

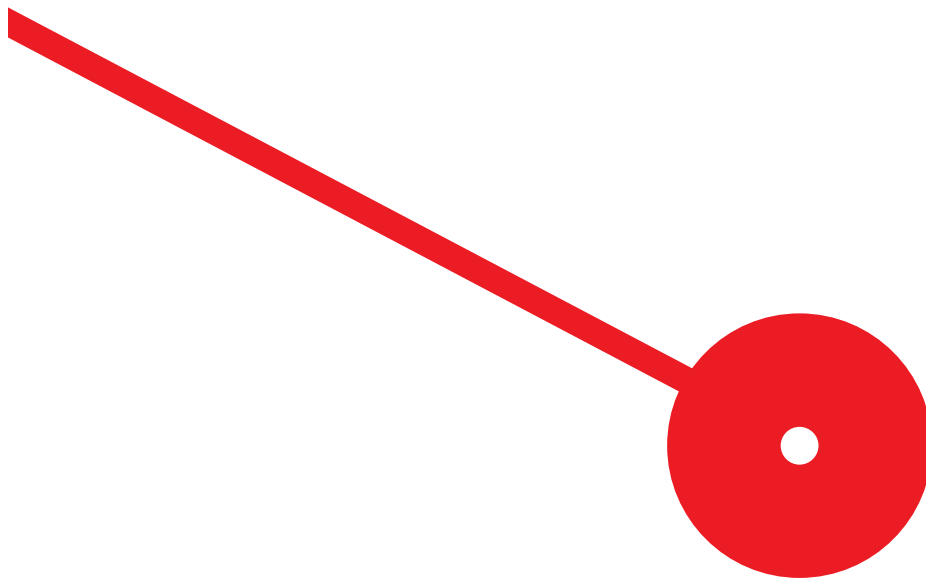


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Mafalda Chaves Dias

10/2021

Final version (This version contains the critiques and suggestions of the members of the jury)

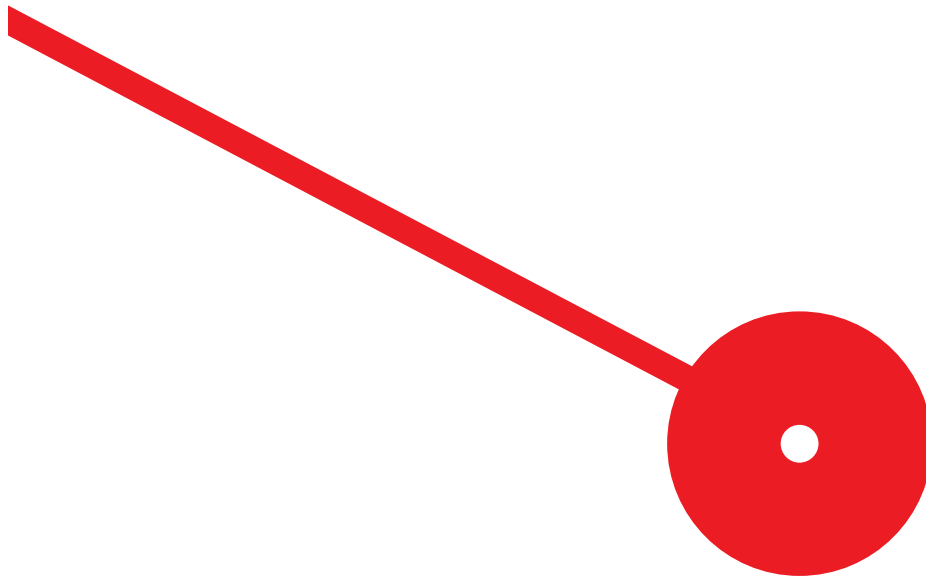




Nonverbal Communication In Intercultural Companies In Macao

Mafalda Chaves Dias

Master Dissertation presented to Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto (ISCAP) to obtain the Master's Degree in Intercultural Studies for Business, under the supervision of Professors Yu Yong, and Clara Sarmento, Ph.D.



Agradecimentos

Brevemente, em primeiro lugar, quero agradecer à minha orientadora professora Yu Yong, pela sua orientação e paciência.

À minha família pelo seu apoio incondicional nesta maratona e a uma amiga especial, por acreditar em mim quando eu já não acreditava e queria desistir.

Por fim, aos entrevistadores pela disponibilidade e colaboração, o meu muito obrigada.

Abstract

In the globalised world that we live in, everything is just a click away, even the task of understanding a foreign language has been simplified, and online tools such as Google Translator have been created to bridge the gap. Still, not all communication is verbal. There are certain messages that can only be decoded through non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions. When communication is between individuals from the same culture, the verbal codes used are identical. Nevertheless, when communicating within different cultures, there is a whole context that must be interpreted in order for communication to be effective.

In a working environment, there is an increased need to communicate effectively between all members of the company. If it is not possible to communicate effectively due to the language barrier, this need can be met with the help of non-verbal communication perception.

Macao was chosen to conduct this study due to its history and the great confluence of various cultures. In addition, it has the particularity that its identity ties the historicity to a newly constructed Macao, with a uniquely diverse and warm community.

Key words: Intercultural communication, Nonverbal Communication, Culture, Macao

Resumo

No mundo globalizado em que vivemos, tudo está a apenas a um clique de distância, mesmo a tarefa de compreender uma língua estrangeira é simplificada, e ferramentas online como o Google tradutor, foram desenvolvidas para colmatar esta lacuna. Não obstante, nem toda a comunicação é verbal.

Existem certas mensagens que só podem ser decodificadas através da comunicação não verbal, tais como expressões faciais. Quando a comunicação é entre indivíduos da mesma cultura, os códigos verbais utilizados são idênticos. No entanto, quando se comunica dentro de culturas diferentes, existe todo um contexto que deve ser interpretado de modo que a comunicação seja eficaz.

Em ambiente de trabalho, há uma maior necessidade de comunicar eficazmente entre todos os membros da empresa. Se não for possível comunicar eficazmente devido à barreira linguística, esta necessidade pode ser satisfeita com a ajuda da perceção da comunicação não-verbal.

Macau foi escolhida para realizar este estudo devido à sua história e à grande confluência de várias culturas. Além disso, tem a particularidade de a sua identidade ligar a historicidade a uma Macau recém-construída, com uma comunidade única, diversificada e calorosa.

Palavras-chaves: Comunicação Intercultural, Comunicação Não-verbal, Cultura, Macau

Table of Contents

Chapter - Introduction	10
Chapter I – Intercultural communication and important aspects in a group environment	13
1.1 Intercultural Communication	14
1.1.1 Concept of communication	14
1.1.2 Concept of Culture	15
1.1.3 Concept of Intercultural Communication	18
1.1.4 High context and low context cultures.....	18
1.2 Intercultural Competence	20
1.2.1 Concept	20
1.3 Cultural Literacy	22
1.3.1 Concept	22
Chapter II – Non-verbal communication	25
2 Non-verbal Communication	26
2.1 Concept.....	26
2.2 Non-verbal behaviour as an aid to verbal communication.....	27
2.3 Types of non-verbal communication.....	28
2.3.1 Kinesics.....	28
2.3.2 Haptics	29
2.3.3 Proxemics.....	29
2.3.4 Paralanguage	29
2.3.5 Chronemics	30
2.4 Non-verbal communication in intercultural group environments	30
Chapter III – Macao as a case study: history	33
3 Macao as a case study: history	34
3.1 Macao’s history: A link between east and west	34

3.2	Macau, a confluence of cultures.....	35
3.2.1	Influence of Portuguese culture in Macao	35
3.2.2	Influence of Chinese culture in Macao	36
3.2.3	Macanese Identity and Culture	36
3.3	Today’s Macao: Social-political and economic context	38
Chapter IV – Research Methodology		40
4	Research Methodology	41
4.1	Research Objectives	41
4.2	Characterization of the sample	41
4.3	Research Instruments	43
4.4	Methodological procedures	44
Chapter V – Analysis of Interviews and Questionnaire.....		45
5	Analysis of Interviews and Questionnaire.....	46
5.1	Analysis of questionnaire	46
5.2	Analysis of interviews	50
5.3	Discussion of the results.....	56
Chapter – Conclusion.....		59
References.....		62
	References.....	63
Appendix.....		67
	Appendix I – Interview Script.....	68
	Appendix II – Questionnaire.....	69

Graphics

Graphic 1- Age.....	32
Graphic 2- Nationality...tor.....	33
Graphic 3- Business Sector.....	34
Graphic 4- Non-verbal communication can be defined as the act of transmitting information without the use of spoken nor written words.....	37
Graphic 5- Do you consider that non-verbal language can help in better understand what others say?.....	38
Graphic 6- How important do you consider non-verbal communication to mediate conflicts between people of different cultures?.....	38
Graphic 7- Please select the options which, in your opinion, are important to better understand others.....	39
Graphic 8- Please select the options which, in your opinion, are not relevant to understand others.....	40
Graphic 9- In your opinion, which of the following sentences do you consider an obstacle to understand other people.....	40
Graphic 10- In your opinion, which of the following sentences do you consider to be important to take into account when communicating with another person?.....	41

Abreviation List

HC High Context

LC Low context

Humans are social beings, so the innate need to understand the other and to be understood is essential. Accordingly, a Confucius saying states that “Human beings draw close to one another by their common nature, but habits and customs keep them apart”.

Today, because of globalization, the necessity to understand the other is being satisfied by new methods. Everything is just a click away, even the task of understanding a foreign language has been simplified, and online tools such as Google Translator have been created to bridge the gap. Still, not all communication is verbal. There are certain messages that can only be decoded through non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions.

Communication between individuals belonging to the same culture relies on identical verbal codes. On the contrary, when communicating within different cultures, there is a whole context that must be interpreted in order for communication to be effective.

There are situations where communication is the key to all problems. For instance, in a working environment, there is an increased necessity to communicate effectively with all members of the company. If it is not possible to communicate effectively due to the language barrier, this necessity can be suppressed with the help of non-verbal communication.

Several scholars address the concept of intercultural competence and cultural literacy in order to promote communicational and relational cohesion between individuals. Nevertheless, how can these concepts help to promote effective intercultural nonverbal communication within a company? Moreover, this raises several questions that also should be addressed:

1 - How intercultural competence, non-verbal communication, and cultural literacy are interrelated and how do they affect communication between people of different cultures within a company?

2 - How do people feel working in an intercultural environment and their level of cultural literacy?

3 - What value do they place on non-verbal communication in order to promote better communication between people of various cultures?

4 - What type of non-verbal communication do people from different cultures use most often and which do they find most effective in getting their message across?

5 - How nonverbal communication helps these people in their interpersonal development and in the development of their cultural literacy?

6 - What are the barriers and strategies used by these people in order to promote better intercultural communication?

To verify this phenomenon, Macao was chosen to conduct this study due to its history and the great confluence of cultures. In addition, it has the particularity that its identity ties the historicity to a newly constructed Macao, with a uniquely diverse and warm community.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter I addresses the conceptualisation of intercultural communication by defining the terms communication and culture. Later, the concepts of intercultural competence and cultural literacy are also developed.

Then, Non-Verbal communication is explored in chapter II. This is a rather wide theme, and it generates some controversy among academics. Its concept is analysed as well as the five types of non-verbal communication: Kinesics, Haptics, Proxemics Paralanguage, Chronemics. Furthermore, it is presented the question of non-verbal communication as an aid to verbal communication and non-verbal communication in intercultural group environments.

A summary of the history of Macao is presented in chapter III. It briefly covers its relationship with Portugal and China, in order to contextualize the deeper and early intercultural relations in Macao. Then, the influences of Portuguese and Chinese cultures within Macao are outlined.

Chapter IV focuses on the empirical study carried out. It also describes the methodologies used in it, such as the sample.

Lastly, chapter V presents the results of the questionnaires and interviews. It is also produced an analysis of the information retrieved from them.

**CHAPTER I – INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND IMPORTANT
ASPECTS IN A GROUP ENVIRONMENT**

1.1 Intercultural Communication

In order to better understand Intercultural Communication, it is imperative to first comprehend the concepts of communication and culture and their relationship.

1.1.1 Concept of communication

The word “Communication”, derives from the Latin root “*communicare*”, meaning “to impart”, “to share” or “to make common” (Peters, 1999). Albeit the term is subject to different interpretations. The focal point of communication is the transmission of signs or messages over distance with the end goal of control. It derives from the ancient necessity to improve the speed and effect of messages (Carey, 2009).

As communication is defined differently, each definition is customarily a representation of a categorical context or an author’s perspective. In order to accommodate the demands of contemporary society, over time, the meaning of “Communication” has transformed and adapted to the various fields of knowledge. When referring to communication as an intrinsic part of the culture, it can be considered Griffin’s (2006:6) approach: “communication is the management of messages with the objective of creating meaning”.

Communication compels the existence of a sender, a message, and a receiver. The sender could be described as an individual or group that formulates and transmits a message to the receiver. This message consists of information, used to create meaning, and has the finality of the sender's desires to be understood. The message, which may be verbal or nonverbal, is encoded and transmitted through a channel to the receiver. As the designed recipient of the message, the receiver interprets the message and assigns a meaning to it. After interpreting the message, the receiver will be able to provide a response. It is not mandatory for the receiver to be available or mindful of the sender's aim to convey the message. Also, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the message, the receiver’s response will be crucial to define and transmit the feedback to the sender. All the communicative interactions always possess a physical and contextual environment.

A threat to effective communication is the interference, commonly described as noise. Some types of noise may distort the message's meaning, leading to a not fully comprehensive message.

In the context of intercultural communication, it is important to understand this simple process of communication to effectively communicate within cultures.

1.1.2 Concept of Culture

Due to the fluidity of the term and the influences in several academic areas, there is a certain arduousness among scholars in defining culture. There are hundreds of definitions for the word, yet it remains a complex term to unravel. The various aspects of culture and cultural interaction result in a variety of disciplinary perspectives to be explored.

Kluckhohn (1951: 86) highlights that culture consists of an important system of values:

Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.

Raymond Williams (1989: 4) argues that culture is ordinary. From an anthropological point of view, culture is defined through the meaning of everyday life, such as values and norms:

A culture has two aspects: the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained to; the new observations and meanings, which are offered and tested. These are the ordinary processes of human societies and human minds, and we see through them the nature of culture: that it is always both traditional and creative; that it is both the most ordinary common meanings and the finest individual meanings. We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life - the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning - the special processes of discovery and creative effort. Some writers reserve the word for one or other of these senses; I insist on both, and on the significance of their conjunction. The questions I ask about our culture are questions about our general and common purposes, yet also questions about deep and personal meanings. Culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind.

Triandis identifies culture as “the human-made part of the environment” (Triandis, 1989: 306). In contrast, Hofstede defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind” (Hofstede, 1991).

On the other hand, Stuart Hall explores the importance of the shared social meanings generated through signs and language. "By culture, here I mean the actual grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages and customs of any specific society. I also mean the contradictory forms of common sense which have taken root in and helped to shape popular life" (Hall, 1996: 439).

Culture is a dynamic system, diverse and varied. Moreover, it could be considered a movement of shared perceptions. Various modern definitions of culture generally mention attitudes, beliefs, values, behaviours, norms, and symbolic resources. Through the anthropological sense, there are three characteristics in culture that must be considered: culture is learned; culture is interrelated; culture is shared and defines boundaries of different groups (Hall E., 1976). In contrast, through the psychological sense, culture is commonly analysed considering the behavioural aspect, the individual, and the group.

Thomas (2010: 19) proposes a practical definition of culture, applied to individuals from different cultural backgrounds:

Culture is a universal phenomenon. All human beings live within a specific culture and contribute to its development. Culture creates a structured environment within which a population can function. It encompasses objects we created and use in our daily lives, as well as our institutions, ideas and values. Culture is always manifested in a system of orientation typical to a country, society, organization or group. This system of orientation consists of specific symbols such as language, body language, mimicry, clothing and greeting rituals and is passed on to future generations from the respective society, organization or group. This system of orientation provides all members with a sense of belonging and inclusion within a society or group and creates an environment in which individuals can develop a unique sense of self and function effectively. Culture has an influence on the perception, thought patterns, judgment and action of all members of a given society. The culture-specific system of orientation creates possibilities and motivation for action but also determines the conditions and limits of the action.

When discussing culture, it is necessary to consider that it is not a static concept, it has been modified through various eras, and that it is widely adapted to various circumstances.

Culture plays an increasingly significant role in globalisation, leading to rethinking its concepts. Waters, for instance, argues that globalisation is most advanced in the sphere of culture (Waters, 1995).

Culture is not only to be understood in terms of places and roots but as a hybrid route in a global space. The emphasis on different cultural theories has led to culture being seen by many as a place of boundaries and hybridity rather than fixed stable entities (Barker, 2008).

Barker (2008: 255) disputes that:

Globalization provides the context for just such a crisis since it has increased the range of sources and resources available for identity construction. Patterns of population movement and settlement established during colonialism and its aftermath, combined with the more recent acceleration of globalization, particularly of electronic communications, have enabled increased cultural juxtaposing, meeting and mixing.

To complement the previous idea, Barker (2008: 258) states that the concept of hybridity is:

problematic in so far as it assumes or implies the meeting or mixing of completely separate and homogeneous cultural spheres. (...) Each category is always already a hybrid form that is also divided along the lines of religion, class, gender, age, nationality and so forth. Thus, hybridization is the mixing of that which is already a hybrid. All cultures are zones of shifting boundaries and hybridization. (...) Nevertheless, the concept of hybridity has enabled us to recognize the production of new identities and cultural forms.

In the same way, when defining culture, multiculturalism and interculturalism are two approached well present. Multiculturalism, or cultural pluralism, may be syntactically described as the existence of several cultures in one place, focusing on a national level and questioning the national identity (Kastoryano, 2018). On the other hand, interculturalism “emphasizes the processes and interactions which unite and define the individuals and the groups in relation to each other.” (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006).

Abdallah-Pretceille (2006: 476) highlights that:

any excessive focusing on the characteristics of others leads to exoticism as well as to cultural dead-ends, by overemphasizing cultural differences and by enhancing, consciously or otherwise, stereotypes or even prejudices. The questioning of one’s identity in relation to others is an integral part of the intercultural approach.

As summarised by Sarmiento (2017: 106),

A transformação do discurso do multiculturalismo num discurso intercultural reforça princípios que dão ênfase à interligação histórica das culturas. As sociedades nunca foram estáticas ao longo da história, já que sempre se adaptaram e mudaram de acordo com os estímulos recebidos de outras culturas. A principal diferença é que, nos dias de hoje, as trocas e contactos culturais ocorrem de uma forma muito mais rápida e globalizada.¹

1.1.3 Concept of Intercultural Communication

According to Hall, “Culture is communication and communication is culture” (Hall E., 1959: 186), meaning that individuals from different cultures communicate differently and so, culture embodies communication. Cultural communication highlights a set of ideals on practices and socialization of individuals in a sociocultural context. Additionally, cultural communication integrates multiple aspects of a culture in a stable, yet dynamic direction.

The term “Intercultural” refers to communication between individuals of different cultural groups, with unifying factors such as values, beliefs, and norms. Intercultural communication occurs when these factors influence the communication process (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Ting-Toomey (1999:16) states that “Intercultural communication is defined as the symbolic exchange process whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation.”.

1.1.4 High context and low context cultures

As previously stated, culture is a dynamic process, and within itself, the individual is a unique organism, so it may not comply with the general characteristics of that culture. In that sense, for a better understanding of the circumstances of the individual within a culture, it is necessary to understand the context in which the individual is framed.

¹ "The transformation of the discourse of multiculturalism into an intercultural discourse reinforces principles that emphasise the historical interconnectedness of cultures. Societies have never been static throughout history, as they have always adapted and changed according to the stimuli received from other cultures. The main difference is that, nowadays, cultural exchanges and contacts take place in a much faster and more globalised way."

Based on the ideas of Hall (1976:6), context “is the information that surrounds an event; it is inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event”. In order to decode the elements produced to give meaning by events and context, Hall (1976) proposed a concept that compares the cultural context of the world, on a scale of high and low context:

High context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. Low context (LC) communication is just the opposite, i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code.

The concept of high-low-context continuum, moving from the low side to the higher side in the scale, helps to identify the awareness of the selective process, increasing the degree to which one is aware of the selective screen that one places between oneself and the outside world.

As Hall said, “Contexting performs multiple functions.” (Hall & Hall, 1990). This indicates that the process of filling in background data relates to the fact that there are specific individual differences within each culture that requires context. Every individual is influenced by the level of context, so this concept may help to identify whether a particular culture from a certain country, may be on the high or low side of the scale.

As explained by Hall, High context cultures, such as Japanese, Arabs, and Mediterranean people, have an extensive information network and are involved in close personal relationships. Communication within HC cultures involves more information in the physical context, do not require background information and nonverbal information is implicitly conveyed during communication. HC communicators attach great importance on what surrounds the message.

Low-context cultures, such as Americans, Germans, and Scandinavians, compartmentalize their personal relationships and many aspects of daily life. Moreover, it is implied that a lot of information is exchanged explicitly, and it is required a detailed background information. LC communicators attach great importance in the explicit message.

Some scholars debate whether the model presented by Hall authentically represents the reality of today's society. Nevertheless, it can be stated with certainty, that this model was a pioneer for a better understanding of intercultural communication.

In contrast to Hall's theory, Holliday (2013) proposes the "bottom-up approach". This approach advocates a direct observation of cultural practices, rejecting the idea of large assumptions about national cultures and then following observation of intercultural encounters. In Holliday opinion, the "top-down approach" will lead to inevitable stereotyping.

When working with a "bottom-up approach" it is important to put aside the influence of theories and stereotypes, to understand how the other is feeling and to be prepared for complexity (Holliday, 2013).

1.2 Intercultural Competence

1.2.1 Concept

Nowadays, the rapid globalisation of the social order has made the area of intercultural communication a requirement for success. An awareness of cultural differences is essential for success in almost any endeavour. In this sense, acquiring and improving intercultural competence becomes mandatory.

As identified by Collier, "Cultural competence is the demonstrated ability to enact a cultural identity in a mutually appropriate and effective manner". Moreover, Collier defines Intercultural competence as "the reinforcement of culturally different identities that are salient in the particular situation. (...) occurs when the avowed identity matches the identity ascribed" (Collier, 2015:59).

Regarding the communication competence, Chen and Starosta (1996:357) state that:

To be competent in communication, a person must not only feel competent, but his or her ability should be observed and confirmed by the people with whom he or she interacts. Thus, communication competence should be judged based on individuals' abilities to formulate and achieve objectives, to collaborate effectively with others, and to adapt to situational variations.

Subsequently, Chen and Starosta (1996:358) define intercultural communication competence as "the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviours that recognize the interactants' multiple identities in a specific environment."

This definition proposed by Chen and Starosta (1996), highlights that intercultural competent individuals know how to interact appropriately and effectively, while fulfilling their communication needs by respecting the cultural identities of those with whom they interact.

To better understand intercultural communication competence, Chen and Starosta (1996) propose an Intercultural communication competence model, that synthesizes the process and is explained from three perspectives: affective (Intercultural Sensitivity), cognitive (Intercultural Awareness), and behavioural (Intercultural Adroitness).

The affective perspective (Intercultural Sensitivity) of intercultural communication competence highlights that interculturally competent individuals are able to project personal emotions that are caused by particular elements before, during, and after intercultural interactions.

There are four attributes to take into consideration when analysing the affective perspective: self-concept, open-mindedness, non-judgmental attitudes, and social relaxation. Self-concept refers to how individuals see themselves. One of the most important elements of the self-concept is self-esteem. Open-mindedness could be defined as the willingness of individuals to openly and appropriately accept others' explanations. Having non-judgmental attitudes means to hold no prejudices, preventing miscommunication and actively listening to others. Finally, the ability to reveal a slight anxiety in communication is referred to as social relaxation.

The four attributes previously described are the affective basis of intercultural communication competence. When taking these elements in consideration, an individual becomes more sensitive and is able to acknowledge and respect cultural differences during intercultural interactions.

The cognitive perspective (Intercultural Awareness) of the intercultural communication competence highlights the understanding of the characteristics of the individual and other cultures. This process reduces the level of uncertainty in intercultural interactions. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for the individual to develop an intercultural awareness: self-awareness and cultural awareness. Self-awareness may be defined as the ability of the individual to be aware of himself. Cultural awareness could be defined as the ability of the individual to be aware of one's own and other's culture, and how it

affects their interactions. Thus, individuals that achieve higher degrees of self-awareness and cultural awareness tend to be more competent in intercultural communication.

The behavioural perspective (Intercultural Adroitness) of the intercultural communication competence points out how to act adequately in intercultural interactions. Intercultural Adroitness consists of verbal and nonverbal behaviours which are effectively used in interactions. These behaviours include message skills, appropriate self-disclosure, behavioural flexibility, interaction management, and social skills. Message skills, refers to the ability to use descriptive messages in the process of interaction, having the ability to use a language of a culture other than one's own. Self-disclosure could be defined as the willingness of individuals to openly and appropriately reveal information about oneself to others. Behavioural flexibility could be defined as the individual's ability to have appropriated behaviours in different situations. Interaction management refers to the ability to appropriately structure and maintain a conversation, speaking in turns, and smoothly initiate and terminate a conversation. To sum, the aforementioned attributes improve the level of Intercultural Adroitness.

The three perspectives of the model previously presented by Chen and Starosta (1996), demonstrate the basic components to effectively approach intercultural communication competence.

1.3 Cultural Literacy

1.3.1 Concept

According to Wilson (1974:86), "cultural literacy is defined as insight into one's own culture and includes some understanding of one's own frustration and tolerance levels, the ability to work effectively with people who are culturally different and to demonstrate the skills this requires."

Similarly, Hirsch (1987:xiii) states that in order "to be culturally literate is to possess the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world." Hirsch defines cultural literacy as the ability to understand and participate fluently in a given culture.

These definitions refer to the individual's understanding of the native culture, a culture acquired unconsciously from childhood. Nevertheless, when the individual interacts with members of a different culture, for lack of elements to decode values, behaviours and

norms, it is compelled to develop a new cultural literacy. Consequently, it is necessary to acquire this understanding of other cultures, not to be literate in all cultures, but to avoid a cultural shock between cultures.

Observing cultural literacy in an intercultural context, Heyward (2004) understands intercultural literacy as “the understanding, competencies, attitudes, language proficiencies, participation and identities which enable effective participation in a cross-cultural setting”. Heyward points out that an interculturally literate individual, has the ability “to interpret its symbols and negotiate its meanings in a practical day-to-day context” (Heyward, 2004). The author also highlights the fact that intercultural literacy may emerge in societies that value cooperation.

Cultural literacy plays an important role in people's education. Moreover, in a globalised world, there is a growing awareness of demand for more and more culturally literate people, leading to the creation of programmes in schools and companies to educate people.

In the same way, the competences necessary for effective cultural literacy should be identified. The model of cultural literacy presented by Shliakhovchuk (2019), identifies four key competencies and skills that should be cultivated.

The first competence is cultural mindfulness. It can be defined as a state of being mindful, firstly, of the individual’s cultural construct, and secondly, of the other person’s cultural constructs that is interacting with, responding without the interference of cultural judgments or biases. In that way, it is important to understand the cultural self-awareness, defined as “the ability of the individual to be aware of the demanding features and biases of his culture” (Shliakhovchuk, 2019:24).

Another aspect of cultural mindfulness is the local cultural awareness, in which the individual is familiar with cultural values, norms and traditions, yet does not belong to that culture. This leads to the individual appreciating diversity and having a more active participation in the community.

Intercultural sensitivity is also an important part of cultural mindfulness. This means being aware of the cultural differences and similarities between people while at the same time not assigning them a value, like good or bad, right or wrong, or whether these values should be changed.

Cultural mindfulness also englobes the concept of empathy, that is, the ability to place oneself in another's position. Thus, an individual becomes culturally mindful throughout the process of cultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity and empathy.

The second skill expressed in Shliakhovchuk's (2019) cultural literacy model is Critical Thinking. It can be seen as the ability to apply reasoning and logic in thinking for oneself. Curiosity is the third ability. This term could be defined as a strong desire to explore and learn, stimulating the willingness to learn about cultural diversity.

The last competence is being a Change Agent Leader (Influencer). As cultural literacy is a constant active practice, there is a constant demand for individuals to acquire the role of agents of change (Peters, 1999).

CHAPTER II – NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

2 Non-verbal Communication

As mentioned in chapter I, communication is a process of sharing information, thoughts and feelings between individuals, through verbal and non-verbal communication. According to Burgoon et al. (2010:12):

most scholars agree that communication refers to the process of creating meanings between senders and receivers through the exchange of signs and symbols. Messages originate as sender cognitions that are encoded (transformed into signals) through commonly understood codes and decoded by receivers (the signals must be recognized, interpreted, and evaluated)

2.1 Concept

Nonverbal communication can be generally defined as “the act of conveying information without the use of words” (APA, n.d.), yet there are other dimensions that must be explored to fully understand this theme. While verbal communication aims to convey the content of a message, non-verbal communication contributes to complementing that message by providing background information, such as emotions and relationships, either transmitted intentionally or accidentally.

Knapp et al. (2010: 18) expresses that people “live in a sea of static and dynamic nonverbal messages”. Nonverbal messages appear in interaction with others and can appear through the physical structure of the environment. These environments are real in a physical sense for they are tangible, yet, for example, in the case of cyberspace, only non-verbal messages can be heard and seen. These computer-generated messages are important in a world that is becoming increasingly becoming fully computerised.

Furthermore, Knapp et al. (2010: 4) points out that:

Verbal messages are meaningless unless someone is there to interpret them. Nonverbal communication is no different. The process of receiving nonverbal messages, including our own, (...) includes giving meaning to or interpreting those messages. (...) As a receiver of nonverbal messages, you may focus on one particular nonverbal cue or several in an attempt to understand the message that another person has sent to you.

On defining nonverbal communication, Burgoon et al. argue that it is important to consider that “all communication is potential information. But all information is not

communication (...) In the same vein, many forms of behavior are informative, but only some of them qualify as communication.”. The authors alert that “not every behavior should be regarded as communication; as with information, communication is a subset of behavior, which is itself a subset of information.” (Burgoon et al., 2010: 13).

Complementary to this, Burgoon et al. (2010: 16) identify the message orientation as a perspective to take into account when defining nonverbal communication:

Communication is viewed as only including those behaviors that form a socially shared coding system. This includes behaviors that (1) are typically sent with intent, (2) are used with regularity among members of a given social community, society, or culture, (3) are typically interpreted as intentional, and (4) have consensually recognized meanings.

This approach to defining nonverbal communication may help the communicators to determine whether their behaviour qualifies as nonverbal communication or not. Focusing on the message, different communicators will perceive differently a given behaviour, yet if they do not share a common “nonverbal vocabulary and grammar” communication would be nearly impossible.

2.2 Non-verbal behaviour as an aid to verbal communication

When faced with situations where messages are contradictory, the communicator will consequently determine which cues to believe in.

Nonverbal cues are often considered as a reliable font that is difficult to disguise in conflicting message situations. However, if there is no linguistic barrier, the communicator will rely more heavily on the verbal message than the nonverbal cue.

Nonverbal behaviour may help to complement, emphasize, substitute and contradict the meaning of verbal messages. Knapp et al. (2010: 18) suggest that:

Nonverbal behavior can modify or elaborate on verbal messages. When the verbal and nonverbal channels are complementary, rather than conflicting, our messages are usually decoded more accurately. Some evidence suggests that complementary nonverbal signals also may be helpful when attempting to recall the verbal message.

Moreover, nonverbal behaviour could reinforce or modify the message and convey information about the communicator's emotional state, helping to regulate the flow of the interaction and provide clearer feedback.

2.3 Types of non-verbal communication

As previously explored in this chapter, non-verbal communication performs multiple functions.

Ting-Toomey (1999) points out five categories to better identify the forms of nonverbal communication. The forms of nonverbal communication pointed out, demonstrate the complexity of nonverbal communication.

2.3.1 Kinesics

Birdwhistell (1968) defines Kinesics as the study of nonverbal expressions of body behavioural communication. Kinesics encompasses facial expressions, eye behaviour, body movements, posture and gestures. (Burgoon et al., 2010) The face and eyes are considered the primary and most trusted source of emotional information. Burgoon et al. (2010: 12) highlight that:

humans have a strong bias to attend to kinesic cues, as a result of the innate tendency to orient to others visually, the overtly noticeable and attention-getting characteristics of kinesics, and the many functions kinesic cues serve. Consequently, people rely more on kinesic cues than any other code to derive meaning from nonverbal messages.

Not all kinesic behaviours displayed by individuals are innate and many are learned through environmental and social experiences. Kinesic expressions may be acquired in three ways: through innate neurological processes passed on genetically; through experiences common to all humans as they interact with the environment; through social interactions that vary across cultures and individuals.

Birdwhistell (1952) defines the term “kineme” as a unit of behaviour. He argued that variations within kinemes come from cultural differences and not from different kinemes, identifying 50 to 60 culturally universal kinemes. The author also divided each body region in eight parts: total head; face; trunk and shoulders; shoulder, arm and wrist; hand and finger section; hip, upper leg, lower leg, ankle; foot behaviour; and neck.

2.3.2 Haptics

Communication through touch is vital to the human social development. Burgoon & Dunbar (2006) indicate that touch, depending on the stage of a relationship, may function to express intimacy differentially, despite being commonly perceived as intimate. The function of touch is an effective, direct and intimate form of communication. It could be either intentional or unintentional, consequently leading to positive or negative consequences.

2.3.3 Proxemics

According to Hall (1959), proxemics is defined as the use of space in interpersonal interactions. The author also argues that human perceptions of space are affected by culture, even though being derived from sensory apparatus (Hall E.,1963).

The possibility of sensory stimulation (smell, sight, touch) is enhanced at closer distances, in this sense, the interpersonal distance may regulate intimacy through sensory exposures (Hall E., 1963). Additionally, he recognized that cultural frameworks are unconsciously internalised in all individuals, and can lead to failures of communication in intercultural environments. Another essential point in Hall's theory is that Interpersonal spacing is not fixed and differs according to context.

Hall (1963) analyses interpersonal proxemic behaviours in categories such as physical interaction proximity; amounts of touching, detectable body heat, detectable body odour, and visual contact; directness of body orientation; and loudness of speaking.

2.3.4 Paralanguage

Paralanguage is the vocalized cues of nonverbal elements of verbal communication. (APA, 2021)

The study of paralanguage is Vocalics and refers to the vocal features in verbal messages, such as intonation (pitch), speech volume, speech rate, vocal quality, and verbal fillers (Andersen, 1999). Many scholars prefer the term Vocalics because it only accommodates the definition of the vocal cues.

Intonation or pitch allows the communicator to convey the meaning and intensity of the message while regulating conversational flow. In the same way, volume also helps to communicate the intensity of a message. The speech rate to the velocity the communicator speaks and may interfere with the ability of others to perceive a message. The tone of voice could be controlled with the pitch, volume and emphasis, yet each voice has a distinct vocal signature. Verbal fillers are onomatopoeic sounds that fill gaps in the speech. Burgoon et al. (2010: 279) emphasise that:

The voice is a powerful instrument of communication, with or without the accompaniment of language. Not only can it be used to complement, accent, emphasize, and contradict what is said, it can also send messages independently. Pitch, loudness, pauses, laughs, and sighs are a few examples of cues in the code. Vocal cues communicate emotional reactions, comment on relationships, indicate social attitudes, and regulate the back-and-forth exchange in conversations.

2.3.5 Chronemics

Time is considered an instrument to measure life itself. It may be perceived as a natural course or a structural framework of life. Chronemics may be defined as how the use of time affects an individual's behaviours, attitudes and communication.

In the book *The Silent Language*, Hall (1959) introduces the terms polychronic and monochronic. Polychronic refers to lineal and segmented time, indicating the aim for doing several things at once. Whereas monochronic refers to the individual's inclination to do their activities one by one.

2.4 Non-verbal communication in intercultural group environments

According to Hall (1990), "Cultural communications are deeper and more complex than spoken or written messages.". When using a lingua franca to communicate with other people in an intercultural environment, individuals intuitively use their own culturally specific rules to decode the message of individuals from other cultures. Therefore, this situation means that even if individuals have high knowledge of the language, there is no guarantee that they will be able to communicate effectively (Glaser, 2010). Singh et al. (1998: 405), point out that:

misunderstandings and misinterpretations of each other's behavior are often rooted in cultural nuances that escape our consciousness. Because we are so grounded in our own cultures, we interpret other's behavior (both verbal and nonverbal) from within our own cultural systems, forgetting that the meanings of words and actions are not universal. When we interact with others on the assumption that words and actions have the same meaning across cultures, and they actually do not, then we increase the likelihood of misunderstanding, tension, and confusion among people of diverse cultures. (...) When we refer to the behavior of people from specific cultures, we are speaking in general terms, because not every person in a given culture will behave exactly like another from the same culture. (...) because we simultaneously belong to multiple cultures, the strength of our grounding in each of these cultures, as well as the inevitable interaction among these cultures, determines our verbal and nonverbal expressions of behavior.

Therefore, having knowledge of non-verbal communication in intercultural group environments may help to effectively mediate conflict and decode the intended message. Complementary to this, Matsumoto and Hwang (2016: 85), argue that:

Cultural norms are learned rules for thinking, feeling, and behaving in specific contexts that provide guidelines and rewards for acceptable behaviors, and sanctions and punishments for unacceptable behavior. Many norms have to do with the regulation of expressive behavior, which is associated with nonverbal behaviors and nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication cannot exist without some basis of culture as we communicate with others verbally and nonverbally to convey information and to share intentions. Thus, culture and nonverbal communication are dependent on and influential to each other simultaneously.

Another essential point Matsumoto and Hwang (2016: 85) mention is that:

cultures produce norms that provide guidelines for the appropriate expression of nonverbal behaviors and other forms of nonverbal communication in specific contexts to facilitate the sharing of social intentions. Culturally moderated nonverbal behaviors, in turn, increase social coordination and reduce social chaos, thereby facilitating group efficiency and survival.

As referred on point 1.1.4, Hall's theory of High and Low context cultures was a pioneering theory in social studies. Similar to Hall's theory, Matsumoto and Hwang propose a theory expressing the difference between cultural norms of different cultures.

Expressive cultures developed norms that encourage the broad, outward expression of nonverbal behaviours. On the other hand, reserved cultures have developed norms that encourage the restricting one's expressive behaviours. Both culture norms serve a purpose in specific contexts that facilitate group efficiency, social coordination, and the sharing of intentions. Nonverbal behaviours serve the same general function across cultures, yet the norms governing those behaviours differ depending on the ecological–cultural context within which those behaviours occur.

CHAPTER III – MACAO AS A CASE STUDY: HISTORY

3 Macao as a case study: history

Macao is highly regarded as a place of confluence of different cultures. It is an international city that highlights “people’s cultural identity as a hybrid of eastern and western cultures.” (Lam, 2010: 660). Due to its multidimensional character, Macao is conceived as a modern and dynamic city that does not discard its history and culture. Although both sides contradict each other, both gain a new dimension in Macao and are able to sit in harmony. Therefore, Macao is a pertinent place to do this case study on non-verbal communication in intercultural businesses.

3.1 Macao’s history: A link between east and west

The following sub-chapter will briefly mention the most relevant events in Macao’s history.

The Portuguese maritime expansion began in the 15th century, encouraged by Infante Dom Henrique, also known as Prince Henry the Navigator (Coates, 1978). This impetus for discoveries was motivated by the desire to discover new, hitherto unknown lands, seek new trade routes and extend the Christian faith to other people.

In 1496, Vasco da Gama, one of the most distinguished Portuguese navigators, departed Portugal in search of a new maritime route. He pioneered the expansion of the sea routes to Asia. The ecclesiastic ideological motivations and the growing demand for commercial expansion were the driving elements of this voyage (Cheng, 1999). Two years later, he reached Calicut in India, successfully navigating the Cape of Good Hope. Later, in 1510 Afonso de Albuquerque seized the port of Goa, transforming it into the capital of the Portuguese mercantile empire. One year later, the Portuguese endeavour penetrated further east and conquered Malacca, the most important port of South-East Asia (Coates, 1978).

Despite the several failed attempts by the Portuguese to settle in other islands along China's south coast, in 1557, the Portuguese settled in Macao. This city quickly became an important connection in the development of Portugal’s trade, setting up bases of operations there for trade with China and Japan. In addition, the Portuguese have thrived both commercially and religiously, securing a commercial dominance due to the Ming’s trade relations severed with Japan (Pina-Cabral, 2002).

Macao prospered as a trade port, however, due to the Dutch conquering Malacca in 1412 and blocking the link with Goa, it was left in abandonment (Pina-Cabral, 2002). After 1843, the foundation of Hong Kong by Britain and the opening of trading ports along the coast of China further obscured the commercial importance of Macao (Pina-Cabral, 2002).

Due to several events such as the Second World War and significant political changes for both Portugal and China, Macao's governance was left in a state of stagnation. Between 1967 and 1987, for a short period of time, Macao was under Portuguese administration, yet followed Chinese local policies (Pina-Cabral, 2002). In 1987, The Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration was signed, setting the stage for the return of Macao to full Chinese sovereignty as a Special Administrative Region on December 20, 1999.

3.2 Macao, a confluence of cultures

All the events and occurrences that have happened over the years have led to the construction of the unique culture that Macao possesses. Kaeding (2010: 137). states that:

Macao was an immigrant society throughout its history. The fluidity of the population was a crucial factor that averted the emergence of a Macao identity. The situation did not change after Macao became a quasi-colony under Portugal's administration, with most Chinese residents of the city identifying primarily ethno-culturally with their Chinese homeland. At the same time the Portuguese administration did stifle the political participation of the Chinese population. Citizen participation, if encouraged and stimulated by the Portuguese rulers, could have led to the manifestation of a civic Macao identity.

3.2.1 Influence of Portuguese culture in Macao

The Portuguese left their legacy in Macao through various aspects: the language, the cuisine and the architecture. Curiously, the architecture of the urban spaces was designed to look like a typical Portuguese city. Moreover, Kaeding (2010: 138) refers that:

The Portuguese presence in the territory decreased visibly after the handover. Many Portuguese residents were government officials or employed in the administration on a few years' contractual bases and left after 1999. (...) A number of Portuguese have,

however, taken residence in the city for decades or longer, and those who married Chinese and Macanese persons have been integrated into the Macanese community. (...) A key feature of Macao's culture is the emergence of a distinctive ethnic group of Eurasians or Macanese of European descent or with close connections to the Portuguese-based communities in Macao. (...) Some Macanese are part of long-established families in the territory who are descendants of inter-racial marriages between Portuguese and indigenous women from other former Portuguese colonies or trade posts in Africa, South and Southeast Asia and Japan. Others originate from more recent pairings of Portuguese and Chinese individuals.

3.2.2 Influence of Chinese culture in Macao

According to Pina-Cabral (2002), the majority of Chinese residents in Macao have always been Han Chinese. In contrast to Portuguese culture, the elements of Chinese culture have always been firmly present, despite the intermittencies in Macao's regency. Regarding the Chinese culture, Kaeding (2010: 139) suggests that:

The Chinese cultural realm is identified with characteristics of south China and the two coastal provinces of Guangdong and Fujian. The various Chinese groups have often retained their traditional local customs, but at the same time also mixed with other Chinese cultures. Therefore in Macau the worship of the goddess Ah-Mah, protector of seafarers, which originates in Fujian exists together with Cantonese folklore and customs. Connections of Macao residents to foreign countries add the overseas Chinese cultural element.

Lam (2010: 660) highlights that “the economic stories focus on the economic benefits of its reintegration with China, thus revealing the intertwinement of political and economic dynamics of identity making by which political legitimacy and unity are achieved by economic narratives.”.

3.2.3 Macanese Identity and Culture

As a result of the Portuguese and Chinese influences in Macao, the defining Macanese identity and culture has been hybridised over the ages, transforming Macao into what it is nowadays. Lam (2010: 664) describes it perfectly by saying that

Macau is first depicted as a caring community where the spirit of mutual help and harmony prevail, and humanitarianism is part of its tradition. The citizens are for and will help one another.(...) These qualities have enabled Macau to retain a reputation in China and elsewhere in Asia for its uniquely warm and caring atmosphere.

Macao's society was mainly divided into Chinese and Portuguese, but these two social groups always maintained exchanges and contacts. Cultural respect was developed at a slow pace, and although both lived peacefully in their own ways, this society was clearly divided culturally. Amaro (2015: 294) pointed out that:

This is not an uncharacteristic example of the relationship between the two communities: the Cantonese and Portuguese languages, and cultures have existed in Macau in diverse communities and in separated worlds for hundreds of years. According to the 2011 census results (DSEC 2012), 8,106 inhabitants are of Portuguese descent (1.5% of the population), and the Portuguese language is spoken by only 2.4% of the 552,503 residents. Chinese residents did not see the need to learn Portuguese, which was used mainly for administrative purposes; similarly, Portuguese residents were not motivated to learn Cantonese, seeing no benefits in becoming proficient in that language. This has led to a progressive distancing between the two communities, punctuated by occasional “inbetween” spaces where the Portuguese negotiate their identities to support a functional integration for daily life.

Another crucial point identified by Kaeding (2010: 139) is that:

A key feature of Macao's culture is the emergence of a distinctive ethnic group of Eurasians or Macanese of European descent or with close connections to the Portuguese based communities in Macao. (...) Some Macanese are part of long-established families in the territory who are descendants of inter-racial marriages between Portuguese and indigenous women from other former Portuguese colonies or trade posts in Africa, South and Southeast Asia and Japan. Others originate from more recent pairings of Portuguese and Chinese individuals.

Furthermore, regarding the Macanese identity, Kaeding (2010: 146) argues that:

Identification as a Macanese largely depends on the individual's relationship with Portuguese heritage in forms like the Portuguese language, Catholicism and some type of Eurasian phenotypic appearance. Yet there is a certain element of personal option, as some individuals chose to identify as Chinese despite their Macanese family background, or as a result of Portuguese schooling opt for the Macanese identity. (...) Due to their linguistic abilities (they are usually fluent in both Portuguese and Cantonese), the

Macanese often acted as intermediaries between the local population and the Portuguese administration. (...)The distinctive composition of Macao's population has a direct impact on the territory's unique culture.

This case of hybridization and syncretism in Macao's culture has led to the Portuguese creole dialect Patois and Macanese food. Patois is a mixture of Chinese syntax with Portuguese and Malay vocabularies, however it disappeared with the teaching of Portuguese and Chinese languages in schools.

3.3 Today's Macao: Social-political and economic context

In the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping, the leader of the People's Republic of China, promulgate the 'one country two systems' model. This model is driven by the principle of the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China over Macao. Furthermore, the model provides Macao a high level of autonomy and concedes the guarantee of systemic continuity of "the capitalist economic system, legal system, police force, monetary system, customs policy, immigration policy, and representation to international organisations and events." (Tang & Sheng, 2009: 220). Lam (2010: 665) highlights that "the political value of this endeavour lies in offering the people an identity which ties the historicity of Macau to a newly constructed Macau identity.". Curiously, with this model, Macao became the only city to permit gambling in China (Clayton, 2019).

After the 1999 handover, significant changes have taken place in Macao, transforming it completely. The development of infrastructures, urban expansion alongside economic and commercial growth are some of the parameters in which this transition is evident.

The liberation of the gaming industry in 2002 allowed for a sudden economic growth, leading to a focus on developing the gaming tourism market (Hao et al., 2017). The government claimed that the "gaming-led tourism would be the driving engine for economic development and the tertiary service industry would be the priority sector." (Tang & Sheng, 2009: 221).

As a result of the casino liberalization, there was a growth in demand for labour in the services and construction sector. Subsequently, "the number of temporary residence cards issued each year rose steadily and was often equal to or even greater than the number of non-resident worker permits issued." (Clayton, 2019: 151).

Although the investment in the gaming sector is massive, due to their contribution to the economy growth, the over-reliance on this industry may compromise the urban economy. The rise in political power of business groups dedicated to this activity affect Macao's political environment directly, leading to a certain political instability and social discontent (Lo, 2013). In order to address this situation, Macao will have to face several challenges such as "its overdependence on the junket system and high rollers, its overreliance on Chinese gamblers, its lack of a skilled labor force, and the ineffective government regulation of its economic activities." (Sheng, 2016: 1).

In order to maintain this phenomenon under control, Macao focused on the tourism sector of MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions, exhibitions), emphasising its effect in balancing and correcting the over-expansion of the gaming industry. Nevertheless, there may be a certain vulnerability of the tourism sector due to reliance on external factors beyond local control. "The tourism industry's high level of income elasticity often causes large swings in the revenues, profits and number of people involved in the sector. In addition, tourism infrastructure is often developed by foreign companies or financed by international financiers." (Hao et al., 2017: 60).

That aside, Lam (2010: 659) explains that Macao:

is unique in showing that the making of a national identity may not be the prime goal of a new regime, and that the regime may not be antagonistic to the features of "the other" – colonial attributes and local identities – that it has inherited. Rather, the new government has cultivated a hybrid identity, including local, national and international identities, believing that these can advance not only nation building but also the economic goals beneficial to governance.

CHAPTER IV – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4 Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodologies used in the research. However, before proceeding to it is necessary to understand that “Research methods refer to the methods the researchers use in performing research operations.” (Kothari, 2004).

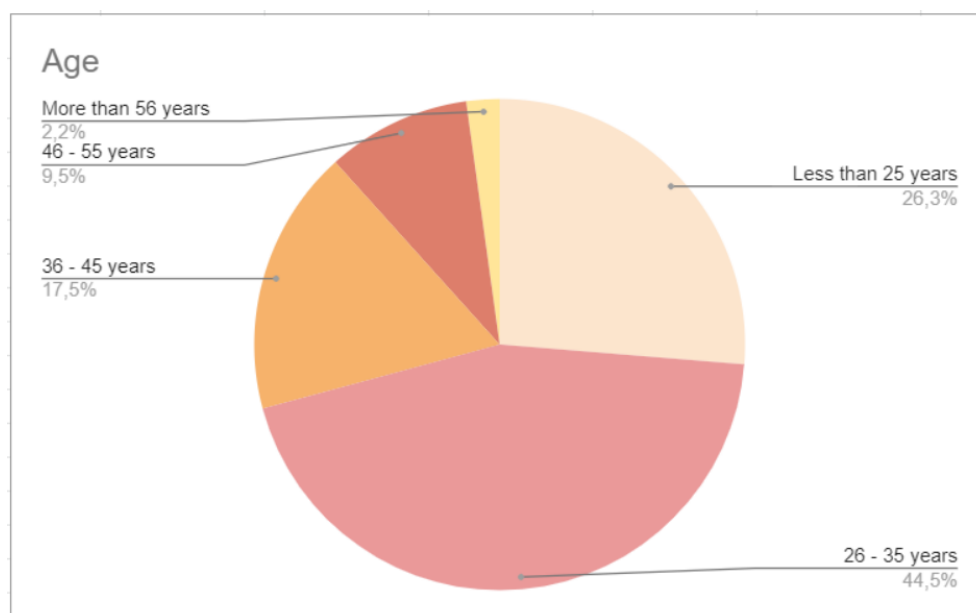
4.1 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to verify how individuals of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds perceive non-verbal communication within a company in Macao. As secondary objectives, it is intended to verify the intercultural competence and cultural literacy of individuals, and which measures they use to effective communicating in an intercultural working environment.

4.2 Characterization of the sample

The sample consists of 137 individuals, 62.8% female and 37.2% male, with ages between 25 and +56 years. Individuals with age bellow 25 years old correspond to 26.3% of the sample, between 26-35 to 44.5%, between 36-45 correspond to 17.5%, between 46-55 to 9.5% and, over 56 years old to 2.2% of those interviewed.

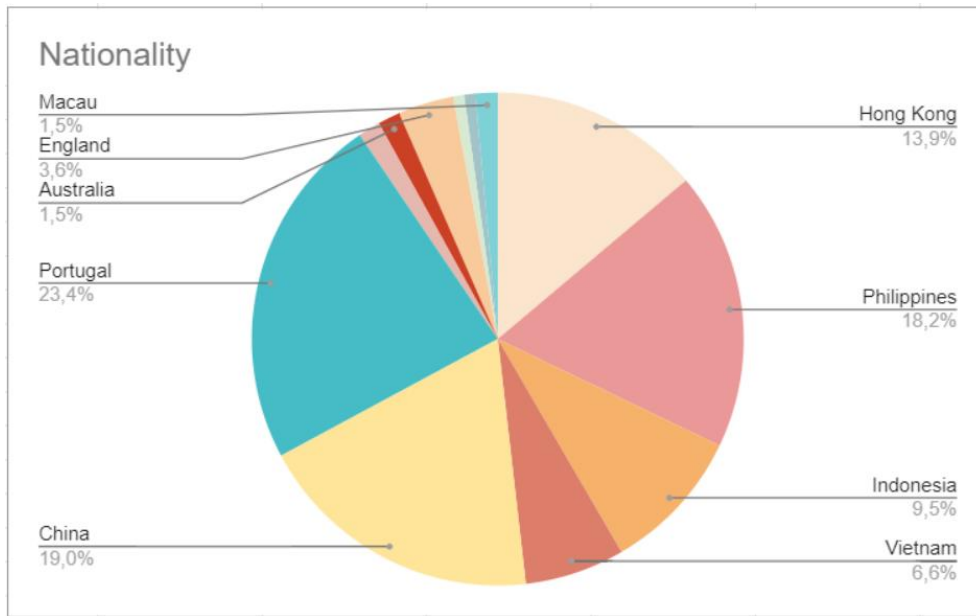
Graphic 1



Source: Self Elaboration

When it comes to the individual's nationalities, 26.4% are from Portugal, 19% from China, 18.2% from Philippines, 13.9% from Hong Kong, 9.5% from Indonesia, 6.6% from Vietnam, 3.6% from England, 1.5% from Australia and 1.5% from Macao.

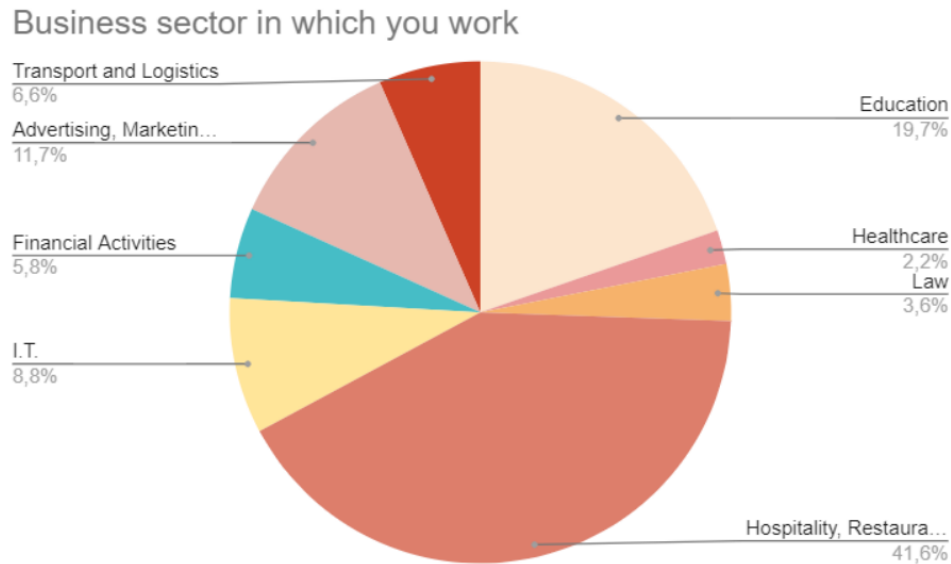
Graphic 2



Source: Self Elaboration

The individuals work in different business sectors: 41.6% work in hospitality, restaurant, tourism and gambling; 19.7% work in education; 11.7% work in advertisement, marketing or design, 8.8% work in I.T.; 6.6% work in Transports and Logistics; 3.6% work in Law and finally; 2.2% work in healthcare.

Graphic 3



Source: Self Elaboration

4.3 Research Instruments

In order to characterize the sample, interviews and questionnaires were used.

For the sample of this study, 150 companies were approached. This contact was made through social networks such as LinkedIn, and directly to the general email of the companies, and in some cases, the human resources department was contacted directly. The companies were selected taking into account the diversity of people of different nationalities and cultures, where an intercultural environment is encouraged among its employees. The selected companies belong to both public and private sectors in various areas such as hospitality, tourism, gambling, education, advertisements and others.

Nevertheless, the samples collected belong to less than half of the number of enterprises approached. The sample consists of 137 people who responded to the questionnaires, of which 5 people were volunteered to be interviewed.

In the questionnaires, eighteen questions were asked regarding the primary objective of this study, which is, to analyse the nonverbal communication in companies in Macao.

Questions from one to eleven, are intended for sample characterization. From question twelve to sixteen are regarding the intercultural competence and cultural literacy about

nonverbal communication. Questions from seventeen to eighteen are regarding the strategies to overcome non-verbal communication barriers.

The criteria used for the selection of individuals was that they were employed in an intercultural company in Macao. Although a larger number of individuals were initially planned, due to the lack of time and adherence to answer the questionnaire, it was not possible to collect more responses.

In the interview, six questions were asked to the interviewees was also regarding the nonverbal communication in companies in Macao, yet it focused on intercultural competence and cultural literacy to decode non-verbal communication codes.

In the selection criteria we tried to choose different nationalities and different work sectors to have a broader result. The interviews were applied to more than five interviewees; however, this was not possible due to lack of compliance. The interviews had approximately the duration of 15 minutes each.

4.4 Methodological procedures

For the methodological procedure for data collection in the interviews and questionnaires, the research explained the objective of the study and requested verbal consent, in the case of the interviews, and written consent, in the case of questionnaires, to use the data for academic purposes. Due to the distance, all interviews were carried out in the Zoom platform and the questionnaires were sent to the individuals via email.

CHAPTER V – ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRE

5 Analysis of Interviews and Questionnaire

5.1 Analysis of questionnaire

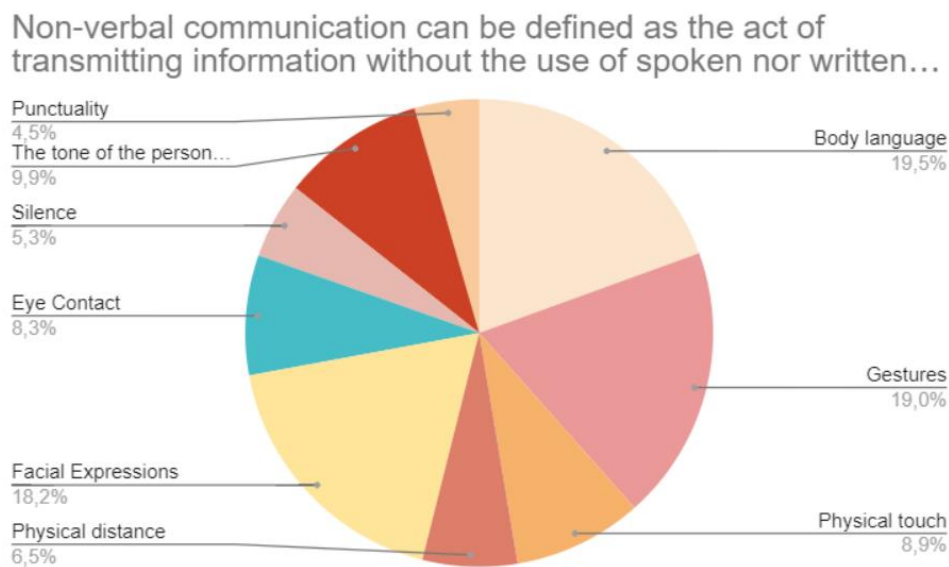
Young (2015) explains that:

Questionnaires are defined as any text-based instrument that give survey participants a series of questions to answer or statements to respond to, either by indicating a response – by marking a page, writing a number or checking a box on paper or online, for example.

As mentioned previously, questions one to eleven are characterisation questions of the sample. These questions are intended to answer the question of the object of study: the perception of non-verbal communication in an intercultural enterprise in Macao.

On the question twelve “Non-verbal communication can be defined as the act of transmitting information without the use of spoken nor written words.”, the kinesics communication had the highest correspondence with 19.5% in Body Language, 19.0% in Gestures and 18.2% in Facial Expressions.

Graphic 4

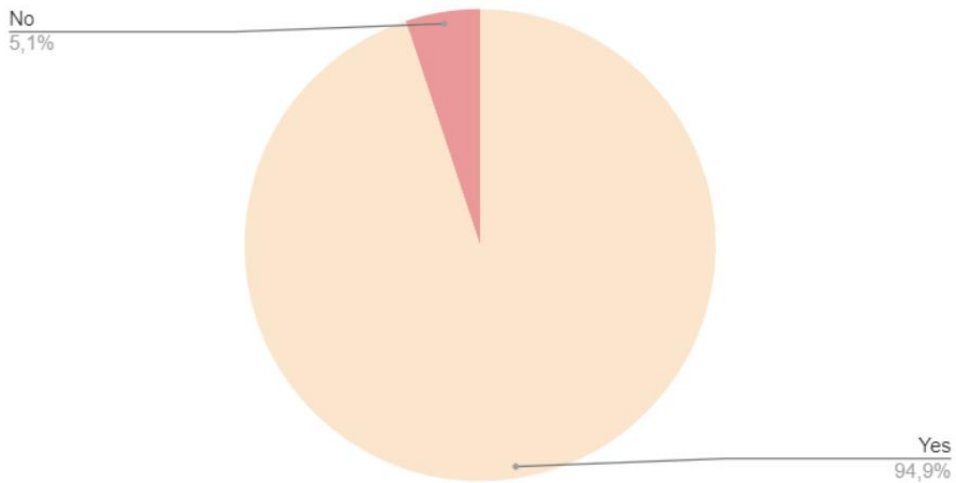


Source: Self Elaboration

On the question thirteen “Do you consider that non-verbal language can help in better understand what others say?”, there is 94.4% saying Yes and 5.1% saying No.

Graphic 5

Do you consider that non-verbal language can help in better understand what others say?

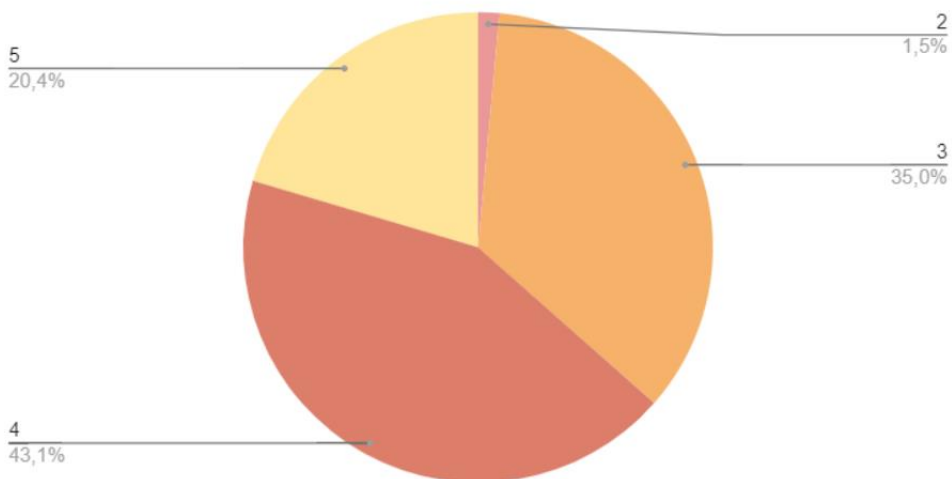


Source: Self Elaboration

On the question fourteen “How important do you consider non-verbal communication to mediate conflicts between people of different cultures?” 20.4% consider it Extremely Important, 43.1% consider Important, 35.0% gave a neutral answer and 1.5% consider it unimportant.

Graphic 6

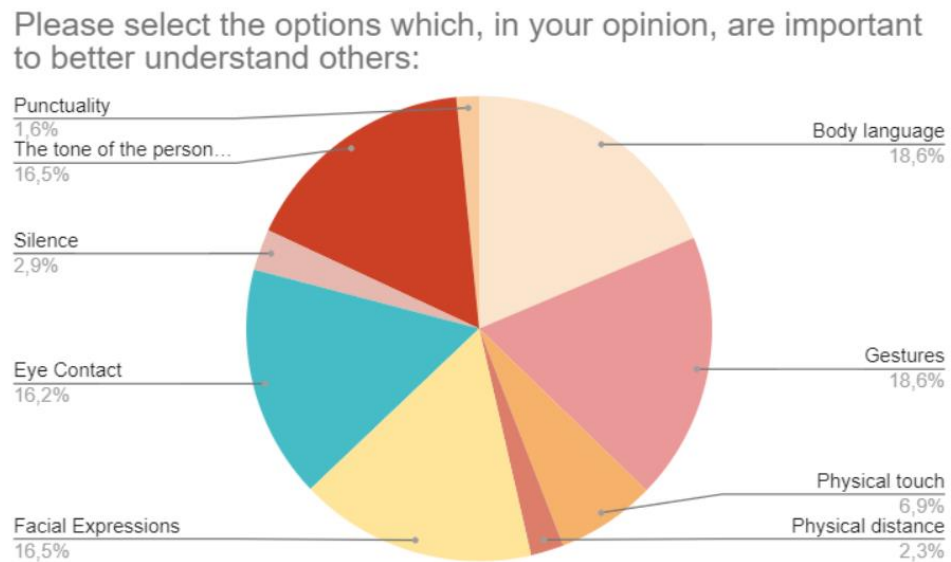
How important do you consider non-verbal communication to mediate conflicts between people of different cultures?



Source: Self Elaboration

On question number fifteen “Please select the options which, in your opinion, are important to better understand others”, once more, the kinesics communication had the highest correspondence with 18.6% in Body Language, 18.6% in Gestures and 16.5% in Facial Expressions.

Graphic 7

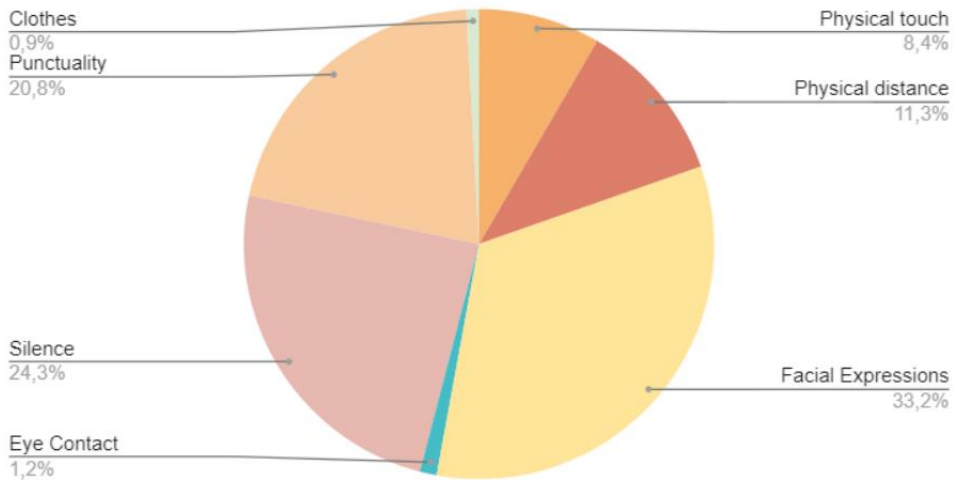


Source: Self Elaboration

On question number sixteen, “Please select the options which, in your opinion, are not relevant to understand others”, 33.2% in Facial expressions, 24.3% in Silence, 20.8% in Punctuality, are the types of nonverbal communication that the sample consider not being relevant to understand others.

Graphic 6

Please select the options which, in your opinion, are not relevant to understand others:

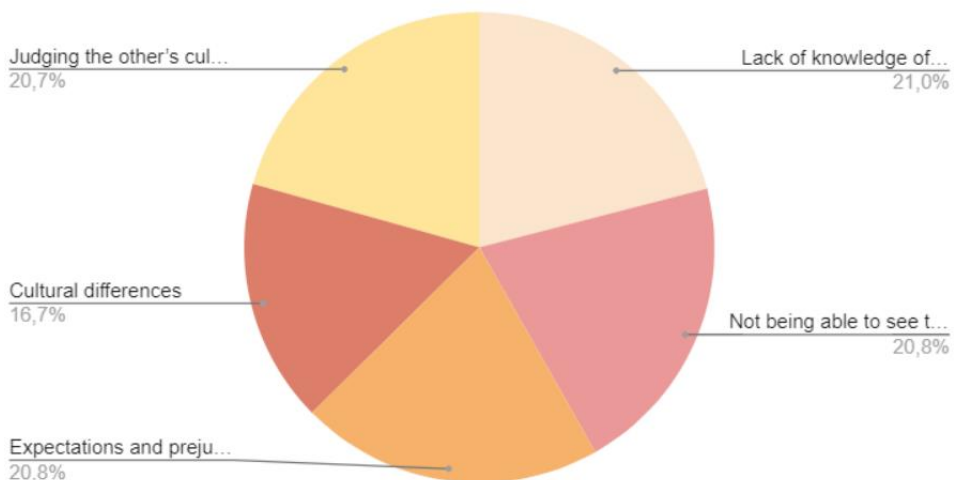


Source: Self Elaboration

On question seventeen, “In your opinion, which of the following sentences do you consider an obstacle to understand other people.”, there is a uniformity of responses, yet Facial expressions appear once more with the highest percentage.

Graphic 7

In your opinion, which of the following sentences do you consider an obstacle to understand other people.

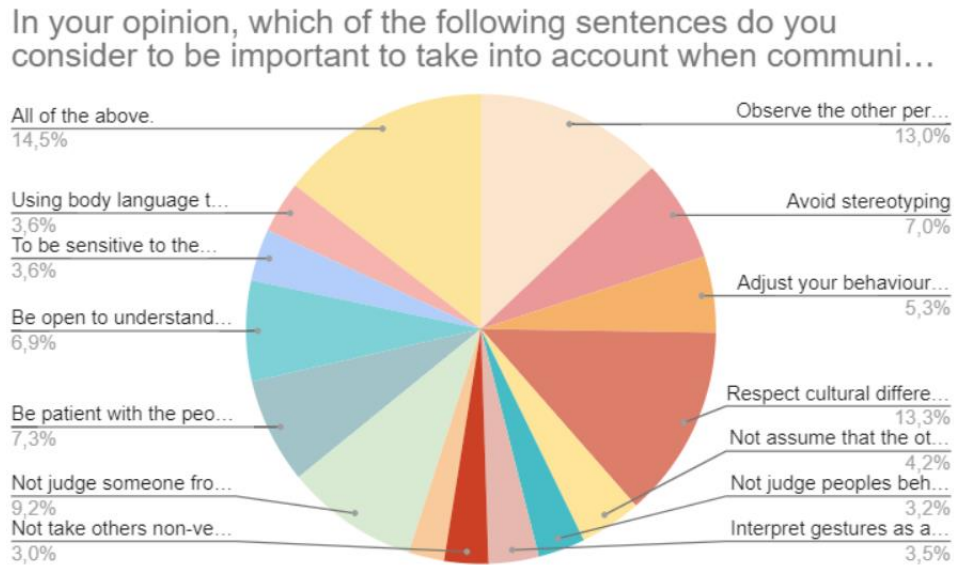


Source: Self Elaboration

Finally, on the question eighteen “In your opinion, which of the following sentences do you consider to be important to take into account when communicating with another

person?”, the option All of the above and the highest percentage with 14.5% and the second highest was Observe the other person body language, with 13.0%.

Graphic 8



Source: Self Elaboration

5.2 Analysis of interviews

The questions in the interviews were different that the questionnaire, yet there are questions with the same intent, so they have similarities. In total 5 individuals working in an intercultural environment in Macao, were questioned. The interviewees are 3 females and 2 males with age comprehend between 25 to 50 years old. Of the interviewees, 3 work in the education sector, 1 work in the marketing sector and 1 work in the hospitality sector.

According with Gibson & Hua (2016), in a structure interview: “the interviewer reads the questions and records the answers, remaining neutral and avoiding any variation from one interview to the next.” Nevertheless, in the course of some interviews, it was verified certain complimentary comments on the response of the participants. After analysing them, these were considered relevant to the study, therefore the following comment will be placed in the responses of each of the interviewees.

The first two questions, 1 and 1.1, are designed to understand the level of satisfaction with the current work situation of the sample. Since all the respondents are not native

Macao residents, the question is asked to understand the reasons of why the participants are working in Macao.

<p>1. Do you like working in Macau?</p> <p>1.1. What do you like about it?</p>	X: “Yes. It’s money and time. More time, more money.”
	A: “Yes. Because of the money.”
	R: “Yes. I like to work in Macau. I already worked with many nationalities in Macau. And I always like to personally work in a Multicultural environment. Especially I work with Australians and so on and I like it and I enjoyed a lot to work with them. With Chinese there are other challenges, but overall, I like to work in Macau, one of the main reasons is the salaries.”
	J: “Yes. The possibility to interact with other cultures.”
	I: “Yes. The friendly people and the high salaries. I like to work with people from different cultures, not only from mine.”

The question number 2 was intended to be a “Yes or No”, yet 3 individuals wanted to share their opinion, which was allowed.

<p>2. Do you like working in an intercultural environment?</p>	X: “It’s a yes, but it’s very challenging. For example, I worked in a Canadian school for many years with the Canadian people, they don’t even say good morning and its cultural. I was like “Hello! Good morning!”, and they were like [blank stare]. I really thought they were rude. Secondly, when they have gatherings like dinner or parties, they have dinner at 5:00pm. Portuguese, don’t have dinner before 9:00pm. And when they finish, they say their goodbyes and go. We, Portuguese, like to talk a lot.”
	A: “Yes. I like to work with other cultures because by doing that we can learn more things, different opinions and different styles. I think it’s a really good experience. With our colleagues we can also learn a lot.”
	R: “Yes. I like to work in an Intercultural environment, I liked very much to work with Australian people. There are cultures that have more challenges. There are others that are closer to us. So, it’s easier to avoid misunderstandings.”
	J: “Yes.”
	I: “Yes.”

In the question three, the intention of the question was to try to identify difficulties in communicating with other cultures.

<p>3. What difficulties do you encounter when interacting with people of other countries?</p>	<p>X: “It is the pre-conception. People have a lot of preconceptions. For example, they already precept or they already think that Portuguese is lazy either way you work very hard, they think “Oh, Portuguese like to dream, to eat and to chat.”. So even if you work hard, sometimes, they already have that in their mind. So, you need to really work very hard for them to see where your potential is. Another difficulty, it's, for example, Chinese people, because we are in Asia, they're very close. At first, they are not very friendly, but they are friendly. I just think that they are shy, but it took me time to understand their shyness. And then, another country for me that was hard to work with was Australia because of their accent, their English slangs are a little bit different. Also, Canadian people, it's their timetable and the way that they work.”</p>
	<p>A: “The cultural differences, sometimes it’s a bit difficult to deal with it. When we interact with people from other countries there are some little things that are different regarding the cultures.”</p>
	<p>R: “So, for me, I am married to a Filipina lady, and I have some difficulties because I thought that some of the problems that we had were due to her personality. And then I found out that it was not the case through YouTube channels and so on. After I found it out it was much easier for me to understand- “Okay, it's just her culture”.”</p>
	<p>J: “I find it very challenging to learn how to understand others and how to not be misunderstood.”</p>
	<p>I: “In my opinion, the difference in the work style confuses me, especially with low responsibility and rude attitude.”</p>

In question 4, once more, was intended to be a “Yes or No” question, yet 2 individuals wanted to share their opinion, which was allowed.

<p>4. Do you consider that non-verbal language can help in</p>	<p>X: “It's a big yes. But it’s difficult because I speak Mandarin, Cantonese, English and Portuguese, so I don't have difficulties while communicating, but it's just understanding what the other person is trying to say. Not only their words. If you see “Hell,</p>
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<p>better understand what others say?</p>	<p>yeah. I'm happy!" [<i>Frowning</i>]. And then you see that expression on their face, that they are not happy, especially when I give lectures or when I'm teaching in the University you can see your students already almost sleeping on the table. So even if they say "Yes, I'm listening" you can see with their body gesture or their eye contact that they already lost track and they are already flying all over the place. Even for little kids our gestures nowadays are very important, because we are wearing masks. The pandemic in Macau. They asked us to wear masks all day long. So, the children cannot see us. The only thing that they can see is our eyes. So, if there is no eye contact, it's very hard."</p>
	<p>A: Yes, sometimes when we cannot explain what we want to say, we just can use gestures and it helps, it helps to communicate. Regarding the kids. Our kids here, they play with other kids from other nationalities, and they can understand each other without knowing the language. Just by showing what they want or by gestures."</p>
	<p>R: "Yes."</p>
	<p>J: "Yes."</p>
	<p>I: "Yes."</p>

In questions 5, there was a intent to try to understand if people could distinguish between the types of communication and which are more relevant to them.

<p>5. What type of non-verbal language do you find easier to understand in other people?</p>	<p>X: "For example, in schools, before the pandemic, physical touch was very important because if you touch them, if you hug them, they feel secure, they stop crying. Even if you don't understand what they are saying, it can be a Korean baby or a German baby. If you hug them and you just cuddle them, they will be very happy. It's an asset, everything here is very important. Like punctuality. It looks like that is not the gesture and it is. I'm freaking out because I'm only one minute late mostly because the parents drop off the kids before the time and they are just throwing the child to you. If you are not here on time. They have the preconception that you are not a good teacher just because you were a little bit late. Or culturally not being punctual for Chinese people is very rude. As well for Canadian people. On the other hand, for us, Portuguese, it is like "I'm ten minutes late, I have time. No problem.""</p>
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	<p>A: “I think altogether and the facial expressions I think are important and now it's difficult because we have to use masks. That is very important and all of these, the body language for sure, gestures. Portuguese like to talk a lot with gestures. And the eye contact, of course. Even Silence, when we are silent, it also means something. So, in my opinion, all these examples you have here, I think are important all together.”</p>
	<p>R: “Personally, I find facial expressions very important. Also, eye contact. I read a lot from that. But in the general manner, I find everything very important.”</p>
	<p>J: “I think the body language and tone of voice are much easier to understand then, for example, facial expressions.”</p>
	<p>I: “Facial expressions and tone of voice are definitely easier to understand.”</p>

In this question 5.1, the intent was the question was asked to understand in which situations non-verbal communication can help.

<p>5.1. In which situations do you consider it helpful?</p>	<p>X: “For me, I found it very useful for me as a director of nursery and I do a lot of interviews to hire people and sometimes it's that moment. You only have a few seconds to see if that person matches the place or not. And the way they talk, their tone, their voice, are they secure? Are they lying? And then they start shaking. But it can also be tricky. Sometimes they are nervous and won't stop touching their hands. If they are very confident and tell you “I work in here and there...”. But if you are too confident, it means that it will be very hard and not collaborative. Maybe not so flexible because you are very confident. So it helps, of course it helps in my work, especially.”</p>
	<p>A: “Every situation. While dealing with kids, but also while dealing with adults, with friends or with anyone you want to talk with, it is important to know how they feel. In every situation. Even if we are in Portugal, with the same culture and same language it is also important to know and to observe.”</p>
	<p>R: “Yes, so I'm a teacher. And even today, I wanted to talk to a girl to stop whatever she was doing, and I found myself removing my mask so that she could see my facial expression and only then did she stop. It depends, but I think it always helps a lot, like a reinforcement.”</p>

	J: “I work at a restaurant, so it is helpful when dealing with the customers, especially when we receive complaints.”
	I: “For example, when I need to be sterner with my co-workers, I change my facial expressions and voice tone to let the person know my situation, instead of saying words like “hurry up” or “I’m serious”.

In the question 6, individuals wanted to add a comment, so they were allowed to.

6. Do you consider that your relationship with others has improved due to understanding other people nonverbal language?	X: “Yes.”
	A: “Maybe because sometimes we may misunderstand. So, it may be helpful if the other person is easy to understand, though. Because sometimes you have a barrier that you don't show your true self, so sometimes even observing the Nonverbal language, the body language, it can be tricky. Sometimes, it depends. But of course, it helps. And I also use this since always. I like observing people. I like to see how they react, how they behave, and how they deal with others. Just to try to guess what they are thinking, how they feel, how their personality is. Although sometimes I can get mistaken.”
	R: “Yes.”
	J: “Yes.”
	I: “Yes.”

In the question 6.1, individuals were asked what strategies they use to better understand non-verbal communication.

6.1 Which strategies do you consider useful to better understand others?	X: “For me, the best strategy. It's if I don't understand, I need to ask. If I didn't get it, I should ask because if I have a preconception like “He didn't say anything. Silent gives consent”. It's a lot of debt that cannot happen in this culture because we are working with so many different cultures that we cannot think like that. So, we need to ask and double-check. For example, in the nursery. Sometimes we go for a drink, or we go for dinner. And you can see it's the tendency that Filipinos will Group, Chinese will group, Portuguese will group, etc, because of the language. When I worked at another International School the same thing happened.”
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	<p>A: “Observing the behaviours. I think it helps to understand others better. In our case our kids or our partners.</p> <p>If nonverbal, you need to know more about the culture or you will not get it. Or you know well the other culture or nonverbal communication can have some flaws. Because we are very different. Only with time you can understand better the other cultures. Even Though somethings are universal. Because some things that are very basic to us, like hugging friend, or giving someone a kiss on the cheek. The people here don't do that. When I arrived here, the first year, I congratulated a co-worker with a hug, it was very natural for me, but not for him. He got nervous and panicked. Later that day he came to me to say sorry, because that never happened to him. Again, we also need to know the culture because they are very different. Even if we live here for many, many years, it's still challenging. I have been here for 21 years and I still find it very challenging. It's not easy to have a real connection because you will always have the culture barrier and the nonverbal language, the touching, the everything.”</p>
	<p>R: “I always try to talk and to ask again, especially, because there is really this question of the yes, here. They say yes when maybe they don't mean to say it.”</p>
	<p>J: “First of all, I think it’s important to experience first with my friends, because we are more open with each other. I also think asking is really important when in doubt. Also, actively listen to the people from other cultures can be really helpful for future socialization.”</p>
	<p>I: “When it’s my first time seeing the person, I try to identify the country by the face, skin colour, behaviour and/or clothes from the person. If the country's culture is not familiar for me, I am more careful and I try to not use sign language to avoid misunderstandings. In that case, I use face expressions and accessible language.”</p>

5.3 Discussion of the results

The questionnaire was designed to ascertain people's perceptions of non-verbal communication in intercultural businesses in Macao. The background information of the

participants acquired on the characterisation questions (from questions one to eleven), reveals that the participants are a diverse group in terms of nationalities, years living and working in Macao and business sectors where they work. In this sense, the questions were designed to verify the diversity of the participants and their circumstances.

The questions about “How long did you lived in your birth country” and “How long do you live in Macao”, may be important indicators to decode the level of exposure to different cultural realities and environments.

The relative questions in order to attempt to perceive whether individuals are aware of the non-verbal communication that surrounds them, thus question twelve to sixteen, it was possible to understand the level of nonverbal and cultural awareness of the people who completed the questionnaire.

In question twelve, the participants were asked to select the options that they “heard of” nonverbal communication. As previously observed in the analysis of the questionnaire, the most chosen options were related to kinesics communication. These responses may indicate that there is a certain ease in decoding non-verbal signals that are visible and do not suggest an in-depth knowledge of them.

In questions thirteen and fourteen, the majority of participants consider that nonverbal communication can help in better understanding what others say, placing great importance on nonverbal communication as an aid to mediate conflicts between people of different cultures.

In questions fifteen and sixteen, when asked which type of nonverbal communication is important or not relevant to better understand others, curiously the correlation between the responses from both questions is divergent. The participants consider kinesics and paralanguage communication as an important asset to better understand others. As previously mentioned, these responses may indicate that there is a certain ease in decoding non-verbal signals that do not suggest an in-depth knowledge of them. On the other hand, the participants, consider silence and punctuality as not relevant factors to better perceive the other. Curiously, they also consider facial expressions as a factor that has no relevance to perceive the other. This phenomenon may be due to the current pandemic context, in which people must wear the mask, so that it will indeed be more challenging to verify facial expressions.

In the questions regarding strategies to better understand non-verbal communication, therefore questions seventeen and eighteen, consisted in already defined phrases placed in order to check with which of the statements the individuals would identify with. In question seventeen, the responses were homogeneous, meaning the participants are aware that there is an imminent obstacle when communication with others.

In question eighteen, the participants were presented with the choice to select the statements that they considered to be important to take into account when communicating with others. The most chosen sentences were to observe the other people body language and to respect cultural differences. However, 14,5% of the participants considered all the statements important. Once again, the kinesics communication is present when accessing and mediating an social interaction.

According to the answers in the questionnaire, and the characterization made earlier to try to decode the profile of the participants, it can be perceived that in general there is an awareness of intercultural communication. Kinesics communication prevails over the others when it is referred to the type of communication, they use to decode non-verbal messages.

Regarding the interviews, the questions aimed to determine the level of understanding about non-verbal communication as well as their perception of it. The questions were posed as open questions in order for the participants to develop the theme. The group seemed to show a great interest in answering the questionnaire.

Despite having different cultural backgrounds, a fairly high cultural literacy can be seen in all the participants. Equally, at the level of intercultural competence, there is an aptitude that may be a factor of constant socialisation with people from other cultures.

At the beginning of this research, the main objective was defined as the perception of individuals about non-verbal communication in intercultural companies in Macao.

With the questionnaires and interviews, it was possible to verify the answers to the secondary questions of this study: “How intercultural competence, non-verbal communication and cultural literacy are interrelated and how do they affect communication between people of different cultures within a company?”; “How do people feel working in an intercultural environment and their level of cultural literacy?”; “What value do they place on non-verbal communication in order to promote better communication between people of various cultures?”; “What type of non-verbal communication do people from different cultures use most often and which do they find most effective in getting their message across?”; “How nonverbal communication helps these people in their interpersonal development and in the development of their cultural literacy?”; “What are the barriers and strategies used by these people in order to promote better intercultural communication?”

Regarding the objective “How intercultural competence, non-verbal communication and cultural literacy are interrelated and how do they affect communication between people of different cultures within a company?”,

Through the interview, it was possible to verify that the individuals interviewed have a great awareness of the way people from different cultures communicate. Although they are not natives of Macao, they have been in Macao for some period of time, which leads to the conclusion that the factor of being constantly inserted into an intercultural environment, leads to the creation of unconscious tools for their adaptation and perception of non-verbal messages.

With respect to the objectives “How do people feel working in an intercultural environment and their level of cultural literacy?” and “How nonverbal communication helps these people in their interpersonal development and in the development of their cultural literacy?”, from the sample, we can conclude that they enjoy working in an intercultural environment. Some of the respondents shared that it was only after moving to Macao that they started to realise that the world is a vast place with many different people. From the interviewees' responses, it is clear that there is a growing awareness of other cultures.

Regarding the objective “What value do they place on non-verbal communication in order to promote better communication between people of various cultures?”, there were varied answers both in the questionnaires and in the interviews to this objective. One of the interviewees shared that due to the pandemic context we are currently living in, it becomes difficult to express what he wants to transmit to children from other cultures. As the interviewees speak English as a lingua franca, some of them said they did not feel the need to use non-verbal communication as an aid to verbal communication.

In the objective “What type of non-verbal communication do people from different cultures use most often and which do they find most effective in getting their message across?”, there is uniformity regarding the type of non-verbal communication kinesics, with facial expressions and body language being the most common result. According to these answers, we can verify that the individuals, despite being from different cultures and having an equally different cultural background, have the same perception, perhaps due to the fact that most of the nationalities that participated in the study belong to a culture with a high cultural context.

Finally, regarding this objective “What are the barriers and strategies used by these people in order to promote better intercultural communication?”, In the interviews, we had several homogeneous answers, and some even consensual, of firstly trying to verify if they can clarify the situation through the non-verbal message and only afterwards starting to try to solve it through non-verbal communication. In certain answers, they initially try to decode through pre-conceptions and then try to communicate verbally.

In summary, through this study it was possible to answer the objectives initially proposed. It was an interesting study to carry out and verify that communication, verbal and nonverbal, depends on the context in which it is framed and the communicator who interprets it.

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Appendix I – Interview Script

The purpose of this questionnaire is to conduct a study as part of a Master's dissertation on Intercultural Studies for Business at the Porto Accounting and Business School.

All responses are confidential and will be used only and exclusively for academic purposes. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Thank you very much for your participation. Your contribution will be essential to the study!

1. Do you like working in Macau?

1.1 What do you like about it?

2. Do you like working in an intercultural environment?

3. What difficulties do you encounter when interacting with people of other countries?

4. Do you consider that non-verbal language can help in better understand what others say?

5. What type of non-verbal language do you find easier to understand in other people?

5.1. In which situations do you consider it helpful?

6. Do you consider that your relationship with others has improved due to understanding other people nonverbal language?

6.1 Which strategies do you consider useful to better understand others?

Appendix II – Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to conduct a study as part of a Master's dissertation on Intercultural Studies for Business at the Porto Accounting and Business School.

All responses are confidential and will be used only and exclusively for academic purposes. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Thank you very much for your participation. Your contribution will be essential to the study!

I agree that my data is used for the research described above.

1. Age: Less than 25 years | 26 - 35 years | 36 - 45 years | 46 - 55 years | More than 56 years

2. Gender: Female | Male | Other

3. Nationality:

4. How long did you lived in your birth country: Up to 1 year | 2 - 4 years | 4 - 6 years | More than 7 years

5. How long do you live in Macao: Up to 1 year | 2 - 4 years | 4 - 6 years | More than 7 years

6. Academic qualifications: Basic school: from pre-school to 9th grade | Secondary school: from 10th to 12th grade | Secondary school: Vocational or professional certification | Bachelor degree | Master degree | PhD degree | Other

7. Business sector in which you work: Education | Health | Law | Hospitality, Restaurants, Tourism, Gaming | I.T. | Financial Activities | Other

8. Job Title/Function:

9. How long have you held this job: Up to a 1 year | 2 - 4 years | 4 - 6 years | More than 7 years

10. Do you consider your work environment to be intercultural? Yes | No

11. How many people from different countries do you work with?

11.1. Which nationalities you work with?

Understanding Nonverbal communication

12. Non-verbal communication can be defined as the act of transmitting information without the use of spoken nor written words. Please select the options you know and/or have heard of.

- Body language
- Gestures
- The need to touch other person
- The distance the person is
- Facial Expressions
- Eye Contact

- Silence
- The tone of the person's voice
- Punctuality
- Other:

13. Do you consider that non-verbal language can help in better understand what others say? Yes
| No

14. How important do you consider non-verbal language to mediate conflicts between people of different cultures? 1 not important - 5 extremely important

15. Please select the options which, in your opinion, are important to better understand others:

- Body language
- Gestures
- The need to touch other person
- The distance the person is
- Facial Expressions
- Eye Contact
- Silence
- The tone of the person's voice
- Punctuality
- Other:

16. Please select the options which, in your opinion, are not relevant to understand others:

- Body language
- Gestures
- The need to touch other person
- The distance the person is
- Facial Expressions
- Eye Contact
- Silence
- The tone of the person's voice
- Punctuality
- Other:

Strategies to overcome non-verbal communication barriers

17. In your opinion, which of the following sentences do you consider an obstacle to understand other people.

- Lack of knowledge of other cultures.
- Not being able to see the non-verbal language (e.g. gestures, posture, body language, etc).
- Expectations and prejudices that lead to false assumptions or stereotyping.
- Cultural differences.
- Judging the other's culture according to our cultural codes and values.

18. In your opinion, which of the following sentences do you consider to be important to take into account when communicating with another person?

- Observe the other person body language.
- Avoid stereotyping.
- Adjust your behaviour according to the situation or environment.
- Respect cultural differences.
- Not assume that the other person has understood your message.
- Not judge peoples behaviour from the first impression.
- Interpret gestures in a cluster, but not individually.
- Not take others non-verbal behaviour personally, even if it is insulting in your culture.
- Develop an awareness of your own non-verbal communication patterns that might be insulting in certain cultures.
- Not judge someone from other cultures by your own cultural values.
- Be patient with the people that have a different culture.
- Be open to understand and respect others cultures.
- To be sensitive to the actions of the people and try to understand without any judgment.
- Using body language that contradicts your words (for example smiling when irritated, laughing when worried).
- All of the above.
- None of the above.