



## The Configuration of Stimulative Organizational Communication Factors within Universities from an Intercultural Perspective

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**Abstract:** The article analyzes the configuration of stimulative factors within organizational communication in the university environment from an intercultural perspective, in relation to the structural transformations associated with the globalization of education and the internationalization of higher education institutions. Organizational communication is examined as a constitutive component of organizational functioning, with direct implications for managerial processes, institutional climate, and academic activity, as configured through the cultural diversity of organizational actors, including academic staff, students, and administrative personnel. The analysis identifies a set of factors that stimulate organizational communication, including organizational culture, participatory forms of leadership, intercultural competences, inclusive institutional regulations, the integration of digital communication technologies, and the articulation of formal and informal communication structures. From an intercultural perspective, attention is directed to the role of cultural values, communication styles, whether direct or indirect, orientations toward authority, and the management of linguistic differences in either facilitating or constraining communication flows. The article advances the view that universities leveraging cultural diversity as an internal organizational variable are better positioned to develop coherent communication frameworks grounded in mutual understanding, institutional trust, and coordinated action. The discussion also addresses institutional practices that contribute to the regulation and improvement of intercultural communication, including intercultural development initiatives, internationalization policies, and institutional feedback mechanisms embedded within

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organizational processes. The configuration of stimulative organizational communication factors, adapted to the intercultural specificities of the university environment, constitutes a fundamental condition for enhancing institutional cohesion, the quality of educational processes, and the international competitiveness of universities.

**Keywords:** organizational communication; university environment; interculturality; organizational culture; leadership

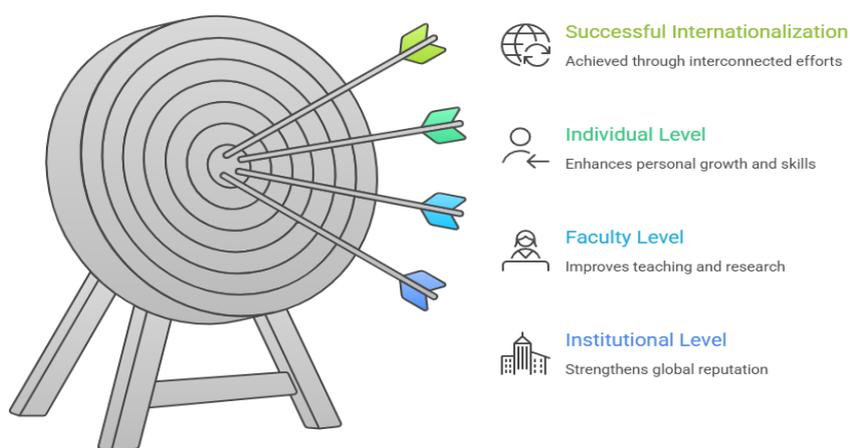
## 1. Introduction

Within the contemporary academic environment, internationalization functions as a primary institutional requirement, serving as a catalyst for systemic evolution. Currently, universities operate within an academic environment defined by increasing cultural diversity, digitalization, hybrid communication, and academic competitiveness. These factors serve as opportunities to continuously bolster institutional reputation. For these reasons, organizational communication is a strategic endeavor to ensure cohesion, integration, and performance.

Expanding the dimensions of collaboration and trust, eliminating conflict, and effectively reducing demotivation regarding professional growth constitute the strategic imperative of the intercultural university. In this context, intercultural communication becomes a catalyst for institutional development and the maintenance of an organizational climate which can be stimulated by core intercultural values, such as cultural empathy, constructive feedback, decisional transparency, participatory leadership, cultural flexibility, intercultural competencies, and functional communication. Bedenlier and Zawacki-Richter (2015) provide a comprehensive framework for measuring the effects organizational communication across three analytical layers, starting with the institutional level (macro/meso). At this level, impact relates to specific outcomes and the attainment of goals that justify resource distribution while facilitating the constant advancement of the institutional mission. Their synthesis further characterizes internationalization as a repetitive cycle where internal motivations support the reach of strategic objectives.

Regarding the faculty level (meso/micro), Bedenlier and Zawacki-Richter (2015) highlight a fundamental principle: the internationalization of the university depends upon the development of its staff. This influence involves the acquisition of intercultural competencies and increased linguistic ability, alongside the adaptation of instructional roles intended to accommodate an increasingly diverse student population. Lastly, at the individual level (micro), the results for academic personnel

include an intersection of professional growth and improved global perspectives, though these benefits are often accompanied by significant difficulties regarding professional instability. Figure 1 operationalizes the internationalization framework proposed by Bedenlier and Zawacki-Richter (2015), depicting the process as a converged, systemic evolution.



**Figure 1. The Multidimensional Layers of University Internationalization (adapted from Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter, 2015)**

Rezaei et al. (2018) observe that global engagement in higher education exists on a spectrum between globalization and internationalization, distinguishing the two based on their underlying ideological motivations. While they define globalization as a trend toward unification and hegemonic standardization, internationalization operates as a multipolarized framework of global integration achieved through academic partnership and mutual advancement.

## 2. Organizational Existence as a Communicative Process

In accordance with the scholarly imperative to define the ontological foundations of organizational existence, the “Communication-as-Constitutive” (CCO) framework posits that communication represents the essential substance of an organization and not a secondary variable occurring within an institutional container. As synthesized by Putnam, Nicotera, and McPhee (2009), this perspective draws significantly upon the work of Karl Weick (1969, 1979) by treating “organization” as a verb instead of

a noun, a shift that identifies communication as the primary mechanism through which human beings coordinate actions and maintain social systems. This assertion moves away from limited views of communication as simple information processing, instead drawing from diverse foundations such as systems theory, structuration, and speech act theory to examine how intricate discursive processes generate the social reality of the institution. While these abstract constructs involve a high degree of complexity, the CCO framework maintains that organizations emerge through specific processes that anchor these abstractions in social practice. Consequently, the study of academic functioning requires an analytical shift toward understanding how the nuanced interplay of language and interaction serves as the primary mode for producing and reproducing organizational forms (Putnam et al., 2009).

Consistent with the trust-repair framework of Bachmann, Gillespie, and Priem (2015), cultural diversity represents an internal pulse of the organization and not a static demographic category. When an institution treats this human variety as a dynamic component of collective learning, it moves away from pro forma compliance toward a human-centered approach to sense-making that serves as the foundation for organizational resilience (Duchek, Raetzke, & Scheuch, 2020). This perspective enables faculty and staff to establish a shared understanding of challenges, allowing an institution to develop an anticipatory capacity to identify environmental shifts that a homogeneous leadership structure might overlook. By prioritizing the unique cognitive mindsets of a diverse workforce and utilizing relational mechanisms, such as culturally sensitive social rituals, organizations can address moral outrage and social disequilibrium while transforming institutional crises into springboards for action (Bachmann et al., 2015; Duchek et al., 2020).

The intersection of ethical leadership (Bachmann et al., 2015) and resilience-oriented diversity management (Duchek et al., 2020) establishes a culture of transparency. Such a shift modifies the communication framework to be more person-centered. Consequently, institutional trust functions as a felt reality sustained by genuine respect and a shared commitment to the future of the organization, instead of an existing nominal policy goal.

To further the premise that institutional trust and communication frameworks are enacted through social practice, the interaction between students and faculty serves as the primary site of this communicative constitution. Hagenauer and Volet (2014) conceptualize student–faculty interactions as a multidimensional phenomenon. Within this framework, communication functions as the mechanism for balancing

the affective and supportive dimensions of the relationship. This process mediates the tension between closeness and distance to establish an environment of mutual trust.

Hagenauer and Volet (2014) also argue that the quality of these interactions depends on the intersection of individual determinants, including the motivations and prior experiences of both parties, and contextual factors such as class size and departmental culture. These elements define communication as the relational labor necessary to sustain a supportive academic bond as opposed to simple information exchange.

The conceptual framework articulated by Fumasoli and Huisman (2013) defines institutional diversity as the result of strategic positioning. In this model, universities exercise embedded agency to navigate the tension between seeking a unique resource niche through differentiation and ensuring institutional legitimacy through compliance. This process transforms the higher education system into a dynamic landscape where organizational actors actively shape the environmental constraints that influence their survival.

The intercultural dimension emerges through the interplay between intercultural communication and cultural intelligence, supporting managerial efficacy and the implementation of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices (Dinu, Cocoşatu, Palăr, & Neamţu, 2025). Within the communicative space of the United Nations, interculturality represents a dynamic process of communicative adaptation where actors negotiate linguistic and professional boundaries to achieve international objectives (Dinu et al., 2025). Cultural intelligence, encompassing cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions, serves as the mediator that connects multicultural team dynamics with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Social and Environmental Standards (SES).

Internal communication serves as a primary determinant of interpersonal relationships, management styles, and the integration of collective values (Curilla, Morales, Poma, & Vicente-Ramos, 2023). A correlation exists between communication and factors such as employee satisfaction and assertiveness, indicating that effective information flow strengthens the hierarchical and organizational structure (Curilla et al., 2023).

This focus on internal structure connects to the broader communicative constitution of the institution. When communication is prioritized as relational labor, the organizational climate moves from a focus on administrative compliance toward a framework of mutual trust (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014). Such an environment

supports strategic positioning where the institution uses its communicative agency to navigate the pressures of global standardization and local differentiation (Fumasoli & Huisman, 2013).

Organizational survival in a globalized era depends on a dual-layered communicative competence that transforms cultural and professional differences into a source of institutional trust, inclusive decision-making, and long-term resilience (Curilla et al., 2023; Dinu et al., 2025). Effective collaboration in this landscape requires intercultural competencies, a multidimensional construct of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAOs) that enables actors to function specifically in technology-mediated contexts (Kampermann et al., 2021). Because Information and Communication Technology (ICT) often carries the hidden principles and beliefs of its creators, it can inadvertently hinder knowledge-sharing in developing contexts. Mitigating these barriers requires the development of intercultural ICT skills, including technical, structural, and strategic abilities that allow users to decode the cultural logic embedded in digital platforms, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS) and e-learning environments (Kampermann et al., 2021).

Intercultural communication and cultural intelligence (CQ) support the successful implementation of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices within international organizations (Dinu et al., 2025). Relational labor in academic settings is mirrored in global governance, where the ability to navigate cultural differences through technology represents a strategic requirement. The integration of these intercultural competencies ensures that institutional digital infrastructure serves as a bridge for mutual enrichment fostering long-term organizational resilience and trust (Curilla et al., 2023; Dinu et al., 2025).

The efficacy of knowledge-sharing within diverse organizational settings is contingent upon speaking-up behavior (SPB), defined as the voluntary expression of ideas or concerns aimed at improving performance (Toufighi et al., 2024). Participative leadership positively correlates with this behavior by fostering a culture of psychological safety where individuals feel empowered to share expertise across cultural and linguistic boundaries. However, while leadership effectiveness partially mediates the intention to share knowledge, language proficiency and regional background remain significant determinants of an individual's willingness to speak up (Toufighi et al., 2024). These structural and cultural barriers can create social identity friction that hinders information flow, even under inclusive leadership.

The work of Toufighi et al. (2024) highlights that soft factors, such as perceived leadership trustworthiness and communication norms, are as critical as formal governance for institutional resilience. Within academic units, departmental decision-making and faculty governance function as communicative rituals that must actively accommodate cultural and linguistic diversity to prevent social disequilibrium. Institutional trust is maintained when participative leadership moves beyond pro forma compliance to transform the organization into a site of mutual enrichment and proactive knowledge exchange (Toufighi et al., 2024).

While participative leadership acts as a facilitator, the enactment of speaking-up behavior is deeply mediated by individual backgrounds. Region and language proficiency influence the confidence required to voice concerns, while cultural dimensions, specifically power distance and individualism-collectivism, shape the extent to which information is exchanged (Toufighi et al., 2024). High power distance often discourages individuals from challenging authority or sharing expertise. Furthermore, the mere existence of a participative structure is insufficient if the leader is not perceived as competent and trustworthy, as the perception of leadership effectiveness partially mediates the relationship between leadership style and knowledge sharing (Toufighi et al., 2024).

The communicative integration of non-native speakers involves systemic and interpersonal challenges, particularly regarding the dialectics of the foreign accent (Evans & Suklun, 2017). While non-native speakers view their accent as a component of personal identity, it can lead to phonetic recognition difficulties for native speakers, often resulting in professional exclusion or a glass ceiling for career advancement. Cultural friction also exists regarding communication styles; non-native speakers may associate directness with efficiency, whereas native English speakers often utilize elaboration and politeness strategies to ensure a positive reception (Evans & Suklun, 2017). Directness is consequently misinterpreted as being blunt or confrontational.

Intercultural adaptation often involves paradoxical coping mechanisms. Native speakers may simplify their vocabulary or slow their speech to facilitate understanding, yet these gestures are frequently perceived as condescending by non-native professionals (Evans & Suklun, 2017). Conversely, non-native speakers might pretend to understand to maintain professional standing, which leads to incomplete task execution. True inclusivity requires a sophisticated skillset in intercultural communication where cultural differences in verbal directness and identity markers

are strategically integrated into the institutional fabric instead of being merely tolerated (Evans & Suklun, 2017).

Intercultural communication functions as a manifestation of power as opposed to a matter of technical proficiency or attitude (Garson & McLean, 2025). The legacy of Western European colonialism has established the communication norms of elite, White men as the global dominant standard, which marginalizes the practices of equity-denied groups. This power dynamic results in the systematic silencing of women, who face more frequent interruptions and are often perceived as less competent when using authoritative speech, and the penalization of diverse groups based on racialized stereotypes (Garson & McLean, 2025). For example, individuals of Asian heritage may face penalization for exhibiting authoritative behavior that contradicts these westernized expectations.

To address these inequities, Garson and McLean (2025) suggest employing culture-general frameworks as heuristic tools to decode the nuances of varying communication styles. These frameworks clarify how communicative intent fluctuates along a continuum between implicit and explicit modes, shaped by specific cultural variables:

- ✓ *Power Distance* dictates the level of directness used when addressing authority, often determining if feedback is delivered through blunt statements or nuanced suggestions.
- ✓ The tension between *Individualism and Collectivism* shapes the balance between personal clarity and the implicit maintenance of group harmony.
- ✓ *Universalism versus Particularism* governs whether interactions adhere to standardized, explicit rules or shift based on contextual, relationship-dependent norms.
- ✓ *Time Orientation (Monochronic vs. Polychronic)* impacts the linear or fluid pacing of dialogue and the explicitness of task coordination

University communication, specifically in advising and peer feedback, suffers a loss in innovation and engagement when certain communication styles are devalued. Recognizing and decoding implicit styles allows academic leaders to foster an environment where diverse voices are validated contributors to institutional discourse (Garson & McLean, 2025).

A symbiotic relationship exists between formal organizational structures and the influence of informal communication channels, where the latter—comprising

“grapevines”, social networks, and casual interactions—serves as the lifeblood of the institution. These dual structures involve a significant interplay where informal networks often exert a more substantial influence on employee perceptions and behaviors than official mandates. By providing the flexibility to adapt to challenges that rigid formal structures might not address, these networks facilitate organizational resilience and play a mediating role in sharing tacit knowledge and fostering creative performance. Consequently, leaders must utilize these informal means to internalize strategic messages and build the personal connections that shape institutional cohesion, while balancing the need to prevent misinformation. This dynamic is further complicated by the emergence of team-based messaging applications like WhatsApp and Slack, which blur the boundary between formal and informal structures and require a high degree of communicative competency to navigate risks such as information overload and work-life imbalance (Obeng, Boateng & Boateng, 2024).

Research by Nassani et al. (2024) demonstrates the link between participatory leadership (PL), supportive organizational culture (SOC), and the sustainability of job satisfaction. The configuration of an inclusive organizational model depends on several specific dimensions:

- ✓ *Shared Authority and Empowerment.* Shifting from centralized hierarchies to shared frameworks allows management to mobilize staff. By delegating authority and valuing subordinate knowledge, leaders foster a sense of being valued, which increases the willingness of employees to perform difficult or voluntary tasks.
- ✓ *Psychological Well-being.* Participation creates a sense of belonging and loyalty. These factors are essential for maintaining psychological happiness and institutional solidarity, particularly within high-pressure professional environments.
- ✓ *Supportive Culture and Human Capital.* A foundation of shared morals and practices prioritizes human needs alongside operational goals. This cognitive structure breaks down silos and allows individuals to excel by providing an environment where innovation is encouraged.
- ✓ *Work-Life Balance as a Regulator.* The ability to meet personal and family commitments without sacrificing career recognition serves as a measure of leadership effectiveness. Respect for this balance is a primary driver of long-term employee retention and engagement (Nassani et al., 2024).

Global challenges in the 21st century, such as violent extremism, migration crises, and political populism, make learning how to live together a social imperative (Deardorff, 2019). Expanding and intensifying communication among individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds serves as a primary method for countering hate speech and fostering a culture of peace. Communication styles are embedded in the cultural and psychological fabric of organizational interactions as distinct from simple linguistic preferences (Lamino & Diaz, 2024). A taxonomy based on the work of Edward Hall (1976) helps decode how meaning is generated across different orientations:

- ✓ *High-Context Cultures (Indirect)*. These collectivist orientations rely on implicit cues, nonverbal signals, and tone. Relationship-building and social harmony take precedence over the explicit transmission of data (Aleassa et al., 2023; Triandis, 1995, as cited in Lamino & Diaz, 2024).
- ✓ *Low-Context Cultures (Direct)*. These orientations prioritize efficiency and clarity, with meaning located primarily in the explicit verbal or written code (Hofstede, 2001; Kittler et al., 2011, as cited in Lamino & Diaz, 2024).

Story Circles function as an accessible tool for navigating these cultural differences through storytelling and circle-based dialogue (Deardorff, 2019). This approach fosters respect, empathy, and self-awareness by engaging cognitive and socio-emotional learning. Because they require minimal resources or specialized training, Story Circles are effective for social integration and inclusive communication across various languages and contexts worldwide (Deardorff, 2019).

Misalignment between communication orientations often leads to institutional failures. For instance, the directness of a low-context professional can be perceived as aggressive in high-context communities, while high-context dialogue may be viewed as ambiguous by low-context individuals (Lamino & Diaz, 2024). To bridge these gaps, specific strategies for balanced interaction include:

- ✓ *Hybrid Communication*. Beginning with concise points to satisfy low-context needs, followed by narrative discussions for high-context participants.
- ✓ *Dual Feedback Mechanisms*. Utilizing formal written surveys alongside informal verbal focus groups to capture diverse contribution styles.

- ✓ *Context Monitoring.* Developing the ability to read nonverbal cues, such as hesitation, especially in settings where open disagreement is avoided to maintain social harmony (Lamino & Diaz, 2024).

By synthesizing the diverse theoretical frameworks and empirical studies examined in this research, we identify a multidimensional configuration of factors essential for stimulating effective communication within the intercultural academic context. These elements function as a cohesive, integrated system that actively supports the university's institutional mission:

- ✓ *Participatory Leadership.* Moving away from centralized hierarchies toward shared authority to foster psychological safety and employee motivation (Nassani et al., 2024; Toufighi et al., 2024).
- ✓ *Supportive Organizational Culture.* Prioritizing human capital and emotional needs to break down professional silos and encourage innovative thinking (Nassani et al., 2024).
- ✓ *Cultural Intelligence and Competence.* Mastering the cognitive and behavioral dimensions necessary to navigate linguistic boundaries and achieve international ESG objectives (Dinu et al., 2025; Kampermann et al., 2021).
- ✓ *Strategic Informal Networks.* Leveraging “grapevines” and casual interactions to share tacit knowledge and build organizational resilience (Obeng et al., 2024).
- ✓ *Intercultural ICT Skills.* Developing the ability to decode the cultural logic of digital platforms, ensuring technology acts as a bridge and not a barrier (Kampermann et al., 2021; Obeng et al., 2024).
- ✓ *Relational Mechanisms and Rituals.* Adopting culturally sensitive practices, such as Story Circles, to build empathy and resolve social disequilibrium (Bachmann et al., 2015; Deardorff, 2019).
- ✓ *Work-Life Balance as a Regulator.* Utilizing the boundary between professional and personal life as a strategic measure of leadership effectiveness and retention (Nassani et al., 2024).
- ✓ *Contextual Awareness.* Navigating the continuum between high-context (indirect) and low-context (direct) styles to ensure clarity in diverse academic interactions (Lamino & Diaz, 2024).

As illustrated in Figure 2, these stimulative factors are organized into four specific dimensions that operate upon a specialized communicative infrastructure.



**Figure 2. Multidimensional Configuration of Stimulative Factors for Intercultural Organizational Communication**

### 3. Conclusion

Understanding and leveraging the stimulative factors of organizational communication within the university environment from an intercultural perspective is extremely important. This is because contemporary university is a multicultural, digital, and competitive space where effective and inclusive organizational communication supports integration, cooperation, conflict prevention, and institutional performance. According to the analysis of the stimulative factors of organizational communication, a university environment is a complex social system in which cultural diversity is the main source of change. Higher education institutions which encourage the “Communication-as-Constitutive” (CCO) approach can link concrete social practices that foster mutual trust and organizational stability in achieving strategic objectives at a high level of abstraction.

Such a connection is illustrated in the Tripartite Framework of Figure 1. The successful internationalization of higher education institutions depends on the thorough development of their missions, the competencies of their teaching

staff, and the professional development of their members, which are all linked through language and intercultural contact.

The summary of research and theoretical models in this study identifies a network of stimulative factors, synthesized in Figure 2, categorized into four primary dimensions and a foundational infrastructure:

- *Structural–Institutional Dimension.* Participatory leadership and supportive organizational culture are primary to this dimension, as they create the psychological safety needed for proactive knowledge sharing and speaking-up behavior across cultural borders.
- *Cultural–Symbolic Dimension.* This area focuses on shared meanings and values, ensuring that the organizational culture prioritizes human capital to break down professional silos.
- *Competence-Based Dimension.* The use of cultural intelligence and contextual awareness ensures that academic leaders can manage linguistic differences and various communication contexts to reduce power imbalances and professional barriers.
- *Relational–Interactional Dimension.* This dimension provides a human-centered base for lasting institutional stability through the use of relational tools, such as Story Circles, and the careful oversight of work-life balance.
- *Communicative Infrastructure.* The strategic connection of formal structures with informal communication channels, supported by intercultural ICT skills, allows digital tools to act as bridges for collaboration instead of locations for cultural dominance.

Universities recognizing cultural diversity as an internal variable instead of a demographic problem are more likely to focus on the issue of improving their international competitiveness as well as social unity. We believe that mobilizing these specific factors is essential to solidifying institutional cohesion. By moving from participatory leadership and cultural support to intercultural intelligence, academic institutions bypass the administrative model to arrive at the constitutive model. This model enables the university to turn cultural diversity from a source of tension to a source of innovation, creating a foundation for academic work grounded in dignity, openness, and cooperation. Consequently, leveraging the stimulative factors of organizational communication contributes to enhancing the quality of education, preventing conflicts, and developing an open, excellence-oriented university culture.

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