

# ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY OF PT INKO FORWARDING IN BUILDING A CROSS-CULTURAL VIRTUAL TEAM WITH TAIWANESE COMPANIES

Dywa Hanif Pradana<sup>1\*</sup>, Bertha Sri Eko<sup>2</sup>, Rismi Juliadi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Multimedia Nusantara University

Email : [dywa.hanif@student.umm](mailto:dywa.hanif@student.umm)<sup>1\*</sup>; [bertasri@umn.ac.id](mailto:bertasri@umn.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>; [rismi.juliadi@umn.ac.id](mailto:rismi.juliadi@umn.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

\* corresponding author

## ABSTRACT

Advancements in communication technology have opened up opportunities for companies to engage in virtual business collaborations. Establishing cross-cultural virtual teams and devising effective strategies for their operation can significantly benefit companies. The research aims to explore the challenges and hurdles faced when working in cross-cultural virtual teams, strategies for forming and managing such teams, as well as communication accommodation strategies within them. Communication Accommodation Theory serves as the theoretical framework, utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach through case study methodology. In-depth interviews were conducted for data collection. Findings reveal the implementation of convergence accommodation strategies by each virtual team studied, particularly exemplified by Inko Forwarding. The company aims to nurture business relationships with agents to achieve specific objectives by establishing networks. To succeed in these endeavors, understanding cultural nuances and employing Communication Accommodation Theory strategies to enhance communication quality within virtual teams are crucial.

This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



## Article history

Received : February, 28  
2024

Revised : March 30, 2024

Accepted : March, 31 2024

## Keywords:

Teams operating virtually  
across cultures ;  
adapting communication ;  
intercultural  
communication ;  
strategies for intercultural  
communication

## 1. Introduction

The globalization and progress of communication technology allow firms to forge business partnerships. These partnerships are not confined to physical interactions but can also be conducted virtually. Consequently, companies must establish cross-cultural virtual teams to streamline work processes and coordination. As stated by Powell, Piccoli, and Ives (2004, p. 8), a virtual team refers to a collective of individuals who are physically, organizationally, and/or temporally separated but are connected through information and telecommunication technologies to complete organizational tasks. These team members collaborate from distant locations with the support of technology. Essentially, a virtual team is a unified global team established to facilitate collaboration among individuals with varying skills and from different geographical locations, all working towards shared objectives. In the execution of a cross-cultural virtual team, numerous dimensions delineate the formation and functionality of such a team. As elucidated by Birdie (2021), these dimensions encompass Language, a crucial determinant in establishing an effective communication medium within

the cross-cultural virtual team; Information flow, scrutinizing the intricacies of information dissemination within the team while considering cultural nuances in information interpretation; Power Distance, a dimension intricately linked to the management of hierarchical disparities between individual team members and top-tier management; Time, delving into the disparities in temporal perceptions; and lastly, Context, where virtual team members demonstrate operational prowess.

Virtual teams are extensively employed by diverse organizations to enhance operational efficiency across various domains, such as research and development, knowledge management, training, manufacturing, marketing, among others. As highlighted in the research by Vasile Duran and Anca-Diana Popescu (2013, p. 365), virtual teams offer numerous advantages compared to traditional teams, including the flexibility for team members to work from any location, unrestricted by physical proximity, adaptable work schedules, and the optimal utilization of team members' expertise. Moreover, Birdie (2021) delineates specific characteristics of virtual teams, encompassing formal knowledge exchange, intricate decision-making processes, task-focused interactions devoid of personal relationships, challenges in communication due to varying time zones among team members, and technical efficiency requirements for broad outreach in virtual settings. This study aims to scrutinize how Inko Forwarding formulates strategies for establishing cross-cultural virtual teams and the obstacles encountered in intercultural communication within such teams.

Communication technology facilitates the collaboration of virtual team members situated in different locations or countries. As noted by Kannan (2014), virtual teams leverage communication tools like video conferencing to coordinate their activities and share project information. Operating within geographically diverse teams demands increased focus on cross-cultural communication, presenting a novel challenge for organizations (Nabi, 2013). Hence, it is imperative for companies to prioritize intercultural communication to effectively tackle these emerging challenges.

Birdie (2021) suggests that establishing a virtual team's high performance relies on various factors such as fostering a Global Mindset, embracing Shared Responsibility, engaging in Meaningful Communication, promoting a Culture of Openness, facilitating an Easy Flow of Information, implementing a Conflict Management Mechanism, nurturing a Positive Attitude, and adhering to Time-bound Work Systems. It's noted that virtual teams and cross-cultural communication are interconnected elements, necessitating team members to adapt over time. Additionally, effective organizational communication and leadership strategies are highlighted as crucial for driving positive organizational outcomes. Leaders are urged to possess cultural awareness and be equipped with the necessary skills to communicate effectively with stakeholders across cultures and through virtual channels (Sundar, 2013).

Studies on cross-cultural virtual teams have been conducted by researchers such as Xiao and Yu et al. (2022), who investigated how cross-cultural Virtual Learning Teams (VLT) effectively collaborate through a longitudinal approach. Their research utilized three key concepts to examine team collaboration: rapid trust, team trust, and shared mental models.

Another study by Norhayati Zakaria & Shafiz Affendi Mohd Yusof (2020) explored the trust-building process in global virtual teams (GVT) collaborating over the Internet using a qualitative approach.

In a study by Kannan (2014) titled "Communication Strategies for Successful Virtual Team Projects in the IT Sector," the focus was on how companies develop communication

strategies to help ensure the success of virtual team projects in the IT sector. The findings of the research acknowledge advancements in communication technology. Video conferencing provides a strategic response to the complex and unforeseen challenges faced by IT organizations. The study also found that video conferencing meets the primary needs of virtual team projects and helps alleviate technological barriers such as miscommunication and information overload.

Another study conducted by Aysha (2016) focused on the role of organizational communication in building virtual communication and cooperation to enhance productivity. Furthermore, Hasler (2011) conducted research on "Intercultural Collaborative Learning in Virtual Worlds," examining the potential of virtual worlds for intercultural collaborative learning. This study utilized case studies and generated a subjective report indicating that students served as the foundation for exploring cross-cultural differences in perceptions of the utility of virtual worlds for intercultural collaboration. It also aimed to examine what they had learned from working in intercultural virtual teams by facilitating collaborative intercultural learning and developing intercultural literacy.

Research by Lopes (2020) titled "Preparing Future Business Professionals for a Globalized Workplace through Intercultural Virtual Collaboration" explored the role of Virtual Teams in creating a work environment unhindered by distance and time. The findings indicated that intercultural virtual collaboration projects benefit organizations in terms of building business relations and facilitating virtual mergers.

Mukherjee (2012) conducted research on "Organizational Identification among Global Virtual Team Members: The Role of Individualism-Collectivism and Uncertainty Avoidance." The aim of this study was to provide a model of organizational identification for virtual teams in understanding cultural dimensions within a virtual setting. The research laid the groundwork for empirical studies on organizational identification. Lockwood & Song (2016) conducted a study titled "Understanding Each Other: Strategies for Accommodation in a Virtual Business Team Project Based in China." This research elucidates how communication accommodation aids an IT company operating virtually with firms from various countries, including the United States. The company utilizes communication accommodation as a strategy to collaborate virtually with multiple countries.

Previous research has indicated that organizational communication plays a pivotal role within virtual teams, while also emphasizing the inextricable link between virtual teams and organizational culture. Cross-cultural virtual teams within a company necessitate a heightened understanding of both team members' individual cultures and the overarching virtual team culture. This observation, as underscored in earlier studies, underscores the importance of cultural factors alongside communication strategies in enabling virtual teams to function optimally within an organizational context. Recognizing cultural disparities and acknowledging the imperative to adapt behaviors among team members while actively engaging with diverse colleagues can significantly enhance efficacy. Various methods exist to cultivate cultural awareness among virtual team members, including the facilitation of collaborative cross-cultural learning initiatives and the cultivation of cross-cultural literacy. Such measures represent key strategies employed by organizations to cultivate effective cross-cultural virtual teams.

Prior research on cross-cultural communication within virtual teams has predominantly focused on the development of strategies for forming cross-cultural virtual teams using qualitative methodologies. However, there has been a limited exploration of

cross-cultural virtual teams from the perspective of communication accommodation. The novelty of this study lies in its investigation into the role of communication accommodation in shaping cross-cultural virtual teams.

Collaboration within cross-cultural virtual teams is imperative for achieving high performance. Given the diverse cultural, ethnic, racial, and national backgrounds of virtual team members, each member must be cognizant of cultural variances that may impact team performance. Furthermore, they must engage in cultural adaptation to foster an effective cross-cultural virtual team.

Cultural adaptation involves the adjustment of values, norms, and behavioral patterns among members of differing cultures, which can significantly influence initial and ongoing interactions. This process occurs as individuals adapt to varying cultural backgrounds within specific groups and towards other groups (Pongantung, Manafe & Liliweri, 2018). According to Robert Dubin (1996) as cited in Liliweri (2011), each adaptation process results in an individual's willingness to defer to other participants based on shared cultural beliefs. Dubin delineates this process into three components: defining the system, describing the system, and formulating theory.

This research endeavors to investigate the strategies for establishing cross-cultural virtual teams, the challenges encountered in communication within such teams, and the cross-cultural accommodation strategies employed to foster effective collaboration at the multinational corporation, Inko Forwarding.

PT Inko Forwarding operates in the logistics sector and boasts a presence with branches across various regions in Indonesia as well as international agents. Given the prevalence of virtual work practices within the company, it is imperative to construct virtual teams that meticulously consider cultural nuances. Furthermore, the company underscores the significance of cultural adaptation among virtual team members interfacing with counterparts from diverse cultural backgrounds to bolster team productivity. Hence, the objectives of this study encompass: 1. Identifying and addressing challenges and obstacles in cross-cultural virtual team collaboration; 2. Developing effective strategies for forming cross-cultural virtual teams; 3. Implementing robust strategies for managing cross-cultural virtual teams; 4. Analyzing the communication accommodation strategies deployed by cross-cultural virtual teams.

PT Inko Forwarding faces several communication or accommodation challenges when collaborating with companies from other countries. First, they have different communication norms and cultures. PT Inko Forwarding needs to understand these differences in order to communicate effectively with companies from these countries. Second, language differences are a major communication barrier when working with companies from other countries. Third, time zone differences between countries can make it difficult to coordinate communications and meetings between PT Inko Forwarding and partner companies. Fourth, business ethics can vary significantly between countries. PT Inko Forwarding must understand and respect the country's business ethical norms in order to maintain good relationships with partner companies and avoid unnecessary conflicts or misunderstandings.

PT Inko Forwarding implements a communication accommodation strategy in its virtual team by paying attention to several main aspects, namely they adjust their communication style depending on the context, use formal language when communicating with clients or internal meetings, and a more relaxed communication style when interacting between team members. Additionally, PT Inko Forwarding pays attention to cultural and

language differences between team members, using translations or simpler language to ensure proper understanding and sensitivity to different cultural norms. Then, they select and use communication technologies that enable effective communication for all team members, including those with access or technology limitations. PT Inko Forwarding creates an environment that supports openness and flexibility, providing space for different opinions and points of view in discussions.

PT Inko Forwarding uses communication accommodation theory to manage conflict constructively with techniques such as agreeing to disagree politely, listening actively, and finding solutions that meet the needs of all parties. By implementing this strategy, PT Inko Forwarding can strengthen teamwork, increase communication effectiveness, and achieve better results in a virtual work environment.

The study will employ communication accommodation theory to investigate how companies implement accommodation strategies within cross-cultural virtual teams. The adoption of Communication Accommodation Theory for this research aims to enhance its depth by providing a foundational understanding of communication dynamics among virtual teams. According to H. Giles as referenced in (West, R. Turner, L.H., 2018), Communication Accommodation Theory elucidates the considerations surrounding the outcomes when both communicators adjust their communication styles, and how individuals adapt their speaking styles to others. Within Communication Accommodation Theory, as articulated by H. Giles in (West, R. Turner, L., 2018), several adaptation strategies exist, including Convergence, Divergence, and Overaccommodation. Convergence stems from mutual interest between communicators, such as attraction and credibility. Divergence underscores speech styles and language as symbolic strategies to preserve identity and cultural distinctiveness. Overaccommodation entails excessive efforts in responding to the interlocutor and is further subdivided into sensory, dependency, and intergroup forms. In the context of this study, Inko Forwarding's selection of strategies will be examined, given the imperative nature of anticipating cultural differences, particularly in communication processes within and among cross-cultural virtual teams.

## 2. Method

The study utilizes a qualitative methodology and adopts a case study approach to demonstrate the company's establishment of organizational communication in forming cross-cultural virtual teams. By employing a qualitative method and case studies, the aim is to generate pertinent data. A case study is defined as a qualitative approach wherein the investigator delves into real-life, contemporary systems, and temporal systems, employing comprehensive data collection involving various sources (interviews, observations, audiovisual materials, documentation, and reports), and reporting a detailed case description and thematic analysis (Yin, 2014).

The chosen case study method assists the researcher in comprehensively examining a phenomenon while maintaining research objectivity. This study will elucidate the role of intercultural communication in fostering collaboration within cross-cultural virtual teams at Inko Forwarding. The exploration will encompass the company's selection process for cross-cultural virtual team members and an analysis of the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors (KAB) within such teams, distinguishing it from previous research. The researcher employs internal validity as a data authenticity technique to ensure research findings align with the

described phenomena (Yin, 2014). Additionally, pattern matching techniques aid in comparing predicted empirical patterns and identifying meaningful interpretations, contributing to the research's analytical depth (Yin, 2014).

The research will be conducted by conducting in-depth interviews with several key informants who play significant roles in the formation and oversight of the Virtual Team at Inko Forwarding. The following are the informants selected by the researcher according to the research need:

**Table 1.** Research participants

No.	Informant's name	Age	The informant's position	Ethnicity
1.	Bob Agave Ramos	38	Marketing Manager Inko Forwarding	Medan
2.	Tirto Adi Guno	35	Documentation of Export-Import at Inko Forwarding.	Java

**Ramos (Marketing Manager Inko Forwarding)**

Through conducting an interview with this informant, the researcher aspires to glean insights and reliable sources pertaining to the informant's methodologies and strategies in shaping cross-cultural virtual teams. Given the profound impact of marketing on customer relations, it bears a heightened responsibility in this context.

**Tirto (Documentation of Export-Import at Inko Forwarding)**

The selection of speakers is intended to gather reliable insights on how companies devise strategies for their employees when engaging in cross-cultural communication with customers. This is crucial for the documentation team to foster effective communication and prevent potentially disastrous misunderstandings in business activities

**3.Results and Discussion**

In today's technologically advanced era, virtual teams enable people to work together seamlessly regardless of distance or time constraints. Successful virtual teamwork requires mutual understanding to maximize benefits and mitigate potential drawbacks (Birdie, 2021). The composition of virtual teams is tailored to the needs and objectives of the company. Forming and managing cross-cultural virtual teams is a challenging task that requires well-thought-out strategies to ensure they contribute positively to the company's goals (Lopes, 2020).

This research aims to deepen the accommodation strategy implemented by PT Inko Forwarding in building cross-cultural virtual teams with Taiwanese companies. In this context, accommodation communication theory is an important basis for understanding how PT Inko Forwarding has succeeded in overcoming cross-cultural communication challenges. In practice, PT Inko Forwarding uses various communication accommodation strategies based on this theory. First, they recognize the importance of adapting communication styles to individual situations and preferences. For example, in interacting with Taiwanese companies, they understand the prevailing cultural and communication norms, so they can use appropriate communication styles to build harmonious relationships.

Apart from that, PT Inko Forwarding also pays attention to language differences as a key factor in cross-cultural communication. They use translations or simpler language to ensure

proper understanding between both parties, in accordance with the principles of communication accommodation theory. Other challenges, such as different time zones and different communication technologies, are also overcome using relevant accommodation strategies. PT Inko Forwarding selected appropriate technology and ensured effective time coordination to facilitate smooth communication between the virtual team and Taiwanese companies.

By implementing these strategies based on accommodation communication theory, PT Inko Forwarding succeeded in building strong collaborations with Taiwanese companies, increasing the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication, and achieving better results in their virtual teamwork. Presented below are the findings and discussions derived from this study:

### **Challenges and Barriers in Working within Cross-Cultural Virtual Teams**

Addressing challenges and barriers encountered in operating within cross-cultural virtual teams, comprising diverse cultural backgrounds, constitutes a fundamental aspect distinguishing the operational dynamics of virtual teams from those of traditional teams. These challenges and barriers pertain to how team members must comprehend distinct cultures and delineate communication protocols within the virtual team (Lockwood & Song, 2016).

#### **The utilization of media**

The findings reveal that PT Inko Forwarding adopts a flexible approach when selecting communication media. The company accommodates stakeholders' preferences in determining the appropriate medium for communication. For instance, when engaging with counterparts from China, communication endeavors are facilitated through the use of the WeChat application. It is emphasized that the selection of an effective communication medium necessitates consideration of applications capable of facilitating seamless interaction between parties, transcending language barriers. The decision to utilize this particular application is driven by its supplementary translator feature, which significantly enhances the company's communication efforts.

#### **Cultural Appropriateness and Cultural Sensitivity**

PT Inko Forwarding assesses the cultural backgrounds of its stakeholders to tailor its work methods and communication approaches accordingly, aiming to prevent misunderstandings regarding cultural nuances and misinterpretations of communicated objectives and meanings in online interactions..

#### **Language**

The determination of language represents a critical factor, as effective communication relies on the mutual understanding of the communicated context. In the logistics domain, Inko Forwarding adopts English for interactions with international stakeholders, while maintaining the use of Indonesian for domestic communication. This judicious language selection enables the team to operate with efficacy and efficiency, while also alleviating potential language barriers.

#### **Management Skills**

Appointing a central figure holds significant importance within cross-cultural virtual teams. Inko Forwarding opts for a supervisor from the marketing division to lead such a team. It is imperative to assess the cultural backgrounds and skills of both team members and management. The selection of a central figure within the company is based on individuals capable of understanding diverse cultures and aiding team members in their interactions.

### **Strategy for Forming Cross-Cultural Virtual Teams**

The establishment of cross-cultural virtual communication teams within Inko Forwarding involves several divisions deemed capable of creating an efficient virtual team. As per Birdie (2020), effective formation of cross-cultural virtual teams requires eight key characteristics, including a global mindset, shared responsibility, meaningful communication, a culture of openness, streamlined information flow, conflict management mechanisms, positive attitudes, and time-bound work systems. Research findings affirm that Inko Forwarding's cross-cultural virtual teams embody these characteristics. The team formation process at Inko Forwarding is based on pre-determined divisions aligned with stakeholders' needs. Member selection within virtual teams prioritizes core competencies essential for functional management, as indicated by Birdie (2020). Inko Forwarding's virtual team comprises members from divisions such as marketing, customer service, and documentation, fostering diversity to facilitate internal and external communication. Effective virtual team formation serves as a competitive advantage for the company (Mukherjee, 2012). Consequently, the company selects members from divisions capable of addressing stakeholders' needs and advancing mutual interests. Participants suggest that the company divides the virtual team into three divisions—Marketing, Customer Service, and Documentation—to streamline communication. Participant Ramos provides further insights into this process.

*“If a company's team has SOPs, there must be marketing, customer service, and documentation teams so that customers can be assisted with three different divisions”*

Here are the members of the Inko Forwarding Virtual Team who have been determined based on their competencies.:

#### **Marketing as the Supervisor/Leader of the Inko Forwarding Virtual Team**

As per Rozkwitalska (2017), effective intercultural communication strategy is pivotal for leaders in virtual collaboration to achieve seamless communication and goal attainment within the team. PT Inko Forwarding designates the marketing division as the supervisor in their virtual team, with responsibilities spanning communication processes to negotiation. The marketing team in Inko Forwarding's cross-cultural virtual team assumes the role of supervisor, overseeing task execution and strategizing to enhance communication and collaboration with the documentation and customer service divisions.

Moreover, the marketing division within the virtual team plays a crucial role in negotiating with stakeholders and must exhibit cultural sensitivity for effective communication. Serving as the supervisory division within the virtual team, they ensure smooth communication channels.

#### ***The Customer Service division plays a role as a member of the Inko Forwarding Virtual Team***

The Customer Service division plays a crucial role in facilitating communication between the virtual team and both internal and external divisions. Effective communication among

virtual team members is essential to prevent misunderstandings with stakeholders, as communication misunderstandings can hinder the export and import processes due to differing perspectives. According to a participant acting as a supervisor, Customer Service serves as a vital communication bridge with numerous stakeholders. Additionally, proficiency in English and understanding stakeholders' cultures is required for the export and import divisions to facilitate communication and achieve goals.

***The Documentation division serves as a member of the Inko Forwarding Virtual Team.***

The documentation division serves as the final component of the cross-cultural virtual team at Inko Forwarding. This division addresses technical aspects that require effective communication among team members, given its direct involvement in crucial business activities. Considered pivotal within the virtual team, the documentation division is equipped to handle technical issues, serving as a critical link between importers and consignees. Communication between divisions is essential to ensure seamless business operations.

Furthermore, the formation of cross-cultural virtual teams at Inko Forwarding is tailored to the stakeholders they engage with, particularly in the context of the company's international logistics operations. Specific strategies are devised to select team members who contribute to the achievement of company objectives.

WhatsApp serves as the primary communication tool within the cross-cultural virtual team, complemented by email. The company establishes a group comprising its cross-cultural virtual team and stakeholders to facilitate effective communication.

**Strategy for Managing Cross-Cultural Virtual Teams**

Effective management of intercultural communication within a company's virtual team is essential for enhancing and maintaining relationships with stakeholders. Cultural differences within a business context present significant communication challenges, emphasizing the importance of every member's understanding to enhance the quality of interactions with stakeholders from diverse cultural backgrounds (Stahl and Tung, 2014). Recognizing cultural differences is vital to dispel negative assumptions and streamline processes in business communication, as highlighted by social identity and social categorization theories, which posit that culture strongly influences an individual's or organization's identity and categorization (Stahl and Tung, 2014).

Research findings reveal that the Inko Forwarding virtual team has carefully considered cultural aspects when assembling the team. Moreover, the company employs cross-cultural communication strategies such as verbal and non-verbal cultural adaptation, selecting an effective communication language, and adjusting to behavioral patterns.

The company advocates the KAB strategy, emphasizing the importance of understanding differences while conducting business activities within the company. A participant shares a case example of one cross-cultural virtual team's interaction with stakeholders, some preferring direct communication while others do not. The participant's approach involves providing understanding or briefing to counterparts, emphasizing the company's commitment to satisfying stakeholders. Additionally, the participant highlights the importance of effective communication irrespective of cultural differences for smoother interactions. According to participant Ramos:

*“The strategy is to emphasize that customer satisfaction is the top priority and to never focus on differences. Over time, team members will naturally adapt, and so far, this approach has been effective.”*

In this scenario, we observe how the participant, whether acting as a supervisor or team member, effectively employs the KAB strategy to facilitate cross-cultural communication. As per Rozkwitalska (2014), fostering Personal Growth emerges as a constructive facet of intercultural exchanges, yielding satisfaction and positive outcomes. This instance underscores how the participant's adoption of such a strategy contributes to enhancing the Personal Growth of Inko Forwarding's cross-cultural virtual team members.

Underpinning the implementation of the KAB strategy, the company places significance on fostering innovation and creativity to elevate the caliber of cross-cultural virtual team members. Creativity and innovation play pivotal roles in cross-cultural communication, especially amidst cultural diversity (Stahl and Tung, 2014). Furthermore, the company prioritizes creative thinking and innovation during cross-cultural interactions, manifesting in initiatives aimed at providing conducive communication platforms leveraging technologies like Zoom, alongside proficiency in the English language to bolster communication effectiveness.

*“When discussing innovation, our main focus is always on providing online meeting platforms using Zoom. Additionally, team members must be proficient in English because interactions are not only with Indonesians but also with Chinese individuals at times”*

In the communication process, cultural context is a factor that should be prioritized, considering that establishing effective communication and achieving specific goals begins with understanding and implementing cross-cultural communication strategies. Adaptation to culture, both verbally and nonverbally, is essential for both team members and supervisors to ensure effective communication and the attainment of specific goals. Each member is also instructed to always prioritize customer satisfaction. According to participant Tirto.

*“Everything must be directed to be in line, and customers must be satisfied by understanding each other's communication.”*

*“Sometimes, when someone speaks loudly, we need to know how to respond, and when someone speaks softly, it can sometimes be ambiguous, but it all comes back to customer satisfaction”*

### **Communication Accommodation Strategies Implemented by Cross-Cultural Virtual Teams.**

According to Giles (2016), communication accommodation strategies consist of Convergence, Divergence, and Over-accommodation. The findings indicate that the cross-cultural virtual team at Inko Forwarding employs the convergence accommodation strategy, both verbally and nonverbally. This is done because each virtual team member has different communication styles and cultures.

The convergence strategy involves adapting in communication with each other. The importance of understanding each other's communication is key to achieving predetermined

goals. Therefore, adapting in communication is the primary strategy employed by the cross-cultural virtual team at Inko Forwarding. This adaptation is also divided into several aspects, such as communication style, language determination used in communication, and adaptation to verbal and nonverbal behavior.

The adoption of this convergence strategy is motivated by the aim to foster and maintain a business relationship between Inko Forwarding, an Indonesian company, and Hippo Logistic, a Taiwanese company, thereby establishing networking in the business domain. As agents and partners, participants or virtual teams from Indonesia tend to employ communication convergence accommodation, making adjustments driven by the company's desires and demands.

Verbal and nonverbal strategies entail adapting the language used in communication, primarily conducted in English, and adjusting communication styles to mitigate conflicts and ensure effective communication within each virtual team. Nonverbally, adjustments are made in facial expressions, voice intonation, and body language to facilitate seamless communication and prevent misunderstandings.

The selection of strategies by the Inko Forwarding virtual team is rooted in the pursuit of achieving goals and ensuring customer satisfaction within the service context, as outlined by (West and Turner, 2018).

#### **4. Conclusion**

Challenges and obstacles within the scope of virtual teams include significant differences between virtual and traditional teams. Challenges arise from the need for an understanding of different cultures among cross-cultural virtual teams, such as Media Usage, Cultural Adaptation and Sensitivity, Language, and Management Skills. These challenges are addressed by selecting central figures who have the capability to understand cultures and guide members during interactions.

The strategy for forming Inko Forwarding's cross-cultural virtual team consists of the Marketing Division (Supervisor), Customer Service, and Documentation. Each division has its own role selected or organized to meet the needs and satisfy customers and stakeholders. PT Inko Forwarding adopts a flexible approach in selecting communication media, accommodating stakeholders' preferences. For instance, when engaging with counterparts from China, they utilize the WeChat application due to its supplementary translator feature. The company assesses stakeholders' cultural backgrounds to tailor work methods and communication approaches accordingly, aiming to prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Inko Forwarding adopts English for interactions with international stakeholders and Indonesian for domestic communication, facilitating efficacy and efficiency while alleviating potential language barriers. A supervisor from the marketing division leads the cross-cultural virtual team, selected based on their understanding of diverse cultures and ability to aid team members in interactions. The company forms virtual teams comprising divisions such as marketing, customer service, and documentation, prioritizing core competencies essential for functional management and aligning with stakeholders' needs. The company emphasizes the KAB strategy, focusing on understanding differences and prioritizing customer satisfaction to facilitate effective cross-cultural communication. Additionally, they prioritize fostering innovation and creativity to enhance team members' personal growth. : The cross-cultural virtual team employs the convergence accommodation strategy, adapting

verbally and nonverbally to diverse communication styles and cultures to foster business relationships and achieve predetermined goals.

In summary, PT Inko Forwarding navigates the challenges of working within cross-cultural virtual teams by employing flexible communication media, demonstrating cultural appropriateness and sensitivity, selecting appropriate languages, appointing skilled management, implementing effective team formation strategies, managing teams using the KAB strategy, and employing communication accommodation strategies to foster effective cross-cultural communication. These findings highlight the company's proactive approach to addressing challenges and maximizing opportunities in cross-cultural collaboration.

The accommodation strategy applied is to adapt communication among each other to facilitate the achievement of predetermined goals. The importance of adapting communication among individuals is evident from the establishment of good relationships between the company and Inko Forwarding with customers. Accommodation strategies are also applied in cross-cultural virtual teams, both verbally and nonverbally, and have positive impacts on each cross-cultural virtual team.

### Acknowledgement

The Author wish to extend deepest gratitude to our esteemed supervisors, Dr. Bertha Sri Eko Murtiningsih M, M.Si and Dr. Rismi Juliadi, S.T., M.Si, for their invaluable guidance, insightful critiques, and unwavering support throughout the course of this research. Additionally, we are profoundly grateful to Universitas Multimedia Nusantara for providing the essential resources and environment conducive to our research. The university's commitment to fostering innovation and excellence in science has been instrumental in the realization of this project.

### References

- Alo, Liliweri. 2011. *Komunikasi Antar Personal*. Jakarta: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Arvind K. Birdie, P. (2021). *Cross-cultural exposure and connections : intercultural learning for global citizenship*.
- Ayesha, I., Yurnalis dan Mukhnizar. 2016. Pelaku Pengrajin Gula Merah Tebu Tradisional di Nagari Bukik Batabuah, Kecamatan Canduang, Kabupaen Agam. *Jurnal Pembangunan Nagari*, Vol. 1 (2).
- Basinska, B.A. 2017. Thriving in a multicultural workplace. In *Intercultural Interactions in the Multicultural Workplace*; Rozkwitalska, M., Sułkowski, Ł., Magala, S., Eds.; Springer International Publishing: New York, NY, USA.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4th ed).
- Duran, Vasile, dan Anca-Diana Popescu. 2014. *Tantangan Komunikasi Multikultural dalam Tim Virtual*.

- Govindan, K., Soleiman, H., dan Kannan, D. 2014. Reverse logistics and closed- loop supply chain: A comprehensive review to explore the future. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 240 (3), 603-626.
- Hasler WL. Nausea, Vomiting and Indigestion. 2011. Dalam : Longo DL, editor. *Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine* vol.1. Edisi 18. New York: Mc Graw Hill.
- Inko Sukses Jaya*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 18, 2022, from <http://inkosuksesjaya.com/>
- Lockwood, J. & Song, Ying. 2016. Understanding Each Other: Strategies for Accommodation in a Virtual Business Team Project Based in China.
- Luana, Ferreira-Lopes dan Bartels, I.M.M. 2020. *Preparing Future Business Professionals For a Globalized Workplace Through Intercultural Virtual Collaboration*.
- Moleong, J Lexy. (2017). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. PT Remaja Rosda karya Bandung.
- Mukherjee, D., Halon, S.C., Kedia, B.L. & Srivastava, P. 2012. Organizational identification among global virtual team members: The role of individualism-collectivism and uncertainty avoidance.
- Norhayati, Z& Shafiz, M.Y.A. 2022. Crossing Cultural Boundaries Using The Internet: Toward Building a Model of Swift Trust Formation in Global Virtual Teams.
- Pongantung, C. A., Manafe, Y. D., & Liliweri, Y. K. N. (2018). *Dinamika Masyarakat dalam Proses Adaptasi Budaya*.
- Powell, A., Piccoli, G. & Ives, B. 2006. Virtual Teams: A Review Of Current Literature And Directions For Future Research. *The Data Base for Advances in Information Systems*.
- Tracy, S.J. (2013). *Qualitative Research Methods. Collecting Evidence. Crafting Analysis, Communication Impact. (First Edi)*. John Wiley & Sons. Inc.
- West, R., & Turner, L. (2018). *Pengantar Teori Komunikasi Analisis dan Aplikasi*. Jakarta: Salemba Humanika.
- Yani, W. (2018). *Komunikasi Bisnis Lintas Budaya Di Cina (Communication Of Cross-Cultural Business In China)*.
- Yin, R.K. (2014). *Studi Kasus Desain & Metode*, Rajawali Pers, Jakarta.