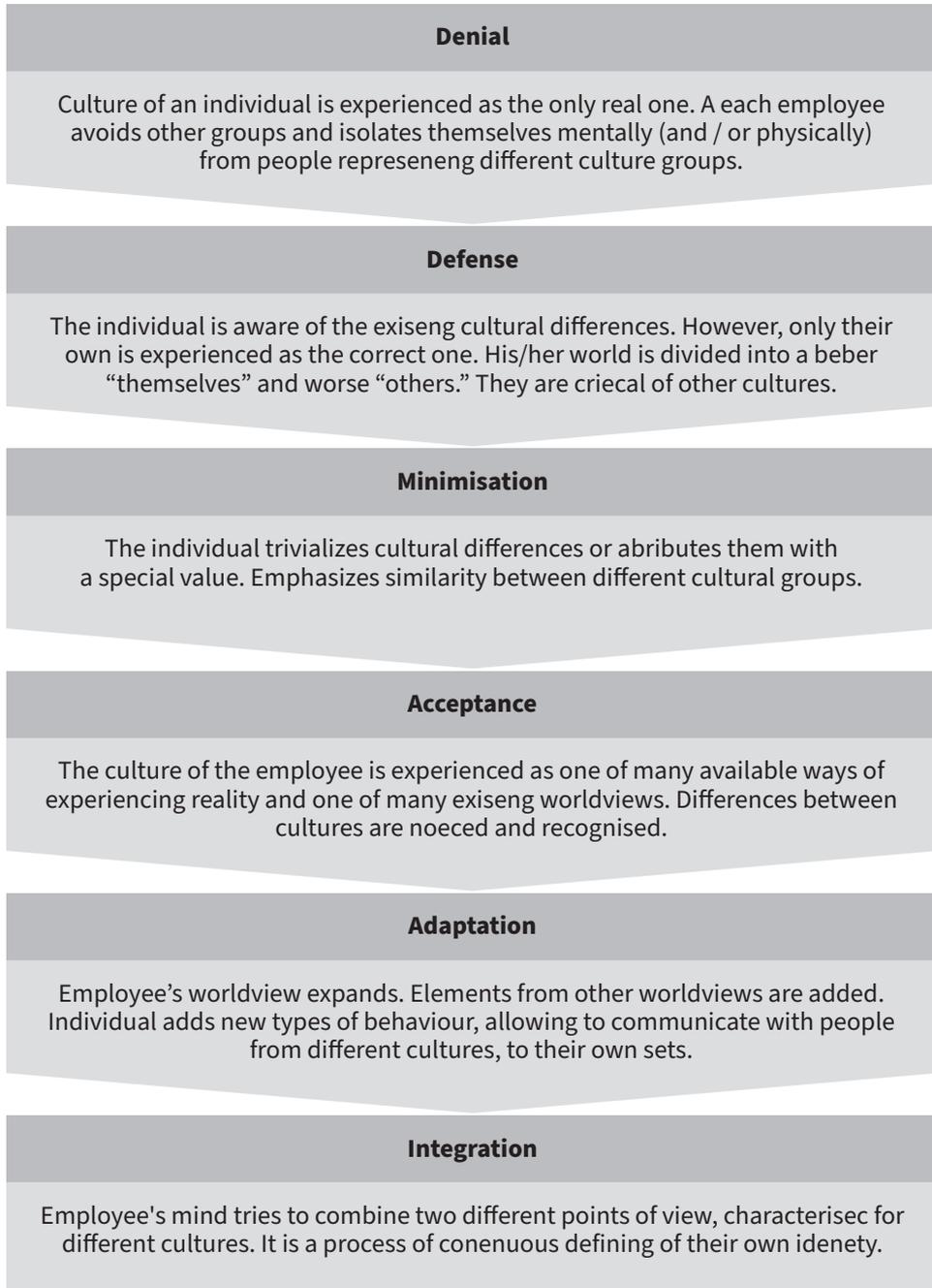
Denial:
I don't consider that cultural differences exist at all.

Integration: I develop a feeling of membership in my new culture.

An illustrated Interpretation of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

Defense:
I defend my home culture because I lose my bearings otherwise.

Adaptation:
I adapt my reasoning and actions to my new culture.

Minimization:
I minimize differences and focus on what brings me similar to others.

Acceptance:
I am aware of diverse cultural perceptions.

Figure 2. Sensitivity building
Source: https://www.cursor.tue.nl/opinie/vincent-merk/dmis-and-tue/#top.

sensitivity, and developing intuition in intercultural contacts. Passing through the successive phases of the model (ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism), the employees learn the kind of sensitivity that allows them not only to function in a new culture, but also enrich it (Fig. 2).

It is worth following this model in relation to what minority employees feel and how they behave in the process of entering into a new cultural environment. The first three phases of the model are characterised by **ethnocentrism**, i.e. the belief that cultural standards known by the employees are somewhat at the centre of reality and are better than those of other groups. Such attitudes as superiority, hostility, violence, discrimination and aggression are characteristic for ethnocentrism (see Sarata) (Fig. 3).

However, extraction of points of contact in the minimisation phase is not the end of the process of developing cultural competence. For this to happen, it is necessary to go through three stages of the ethnorelativistic phase, in which the differences between cultures are not perceived as threatening by the employee. Instead, they are seen as a challenge and opportunity for development in a new environment. It should be noted, however, that the aim of the process is not to change norms or values, but rather to match behaviour to the rules prevailing in the group.

Denial

Culture of an individual is experienced as the only real one. A each employee avoids other groups and isolates themselves mentally (and / or physically) from people represeneng different culture groups.

Defense

The individual is aware of the exiseng cultural differences. However, only their own is experienced as the correct one. His/her world is divided into a beber "themselves" and worse "others." They are criecal of other cultures.

Minimisation

The individual trivializes cultural differences or abributes them with a special value. Emphasizes similarity between different cultural groups.

Acceptance

The culture of the employee is experienced as one of many available ways of experiencing reality and one of many exiseng worldviews. Differences between cultures are noeced and recognised.

Adaptation

Employee's worldview expands. Elements from other worldviews are added. Individual adds new types of behaviour, allowing to communicate with people from different cultures, to their own sets.

Integration

Employee's mind tries to combine two different points of view, characterisec for different cultures. It is a process of conenuous defining of their own idenety.

Figure 3. Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
Source: Own elaboration based on: Bennett (2017), *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, [in:] Kim, McKay-Semmler (eds), *The International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication*, JohnWiley & Sons, Inc., Wiley Online Library, pp. 1–10.

Recommendation – How to Manage/Create International Cooperation

People brought up in a different culture should have the opportunity to learn about a new culture and, at the same time, to cultivate their own. It is achieved through numerous activities that support acculturation, e.g., teaching foreigners such skills as collective methods of work and behaviour valued in "native organization", such as volunteering, public questioning, arguing own opinion, etc. The first point is a good evaluation of own skills – awareness of strengths and weaknesses will allow us to better understand ourselves and will show directions for self-improvement. A diagnostic tool for self-evaluating skills in multicultural management may be helpful in this respect (it can be found in the appendix to the chapter). The second step is "the action". By taking specific actions, the manager should pay attention to the current relationship of the employee towards their own and foreign culture. Examples of recommendations which address the process of entering a new culture are listed below (Table 2).

Regardless of supportive activities aimed at employees from minority cultures, the manager should also implement managing methods which activate the entire group and encourage learning about each other outside the cultural context (Figure 4).

Table 2. New culture entering phases – recommendations for managers
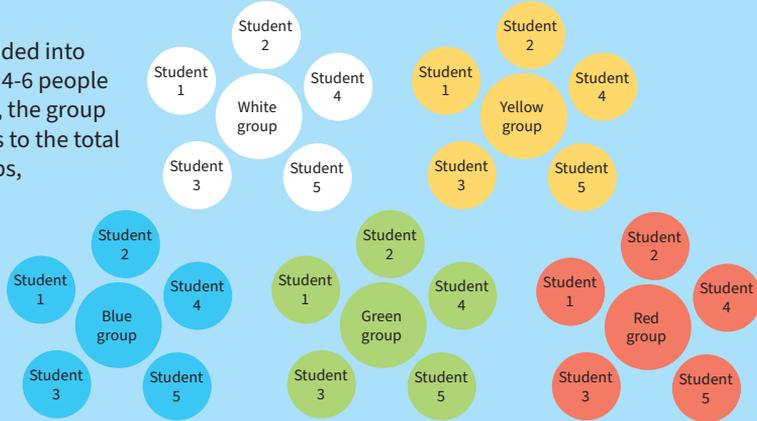
Phase:	Characteristics of employee behaviour	The manager should:
Honeymoon	• The employee has a positive attitude. He/she is interested in otherness, • He/she is delighted, intrigued and enthusiastic about novelty, • He/she indicates a great need to ensure their safety.	• acquaint the employee with the organization's reality, and explain rules to be observed, • prepare the group for a new member, • engage co-workers in the adaptation process, provide them with the knowledge needed to understand the behaviour and reactions of a new colleague, • use available literature to increase cultural knowledge and understanding of the functioning of the organization in general, • take advantage of a cultural assistant (if employed in organization) or request the management to employ such a person, • provide translations of room names in the premises, e.g., secretary's office, employees' room, toilet, into employees' native languages.

Phase:	Characteristics of employee behaviour	The manager should:
Bewilder-ment	Surprise, irritation, feeling that known behaviour patterns, e.g., towards managers, are no longer adequate. Possibility of depressed mood and withdrawal.	• provide a sense of security. For example, he/she may appoint another employee to act as a guide for the new employee and help them to move around the organization and city. It can be someone with a similar experience. Such actions may be the first step to build relationships with co-workers, which help people to better adapt to the conditions in the organization, • engage co-workers in various forms of assistance and encourage them to spend free time together, • create opportunities to achieve success in school; appreciate employee's interests; appreciate and reinforce their strengths, • be sympathetic and tolerant, avoid criticism and harsh tone, • use the support of the organization, or an intercultural psychologist (if possible).
Exhaustion, anger with the "new"	Frustration, resignation, and aggression towards the surroundings	• allow such emotions to pass, even by a low margin, • provide positive support and appreciate even minor successes, • notice efforts and doing one's best.
Initial stabilisation	The employee already knows how "native culture" works, recovers and regains control, He/she distances him-/herself from own and foreign culture, His/her willingness to establish and maintain social contacts returns, Psychophysical condition, concentration and cognitive performance improve.	• appreciate employee's efforts, • gradually increase the level of requirements regarding learning, • support the recovery of well-being, • emphasise social and intercultural competences, • support further bonding with co-workers.
Integration	An employee is able to function effectively in organization, observe rules and retain cultural values of his/her homeland.	• engage employees in school life (including activities outside the organization), • treat employees as colleagues, gradually reducing cultural support.

Source: Own elaboration based on: Białek (2015), *Międzykulturowość w szkole. Poradnik dla nauczycieli i specjalistów*, Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, Warszawa.
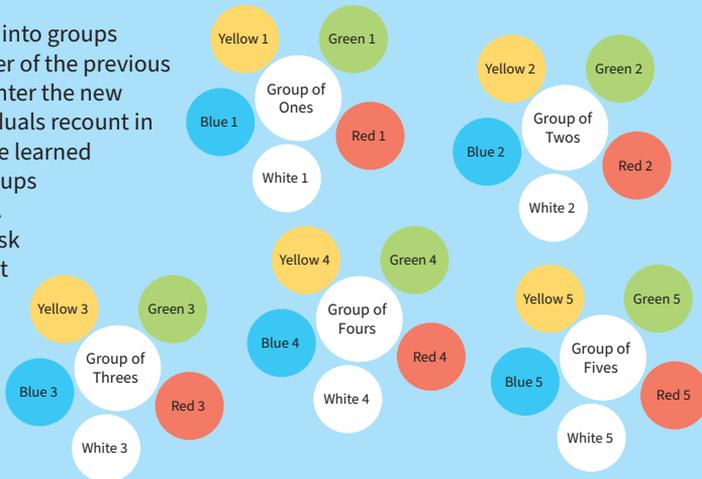
Step 1

The group is divided into micro-groups of 4-6 people (in an ideal case, the group size corresponds to the total number of groups, i.e. 5 groups of 5 people).

White group: Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4, Student 5

Yellow group: Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4, Student 5

Blue group: Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4, Student 5

Green group: Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4, Student 5

Red group: Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4, Student 5

Step 2

Employees work in the so-called expert groups. Each group receives a different part (or aspect) of the subject, or problem to be solved. Groups are supposed to discuss and cover their own part of the subject. Each person in the group has to understand the issue well enough to be able to explain it to another group.

Step 3

The second division into groups requires one member of the previous (expert) groups to enter the new group. Those individuals recount in turns what they have learned in their previous groups (the previous stage). It is a good idea to ask each group to collect all the information.

Group of Ones: Yellow 1, Green 1, Blue 1, Red 1, White 1

Group of Twos: Yellow 2, Green 2, Blue 2, Red 2, White 2

Group of Threes: Yellow 3, Green 3, Blue 3, Red 3, White 3

Group of Fours: Yellow 4, Green 4, Blue 4, Red 4, White 4

Group of Fives: Yellow 5, Green 5, Blue 5, Red 5, White 5

Step 4

Experts return to their groups and confront acquired comprehensive knowledge. They check whether everyone has learned everything. This system necessitates cooperation. In order to get a positive result, each employee must use the help (knowledge) of another employee. They have to help other as well.

Figure 4. Scenario for The Jigsaw Classroom
Source: Hedeen (2003), *The reverse jigsaw: A process of cooperative learning and discussion*, "Teaching Sociology", 31(3), pp. 325–332.

In the jigsaw classroom the "required" interdependence among people (workers, students and others) encourages them to take an active part in learning. Each participant plays the role of both a student and a teacher, which becomes a valuable resource for the others. Learning from each other gradually diminishes the need to try to out-perform them because all participants' learning enhances the performance of the others instead of inhibiting it, as is usually the case in most competitive, teacher-oriented methods (https://www.jigsaw.org). In the school environment, as well as in managing in the workplace, the manager or teacher learns to be a facilitating resource person, and contributes to learning within this cooperative paradigm. From the multicultural management's point of view such an approach plays a key role and is especially useful.

Conclusions

Management in multicultural environments is an integral part of diversity management. As Gross-Gołacka (2018) writes, this issue will appear in the scientific and business discourse as an indicator of changing human resources. As the new management paradigm emphasizes teamwork and continuous learning, the role of diversity management, also in the context of the cultural differences analyzed in this paper, is growing. Better communication, integration, and interpersonal cooperation are key areas for building the engagement of employees, but also members of other communities (e.g. scholars). Therefore, understanding these processes as well as identifying your strengths and weaknesses in this area is necessary for the proper functioning of multicultural communities.

Thus, an important role of a leader – whether in the workplace or in other multicultural environments – is to prevent situations where cultural differences could cause problems related to multiculturalism. This requires, firstly, recognition of the right to individuality (MacLeod, Brady 2011). The key element is the self-awareness of managers in a multicultural environment. The manager/leader should care for the development of co-workers, should constantly participate in the process of organizational learning by delegating tasks, supporting, providing feedback and giving some degree of independence, which allows subordinates to support their process of taking responsibility and building self-confidence. This allows to build intercultural sensitivity without which it is difficult to achieve the expected level of commitment of members of the organization.

Examples of tools given in this paper can be effectively applied in practice to activities of especially smaller, culturally diverse teams – both in the workplace and in other communities. Obviously the chapter does not exhaust this very extensive subject and requires further in-depth research. However, it can be a good starting point for those at the beginning of their journey in management in a multicultural environment.

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Key Terms and Definitions

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) – a model describing the increasing growth of competence in intercultural relations while the experience of cultural difference becomes increasingly complex. In his model, Bennett presents six stages of increasing sensitivity to cultural differences.

Hofstede's theory – theory describing cultural differences in five dimensions: individualism/collectivism, power distance, masculinity/femininity, avoidance of uncertainty and long-term orientation.

Management in a multicultural environment – working with a group in a culturally diverse environment, the aim of which is to ensure the effective functioning and development of all its members; it is directly related to managing intercultural sensitivity (awareness of the differences existing between cultures) and the use of methods and techniques which allow to develop the potential of all members of a group.

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