



## Inclusive Workplace Culture of a Government Office in the Philippines Through Intercultural Communication

Jherico R. Gamboa<sup>1</sup>, John Feree C. Arriola<sup>1</sup>, Jade Chrisel L. Baquiran<sup>1</sup>,

Jesus P. Briones<sup>1\*</sup>, Marmelo V. Abante<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>World Citi Colleges, Philippines

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### Abstract

Effective intercultural communication is essential in the workplace to address cultural barriers, improve inclusivity and promote employee engagement. In this respect, the study aimed to enhance cultural competence by observing emotions, developing cultural sensitivity, and identifying barriers to intercultural communication within a government office in the Philippines. This study examined the cognitive aspects of intercultural communication and barriers to effective interaction among employees. A comprehensive quantitative-descriptive study was conducted with a census of fifty (50) employees from the subject government office, including permanent staff and outsourced personnel. The data-gathering tool was a validated questionnaire distributed via an in-person survey. The data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The findings indicate that respect for cultural differences is highly practiced in the office, with the cognitive interaction aspects of intercultural communication to be further improved for a more efficient inclusive environment. Although barriers to intercultural communication exist, they can be minimized by fostering respectful and inclusive interactions among employees. Based on the findings of the study, a strategy roadmap for improving intercultural communication is proposed. This study is essential for an organization seeking to improve workplace dynamics and the long-term success created through diversity and inclusion initiatives.

**Keywords:** *cultural awareness, cultural competence, diversity awareness, employee engagement, inclusion strategies, Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory, inclusive workplace culture, intercultural communication, intercultural communication barriers*

### INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is a country full of diversity. It is an archipelagic location of the world, composed of 7,641 islands divided into Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. The population is 119,106,224 and includes over 180 ethnolinguistic groups (Reyes et al., 2017). The history of colonialism from different races has created new practices as ways of life. The pre-Hispanic belief system of the Filipinos consisted of a pantheon of gods, spirits, creatures, and men who guarded streams, fields, trees, mountains, forests, and houses. Bathala, who created earth and humankind, was superior to the other gods and spirits. Wood and metal images represented ancestral spirits, and no distinction was made between the spirits and their physical symbols (Miller, 2024). Christianity, through Catholicism, was first brought to the Philippines by Spanish pirates, missionaries, and settlers who arrived in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Philippines proudly boast of being the only Christian nation in Asia. These are some reasons why the Philippines has a diverse population, and diverse people mean diverse cultural beliefs and beliefs where they grow up and instill a strong perception as a contribution to the constant cultural changes and beliefs.

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Corresponding author's email: [jpbriones1961@gmail.com](mailto:jpbriones1961@gmail.com)

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Historically, the Filipino indigenous people have been marginalized, and they have been separated from economic opportunities and political participation. Systemic challenges, such as discrimination and social exclusion, should be approached by highlighting the relevance of cross-cultural skills development; this may shatter stigma- and bias-created barriers (Zegers & Auron, 2022). These barriers may seem to affect one's verbal and nonverbal communication, so improving cultural sensitivity through adequate understanding of all types of communication is necessary (Sahadevan & Sumangala, 2021). Thus, cross-cultural communication refers to the interconnection of diverse people in a workplace. In most cases, language confuses communication between different cultures and communities. For effective cross-cultural communication, one should recognize the variances caused by cultural differences. In today's diverse world, the ability to communicate multi-culturally and effectively is crucial. Establishing a common ground helps create a productive dialog between the two parties to enhance the relationship between the two parties. While establishing common ground, the two sides must recognize cultural differences and expectations.

On December 19, 2019, President Rodrigo Duterte signed Executive Order 100, s. 2019, the Diversity and Inclusion Program (DIP) was established to eliminate barriers to equal opportunities in government entities (Guerra, 2019). While the program promotes inclusivity through training and mechanisms for addressing discrimination, gaps remain in understanding intercultural communication challenges within government offices. There are three reasons why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts fail; employee fatigue, backlash with DEI initiatives, and the denial of inequality (Zheng, 2022). Many studies on intercultural communication have been conducted, but particular problems in government offices in the Philippines have not yet been addressed. Although previous research had discussed physical, psychological, language, cultural, and attitudinal barriers (Jagtiani, 2023), very few studies discuss the significant challenges communicated in terms of dynamic change in the context of government settings, especially when permanent and outsourced staff come from different backgrounds. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has yet examined these challenges in the context of this particular government office, justifying the research. This study focused on a government agency in the Philippines, where diverse employees face communication challenges that hinder inclusivity and efficiency. There is a need to explore how important it is to overcome such communication barriers because effective communication leads directly to the quality of public service delivery. Findings from this study are critical for supporting the DIP of the agency and potentially enhancing employee engagement while improving organizational performance and building a more inclusive workplace.

Thus, this study examined how intercultural communication influences an inclusive workplace culture in a government office setting. Specifically, this study assessed the cognitive aspects of intercultural communication and barriers to effective interaction among employees. Drawing on Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, this study examined their association. Finally, a strategic roadmap is proposed to enhance intercultural communication in the subject government office.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Intercultural communication is vital for effective organizational dynamics, particularly in government offices, where cultural awareness fosters collaboration and achieves organizational goals. This review explores Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory, highlighting how cultural values influence communication styles in multicultural teams. It identifies physical, psychological, language, culture, and attitudinal barriers to intercultural communication that can lead to misunderstandings and hinder collaboration, especially in multigenerational workplaces. Finally, this review proposes strategies such as cross-cultural training and diversity awareness initiatives to overcome these barriers and create a more inclusive workplace, ultimately enhancing

communication effectiveness and employee engagement.

### **Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory**

On a basic level, intercultural communication occurs when people communicate from different cultural backgrounds. It is an interdisciplinary concept that combines anthropology, sociology, psychology, and linguistics and encompasses all types of communication, including verbal (such as language) and nonverbal (such as hand gestures, body language, and facial expressions).

This study is anchored on Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions' Theory ([Žemojtel-Piotrowska & Piotrowski, 2023](#)), a framework for cross-cultural psychology that Geert Hofstede developed. This method uses a structure derived from factor analysis to demonstrate the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members and how these values relate to behavior. It is an excellent resource for demonstrating the impact of different cultures on business and diplomatic negotiations. They can build great rapport in management systems with a diversified culture. [Martinovski \(2018\)](#) remarked that humans and virtual agents interact in cross-cultural environments and must correctly behave according to their environment demands. Possibly, every individual will also learn how to avoid conflicts and live together. Communication is used to coordinate an organization's activities to achieve its goals. It is also used to signal and order those involved in the task. In consideration of the diverse cultural backgrounds of the employees in an office, the effectiveness of the communication system within the organization is paramount in achieving a more productive and highly engaged workforce.

According to [Daryani and Amini \(2016\)](#), organizational complexity is the combination of diversity and interactivity within an organization or system. In other words, as the number of components of an organization or system increases, its operational complexity also increases. In response to the combined interactions of multiple stakeholders with diverse objectives, large organizations inevitably face challenges arising from this complexity. An increase in the number of stakeholders leads to an increase in communication entry points. This increase is not merely due to the increase in communication paths and channels but also due to the complexity of the provision of information.

### **Cognitive Characteristics of Intercultural Communication**

Engagement, respect for cultural differences, and enjoyment of interaction are major cognitive characteristics that help construct effective communication in multicultural settings. Research suggests that increased cultural awareness and competence were positively correlated with these cognitive factors, thereby decreasing the impact of barriers on communication outcomes. In the government office scenario, where employees may be from different cultures and thus have diverse sensitivities toward such differences, understanding the cognitive aspects of communication becomes an essential factor in improving workplace interactions. Studies have indicated that the more employees demonstrate cultural competence, the better their respect for differences and their more positive engagement in intercultural communication activities ([Kaihlanen et al., 2019](#)).

### **Intercultural Communication Barriers**

Studies have revealed that intercultural communication in diverse workplaces often experiences numerous barriers, which are generally categorized into five types: physical, psychological, language, culture, and attitudinal ([Kim & Penry Williams, 2021](#)). The same obstacles in government offices lead to many misunderstandings and misinterpretations, negatively affecting collaboration, employee engagement and even workplace inclusiveness. Organizational settings, in particular, require an analysis of the above barriers to find solutions that promote a more efficient and harmonious communication environment ([Mao et al., 2020](#)). Age differences also bring

communication sensitivity, making intercultural communication much more challenging, especially when people of various age groups are placed in the workplace (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015).

In summary, these barriers obstruct effective intercultural communication in government agencies, underscoring the need for strategies to address organizational and interpersonal challenges to enhance transparency and dialog. In this regard, the interplay between the cognitive aspects of intercultural communication and barriers affecting it needs to be evaluated for a more productive and engaged workforce. Thus, the null hypothesis is expressed as follows:

- Ho: There is no significant relationship between the level of cognitive communication aspects and the barriers that affect intercultural communication.

### **Strategies for improving intercultural communication**

Intercultural communication barriers can be overcome through several strategies. One of these strategies is cross-cultural training, which helps employees develop their cultural competencies and establish an inclusive workplace environment (Malik et al., 2017). Diversity awareness initiatives are also crucial in reducing unconscious biases and appreciation for respect for differences in society, leading to eventual improvement in interaction engagement and efficiency in communication. To that end, promoting open discussions and feedback, which are included in communication policies, can also remove fewer psychological and attitudinal barriers, thus providing workplaces with a collaborative feel (Leisy & Ahmad, 2016). In general, eradicating these barriers through any relevant strategy can further improve an organization's ability to achieve its goals and objectives. De Luna (2023) recommended that a standard communication system should be strictly followed by all members of an organization to avoid these barriers. As emphasized by Laco et al. (2024), an organization with a strong communication culture will eventually achieve improved efficiency, productivity, quality, customer satisfaction, and profitability.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative-descriptive design to assess intercultural communication within a subject government office. According to Nassaji (2015), quantitative-descriptive research involves collecting and analyzing data quantitatively, making it well-suited for the study quantifying the cognitive aspects of intercultural communication and its related barriers. This study considered a census of all 50 employees within the governmental agency office, including permanent and outsourced employees. Therefore, it ensured that every employee within the given office had tangible experience with the considered communication dynamics.

The self-developed questionnaire, which is the central data collection tool, was divided into two sections. The first section collected demographic data, including age, gender, and cultural background. On the other hand, the second section aimed to measure cognitive attitudes toward communication in intercultural interaction with respect to aspects such as engagement with interaction, respect for differences, enjoyment with interaction, and communication barriers. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale for the measurement of responses: 1 = 1.00 - 1.79 (Strongly Disagree), 2 = 1.80 - 2.59 (Disagree), 3 = 2.60 - 3.39 (Neutral), 4 = 3.40 - 4.19 (Agree), and 5 = 4.20 - 5.00 (Strongly Agree). Two statisticians validated the questionnaire, which was pilot-tested to employees from another office to ensure reliability. Cronbach's alpha scores ranged from 0.80 to 0.91, thus having an acceptable level of internal consistency across the survey items (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Reliability Statistics

Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Interaction Engagement	0.91	5
Respect Cultural Differences	0.84	4
Interaction Confidence	0.82	5
Interaction Enjoyment	0.80	4
Interaction Attentiveness	0.81	4
Issues and Challenges	0.80	5

Data collection via an in-person survey was performed under stringent ethical standards with consideration of the need for confidentiality and voluntariness of response. Each employee was informed of the objectives of the study and was specifically requested to give a respondent's consent before answering the questionnaires. The data were collated, enumerated, and analyzed using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient to identify relationships between the cognitive aspects of intercultural communication and the described barriers. Other statistical tools employed in data analysis were frequency and percentage, standard deviation, and weighted mean. In this manner, a valid data test is provided to provide a justifiable conclusion from the study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's findings on intercultural communication within a government office, focusing on respondents' demographic profile, cognitive aspects of intercultural communication, and barriers they face. The discussion interprets these findings in the context of their relevance to improving intercultural interactions in the workplace. The results are structured across various tables, providing a comprehensive overview of the respondents' experiences and the relationship between cognitive factors and communication barriers. These insights are crucial for understanding how intercultural communication can be enhanced in government settings.

### Demographic Profile

The demographic profile shows how age, gender, religion, and language influence office communication. Table 2 shows the profile of the respondents.

**Table 2.** Profile of the Study Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Age</i>		
Under 25	3	6
26 – 37 years old	34	68
38 – 50 years old	9	18
51 years old or older	4	8
Total	50	100
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	21	42
Female	29	58
Total	50	100
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>		
Roman Catholic	39	78
Christian	4	8
Islam	4	8

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Iglesia ni Cristo	3	6
Total	50	100
<i>Language often speak</i>		
Tagalog	33	66
Ilokano	11	22
Maranao	6	12
Total	50	100

As can be gleaned from the table, in general, the office employs younger female employees who are more receptive to diverse communication interactions. Most respondents belong to the same religion; therefore, it creates a common ground for communication, and the difference needs to be highlighted so that no other linguistic groups or religious ones are overlooked (Kurian, 2024). Tagalog is the predominant language, thus providing most employees with an accessible communication language when interacting with each other. People who communicate in different languages may find themselves in tight situations; hence, there is a requirement for effective inclusiveness in the organization.

### Cognitive aspects of intercultural communication in a Government Office

Cognitive aspects involve mental processes that shape how employees interact across cultural differences. In a diverse government office, such factors as engagement, respect for differences and communication enjoyment play key roles in effective intercultural communication. In the same vein, effective communication within an organization plays an important role in information dissemination and collaboration among stakeholders (Roldan et al., 2023). Table 3 presents how these cognitive elements impact workplace interactions and highlights areas for improvement to promote inclusivity and collaboration.

**Table 3.** Cognitive Aspects in Intercultural Communication in Government Offices

Cognitive Aspects of Intercultural Communication	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Interaction Engagement	4.14	Agree
Respect Differences	4.28	Strongly Agree
Interaction Differences	3.88	Agree
Interaction Enjoyment	4.12	Agree
Interaction Activeness	4.24	Strongly Agree
Mean of Means	4.13	Agree

Overall, the results show that employees generally agreed with all aspects of intercultural communication. Respect for differences and interaction activeness ratings were high because employees appreciated the need to respect cultural differences and intercultural interactions. This view is supported by a mini-review on the neuroscience of respect: insights from a cross-cultural perspective, which discussed the cultural differences of respect as an essential human value and the neural underpinnings accompanying them (Khalaila et al., 2023).

Moreover, interaction engagement, differences, and enjoyment are also important factors to consider. Alonzo et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of effective interaction and collaboration approaches among employees to improve the workplace's positive work environment. The finding also indicates that although employees are willing to engage, there are challenges or discomforts in how they can thoroughly enjoy or reach deep engagements in intercultural interactions. As Maxwell

et al. (2023) noted, in the absence of much needed supervision, training, and facilitation, it is sometimes difficult to understand each other better and enjoy intercultural encounters among them in a group. In this regard, Endro and Meilasari-Sugiana (2024) suggested that self-integrity, a virtue acquired through identifying oneself in an organization that an individual belongs to, enhances effective intercultural communication if practiced by all employees in the workplace.

### Barriers Affecting Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication in the workplace is influenced by several barriers that can hinder effective interaction among employees of diverse cultural backgrounds. Understanding these barriers is critical for creating an inclusive and collaborative work environment. The main barriers identified in this study include physical, psychological, language, cultural, and attitudinal challenges. Table 4 presents the barriers affecting intercultural communication in the organization.

**Table 4.** Barriers Affecting Intercultural Communication in Organizations

Barriers of Intercultural Communication	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Physical Barriers	4.00	Agree
Psychological Barriers	3.98	Agree
Language Barriers	4.00	Agree
Cultural Barriers	3.90	Agree
Attitudinal Barriers	3.94	Agree
Mean of Means	3.96	Agree

The finding reveals that employees perceived all barriers to affecting the inclusive workplace culture within the organization. They believed that all these barriers significantly affected the efficiency of inclusivity in the organization. Overall, the results indicate that addressing these barriers is crucial for improving intercultural communication within an organization. When these barriers are eradicated, effective interpersonal relationships may be significantly improved. As Gubi et al. (2024) pointed out, employee performance can be expected to improve when effective interpersonal relations exist among employees in the workplace. As further emphasized by Ndini and Agustini (2024), challenges related to engagement and responsiveness can be addressed by effective communication.

Physical and language barriers were considered to affect the successful communication engagement of employees. This finding is supported by Higginbottom et al. (2015), who emphasized how these barriers could affect intercultural communication because of the difficulty of navigating language differences and the impact of physical environments on communication effectiveness.

On the other hand, psychological and attitudinal barriers, such as anxiety and personal biases, were also perceived by the employees as challenging, as these can also affect the interaction effectiveness of the employees within the organization. This finding is consistent with Lou and Noels (2019) study that highlighted the role of mental and emotional states in communication, especially in multicultural settings.

Similarly, the employees perceived cultural barriers to affect the effectiveness of intercultural communication. Although this was rated the least among barriers, its possible impact cannot be ignored. This finding is supported by Ogay and Edelmann (2016), who noted that even subtle cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings, making them essential to be addressed in order not create adverse impact on interaction effectiveness within a group.

### Relationship Between Cognitive Aspect Level and Barriers Affecting Intercultural Communication

Understanding the relationship between the level of cognitive intercultural communication and the barriers affecting it is vital for creating a more productive and engaged workforce. The null hypothesis was tested using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient:  $H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between the level of cognitive intercultural communication and the barriers affecting it. Table 5 presents the relationship between the two research variables.

**Table 5.** Relationship between the Level of Cognitive Aspects of Intercultural Communication and Barriers Affecting Intercultural Communication

Barriers	Aspects	Correlation Coefficient	Description	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Physical Barrier	Interaction Engagement	0.540	Strong Correlation	<0.001	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Respect Differences	0.311	Moderate Correlation	0.028	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Differences	0.417	Moderate Correlation	0.003	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Enjoyment	0.142	Weak Correlation	0.327	Fail To Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
	Interaction Activeness	0.453	Moderate Correlation	<0.001	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
Psychological Barrier	Interaction Engagement	0.351	Moderate Correlation	0.012	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Respect Differences	0.465	Moderate Correlation	<0.001	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Differences	0.507	Strong Correlation	<0.001	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Enjoyment	0.426	Moderate Correlation	0.002	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Activeness	0.359	Moderate Correlation	0.010	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
Language Barriers	Interaction Engagement	0.471	Moderate Correlation	<0.001	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Respect Differences	0.357	Moderate Correlation	0.011	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Differences	0.409	Moderate Correlation	0.003	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Enjoyment	0.394	Moderate Correlation	0.005	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Activeness	0.341	Moderate Correlation	0.015	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
Cultural Barriers	Interaction Engagement	0.480	Moderate Correlation	<0.001	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant



Barriers	Aspects	Correlation Coefficient	Description	P-value	Decision	Remarks
	Respect Differences	0.459	Moderate Correlation	<0.001	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Differences	0.276	Moderate Correlation	0.053	Fail To Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
	Interaction Enjoyment	0.220	Weak Correlation	0.125	Fail To Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
	Interaction Activeness	0.419	Moderate Correlation	0.002	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Engagement	0.384	Moderate Correlation	0.006	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
Attitudinal Barriers	Respect Differences	0.392	Moderate Correlation	0.005	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Differences	0.403	Moderate Correlation	0.004	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Enjoyment	0.300	Moderate Correlation	0.034	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
	Interaction Activeness	0.279	Moderate Correlation	0.050	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant

\*\*If the P-value is less than or equal to 0.05, reject the null hypothesis. Otherwise, it fails to reject the null hypothesis. Correlation interpretation ( $\pm 0.76-0.99$  Very Strong Correlation:  $\pm 0.51-.75$  Strong Correlation:  $\pm 0.26-0.50$  Moderate Correlation:  $\pm 0.11-0.25$  Weak Correlation and  $\pm 0.01-0.10$  Very Weak Correlation)

The analysis reveals that some barriers are more influential on intercultural communication than others. As can be gleaned in the table, significant relationships exist between physical and language barriers and other features like interaction engagement and activeness; issues like workspaces and language differences affect employees' expression and participation. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This resonates with research on how physical and language barriers can interfere with effective communication (Norouzinia et al., 2015; Ozmen et al., 2016).

Psychological and attitudinal barriers also have a significant influence, especially on respect for differences and enjoyment of interactions. Anxiety and personal bias act as barriers to communication, which makes it even harder for employees to engage in efficient communication and enjoy their interactions. This supports Men and Yue (2019), who identified emotional factors as influential for successful intercultural communication.

The cultural barriers, although necessary for involvement and respect for the differences of others, were found to be less significant in the enjoyment of interaction. Reichard et al. (2015) stated that even if employees are cognizant of cultural differences, they may not typically practice their encounters with co-workers as critical hurdles in enjoying effective interactions due to their cultural comfort.

The results also reveal that not all variables have significant relationships. Relationships involving physical and cultural barriers were found to have inconsequential effects on the enjoyment of interaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted for these variables. This means that despite the effects of these factors on employee engagement, these barriers do not directly contribute to how much employees enjoy intercultural communication. This finding is inlined with

[Good et al. \(2017\)](#), who found that not all barriers are similar absolutely when influencing specific aspects of communication.

### Strategy Roadmap for Improving Intercultural Communication in Organizations

Table 6 outlines the proposed strategy roadmap for improving intercultural communication in the subject government office.

**Table 6.** Proposed Strategy Roadmap

Indicators	Proposed Strategies
Interaction Engagement	Implement guidelines on active listening and tailoring communication to the interest, needs, and preferences of employees to help build connection, foster mutual respect and make the message more relevant
Interaction Differences	Educate employees about the cultural norms, values, and practices of the other cultures to avoid misunderstanding and to consistently practice respecting everyone's differences in the workplace
Interaction Enjoyment	Identify shared interest or hobbies that can serve as a foundation for engaging and enjoyable interactions among employees
Physical Barrier	Schedule regular check-ins or meetings to ensure ongoing communication and avoid misunderstanding to help build trust and rapport among employees
Psychological Barrier	Encourage open and respectful dialogue to exchange ideas and perspectives to build a positive and inclusive environment in the workplace
Language Barrier	Learn basic phrases and vocabulary in the other person's language to show respect for their culture as a matter of practice among employees in the workplace
Cultural Barrier	Conduct a training for employees on cultural awareness that involve adjusting the language, tone, and body language to align with the cultural preferences of the others
Attitudinal Barrier	Promote and encourage open-mindedness and a willingness to consider different perspectives and build empathy to understand and appreciate the experiences and perspectives of others as a required office etiquette among employees

The table shows the strategies necessary for areas that would need improvement in intercultural communication in the organization, such as the several barriers encountered in intercultural communication and the cognitive aspects of intercultural communication that include interaction engagement, interaction differences and interaction enjoyment. According to [Ilie \(2019\)](#), learning about other cultures and developing intercultural communication competencies and skills can facilitate multicultural encounters and lead to more openness and tolerance toward others. Additionally, to improve intercultural communication, it is important to address these barriers. This can be achieved through training and education in intercultural communication, as well as through increased awareness and understanding of cultural differences. Likewise, [De Ramos and Briones \(2024\)](#) reiterated that any organization should always consider providing relevant strategies addressing issues and challenges for effective communication.

The proposed strategies will help understand the diverse workforce and guide them toward effective cross-cultural communication to avoid possible issues related to employee relationships, staffing, team building, and negotiations. Sahadevan and Sumangala (2021) stated that to effectively communicate in a culturally diverse organization, there is a need for effective sharing and exchanging of ideas based on mutual understanding, respect, and credibility.

## CONCLUSIONS

The inclusive workplace culture of a government office is adequate, considering how its environment values, appreciates, and welcomes employees of all backgrounds and diverse characteristics. This is demonstrated by how employees practice cognitive intercultural communication. However, to be more efficient in its practice of inclusivity, the employees of the subject government office need to further improve their interaction cognitive aspects. The study also revealed that barriers to effective intercultural communication, whether physical, psychological, language, cultural, or attitudinal, affect the inclusive workplace culture. Thus, appropriate measures should be taken to improve intercultural communication engagement within the organization.

The proposed strategies are expected to create an all-inclusive atmosphere that encourages active participation and interaction while respecting individual differences. Likewise, these strategies tend to reduce barriers to intercultural communication, if not completely eradicated. It is expected that enhancing intercultural communication in a government office with an inclusive environment will consequently improve the organization's collaboration, creativity, and productivity.

## LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

One limitation was the focus on only one government office, and most respondents were middle-aged females only; hence, they were not very generalizable to other organizations with generally different setups. There may also be self-reported bias in using such data because employees' perceptions may not accurately measure objective intercultural communication dynamics. In addition, while the present study on cognitive aspects is informative, additional information could be extracted by including observational or qualitative data to capture subtle interpersonal interactions and communication interference. In future studies, the study could be extended to other diverse organizations and sectors, which would allow the generalizability of the findings in diverse workplace settings. Further demographic factors like educational background, linguistic diversity, and cultural background, can be included in future studies, as this would help to further understand the impact of intercultural communication styles. The analysis could be further enhanced using qualitative approaches such as interviews or focus groups. These methods allow for a detailed examination of employees' perspectives and experiences, thus providing more significant insights in terms of developing effective intercultural communication strategy.

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