

## Submission of Dissertation

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**Name:** Weronika Szczesniak

**Student Number:** x23181044

**Degree for which thesis is submitted:** Masters

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INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS - TESCO

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*W Szczesniak*

BARRIERS TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION WITHIN INTERNATIONAL  
BUSINESS - TESCO

## **Acknowledgement**

The current research came out as one of my enriching life experiences that enhanced my skills and knowledge profoundly. Through a thorough investigation of the research topic, I have been able to obtain a great understanding of the Intercultural communication importance. I would like to thank my mentors for allowing me to work on this topic. I would also like to thank my family and friends for supporting me through my hard times. Their continuous assistance and day-to-day support undoubtedly cheered me when I felt low on motivation and completed the study successfully.

## **Abstract**

**Background:** In the post-globalisation period, most small and big businesses have begun to expand internationally to increase profits. Globalisation has enabled corporations to acquire their desired raw materials from countries where such commodities are less expensive, which has improved worldwide marketing. This has further caused recruitment of employees from different cultures increasing cultural diversity within the companies.

**Aim:** The main aim of this research is to identify the communication barriers faced by Tesco due to cultural differences among the employees.

**Method:** The study has adopted a primary quantitative research method, with data collected through surveying 50 Tesco employees and the data has been analysed using graphical analytic techniques.

**Findings:** The findings reveal that the main barriers faced by Tesco in managing cross-cultural communication are a lack of familiarity with local cultures and customs, different communication styles, misinterpretation of gestures, language differences and cultural differences respectively. Aside from that, additional research indicates that the primary causes of hurdles in cross-cultural communication include power disparities, divergent cultural values, linguistic variations, and distinct non-verbal signals.

**Conclusion:** This study concludes that companies have seen a stunning tapestry of varied cultures, distinct beliefs, and viewpoints in their workforce, which has been brought about by the fast development of market operations. As a result, when workers from various cultural backgrounds are engaged, intercultural communication becomes increasingly important in promoting inclusion within the workplace.

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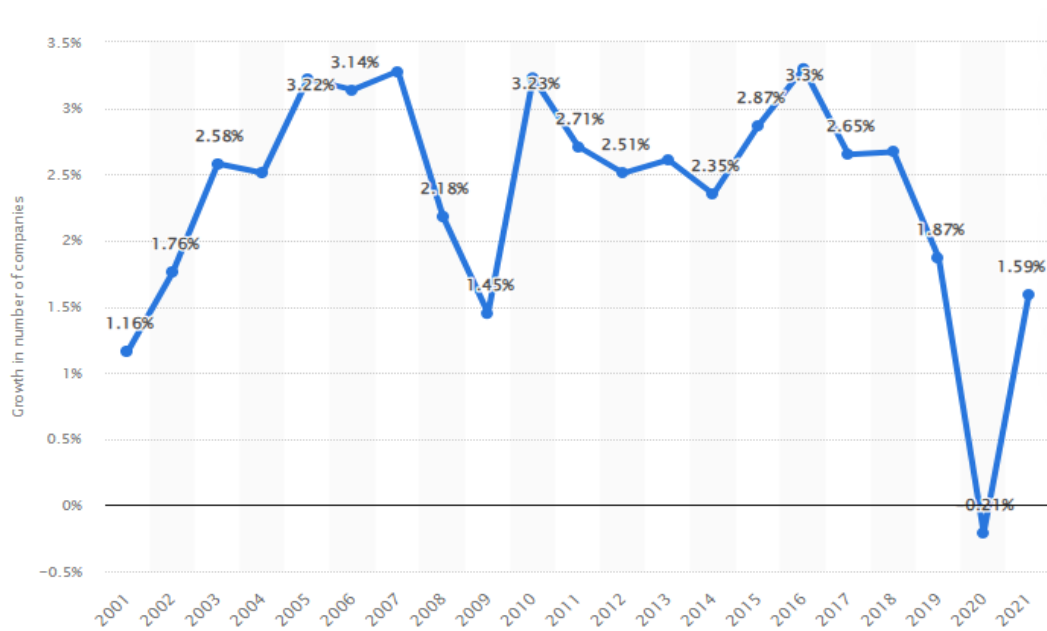
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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Research Background**

During the post-globalisation era, the majority of large-scale organisations as well as small-scale companies have started to enter the international market to achieve more profit (Tiawati et al. 2024). With the positive influence of globalisation, the international trade associations have also started emphasising the development of international business and started spending large amounts of investment to make local businesses succeed in the international market (Dabic, Maley and Novak 2021). As stated by Callaghan (2021), in general, globalisation has kindly assisted firms in reducing their operational costs and costs of manufacturing by offering products or services to customers at affordable prices. Similarly, Shenkar, Luo and Chi (2021) have stated that globalisation has mainly attempted to improve the living quality of customers by offering them different kinds of products and services in the international market. Another advantage of globalisation, that has boosted international marketing, is that it authorised companies to source their desired raw materials from nations where those materials are less expensive. Similarly, as a positive influence of international business management, multinational companies try to recruit employees from developing regions, where the labour costs are comparatively lower (Isokariari and Daniel 2020). Due to these advantages in recent times, international business has achieved positive growth in the market. According to a report published by Statista (2024), the number of companies in the international market has achieved significant growth throughout the last decades. However, the growth of these companies in international business has faced a negative growth of 0.21% in 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as shown in Figure 1.1. To control the spread of COVID-19, the majority of the countries have implemented strict lockdown policies. According to Liu, Lee and Lee (2020) during this lockdown, many companies faced issues in managing their international operations. However, in the pandemic situation, the business

environment has also become favourable for international business, leading to a growth rate of 1.59%, as can be seen from the above figure. International business has also achieved positive growth as a result of the digitisation process. As stated by Leung, Koh and Lee (2020), due to the positive impact of social media marketing, customers have become more familiar with global trends and are more likely to purchase products or services from organisations across the globe.



**Figure 1.1: Increasing Number of Companies in International Businesses**

(Source: Statista 2024)

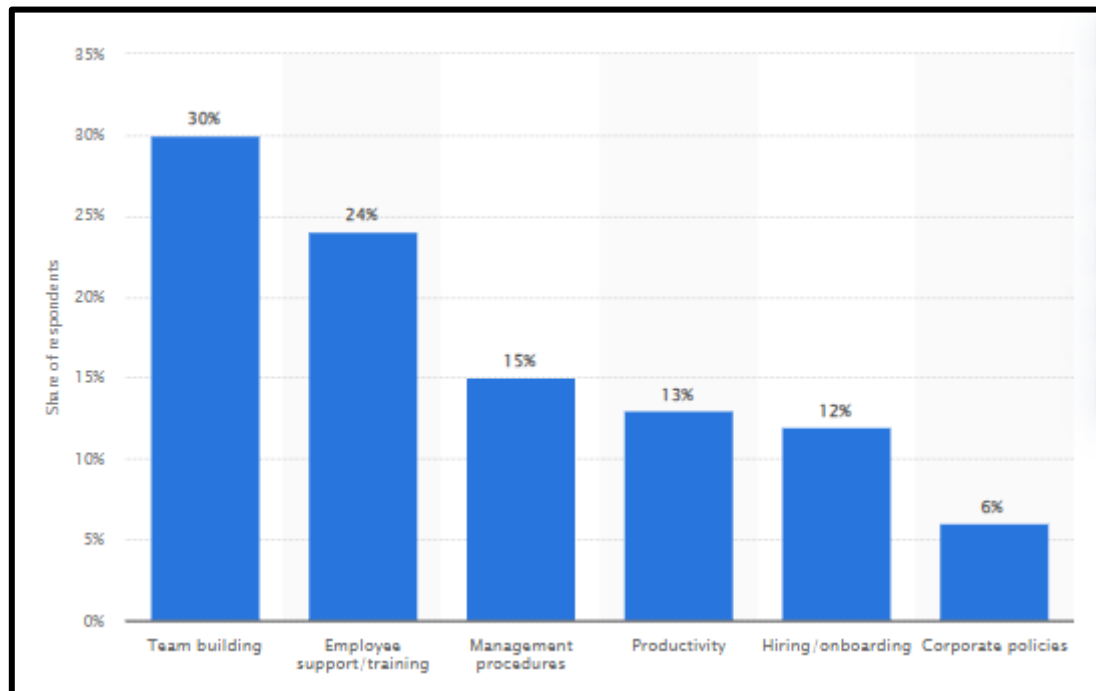
From the above discussion, it can be noted that international business has become a proposer of opportunities for companies to achieve long-term success. Aiming to maintain this success in the international market, many companies have also started to recruit employees from different nations. According to Ghauri, Strange and Cooke (2021), to understand the needs and cultural values of customers from different regions, multinational companies often focus on recruiting employees from that specific region. On the other hand, Buckley (2021) has commented that to reduce the operation costs in international marketing, international companies often focus on hiring employees from developing regions at low labour costs. Due

to these hiring practices, the need for intercultural communication in cross-cultural teams has also increased. However, in the case of these intercultural communication methods, the employees often face issues in managing their performance due to cultural differences. Employees often have different perceptions about the organisational procedure, which leads to further conflicts among the employees (Aririguzoh 2022). Therefore, this project aims to investigate the different factors leading to intercultural communication arrears and the long-term impact of these problems on the organisations' performance. To develop this study, the case study of Tesco has been selected.

## **1.2 Research Problem Statement**

The main problem related to cross-cultural team management is that, in this format, employees from different cultural and societal backgrounds work together to achieve business goals. As discussed in the above section, the majority of companies nowadays focus on recruiting employees from different cultural backgrounds to improve their performance in the international market. According to Siregar and Scheffer-Sumampouw (2021), by recruiting employees of different backgrounds, companies become able to understand the preferences of local customers. However, recruiting employees from different cultural backgrounds increases the diversity within the team, which further increases the need for effective intercultural communication. Because they are from various cultural backgrounds, the employees find it difficult to communicate with one another, which lowers employee engagement. Furthermore, a lack of communication in cross-cultural settings can result in misunderstandings, disagreements, misinterpretations, stress and even financial harm as can be seen in Figure 1.2. Similar to other multinational companies, Tesco's business management scenario still faces this issue. To strengthen its global operations, the organisation has concentrated on managing its diversity and inclusion. In line with the growing percentage of people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, the company aims to hire 15% of its workforce from global ethnic

communities (Brannen, Mughan and Moore 2020). By focusing on improving diversity, Tesco often fails to address the need for effective cross-cultural management leading to intercultural communicational challenges. Thus, the main problem related to this study suggests that the cultural differences among employees often make it difficult for them to work together.



**Figure 1.2: Cross-cultural Challenges**

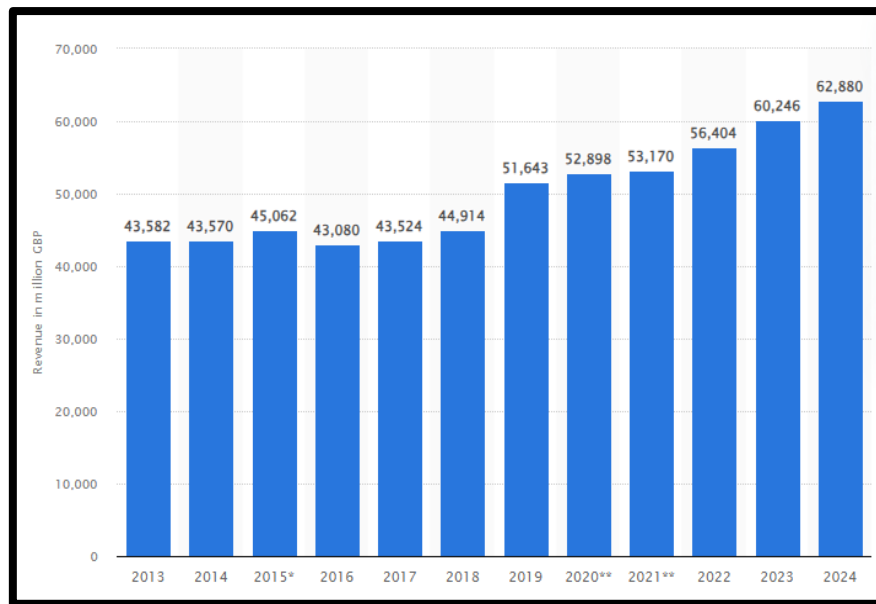
(Source: Statista 2024)

### 1.3 Research Rationale

The research has described existing cross-cultural communication challenges in Tesco. Cross-cultural communication issues influence employee satisfaction and engagement within the organisation, which are important aspects of improving business performance in any challenging market (Srivastava, Singh and Dhir 2020). This can also lead to an increase in employee turnover, damaging the reputation of a company, and loss of input from skilled workers. According to Tamunomiebi and John-Eke (2020), diversity issues in the workplace can cause higher conflict and employee attrition in the company. Therefore, the main reason

behind conducting this study is to make the management of Tesco aware of the importance of intercultural communication in improving overall organisational productivity.

The main reason behind selecting Tesco as the case study company is that it is one of the top supermarkets in the UK. Food and drink items, apparel, household appliances and even financial services are all part of the product line (Statista 2024). Other than that, Tesco Group also consists of the food and drink distributor Booker, the data science company Dunnhumby, One Stop convenience shops, Tesco Bank, and Tesco Mobile. Along with that, the company has a well-established international market having more than 4752 stores across countries like the UK, Ireland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. The company mainly operates in the integrational market through online portals and mobile applications. Due to ongoing operational expansion, the business added 79 locations in FY2022 (Fiscal Year 2022) and 60 stores in FY2021. After selling its companies in Asia in FY2020, the company's stated segment store count decreased from 4,613 shops in FY2019 to 2,380 stores in FY2020 (Globaldata 2024). Tesco holds a dominant position in the grocery market share of the UK and is a well-known supermarket brand. With its headquarters located in Hertfordshire, United Kingdom, the corporation has over 354,000 employees globally. From the below figure, it can be seen that Tesco's yearly revenue in the UK and the Republic of Ireland exceeded 62.8 billion British pounds for the 2023–2024 fiscal year. This represented a rise of more than 2.6 billion pounds over the previous fiscal year. In 2023–2024, the company's profit in the UK and ROI grew to \$2,689 million (Statista 2024). Thus, it can be stated that despite this success in the international market, the company still faces cross-cultural communication issues. For this reason, the company has been chosen as the case study organisation for this research.



**Figure 1.3: Tesco's Market Performance**

(Source: Statista 2024)

## 1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this research is to identify the communication barriers faced by Tesco due to cultural differences among its employees.

The main objectives of this paper are listed below.

- To identify the different communication strategies implemented by Tesco to manage cross-cultural teams
- To identify the different barriers faced by Tesco in managing intercultural communication
- To evaluate the need to implement intercultural communication to improve international business practices
- To recommend effective strategies to Tesco to establish diversity and inclusion to improve intercultural communication



## 1.5 Research Questions

The primary research question of this study aims to identify what communication obstacles are posed by cultural differences within the international organisation - Tesco. To answer this question, it has been further decided on several research sub-questions which are listed below:

- What are the different communication strategies implemented by Tesco to manage cross-cultural teams?
- What are the different barriers faced by Tesco in managing intercultural communication?
- What are the reasons behind improving intercultural communication in Tesco?
- What strategies could be recommended to Tesco to establish diversity and inclusion to improve intercultural communication?

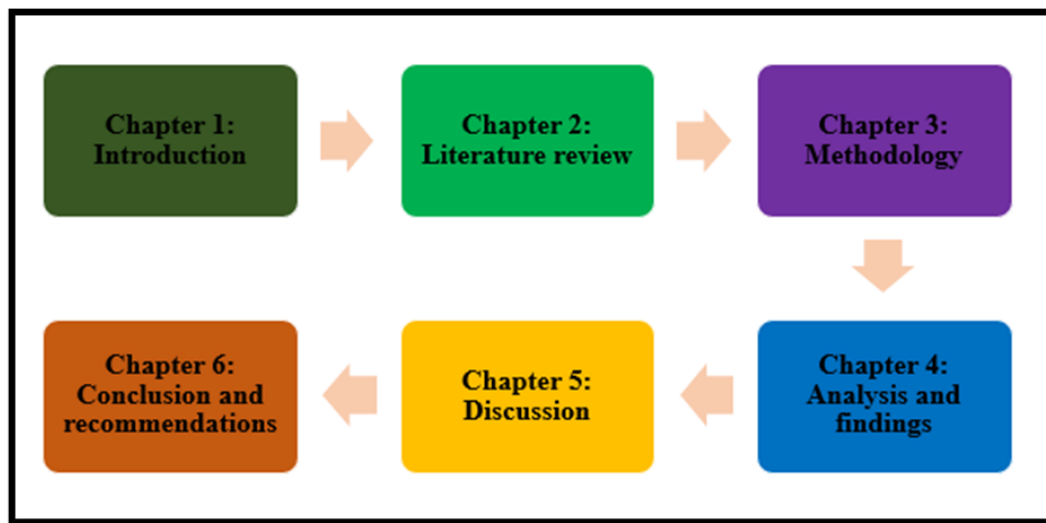
## 1.6 Significance of Research

This paper has mainly discussed the key intercommunication barriers faced by Tesco due to cultural differences among the employees. This paper has also shared insights about the importance of cross-cultural management in improving international practices. Thus, the main significance of this study is that this paper could assist Tesco in improving its overall intercultural communication process by following the suggestive measures included in this study. Moreover, along with Tesco, other small or medium-scale companies could also benefit from this study by improving their cultural management process and their international operations. Furthermore, this paper would also be beneficial for future researchers in developing detailed knowledge about the different aspects related to cross-cultural management and intercultural communication processes.

## **1.7 Research Methodological Background**

Here, the main aim of this research is to identify the communication barriers faced by Tesco due to cultural differences among the employees. Intending to achieve this aim, it has been planned to follow a primary quantitative research method, where the data has been collected by surveying 50 employees of Tesco. Here, the Google Forms Survey was used, to collect data from the participants. In this study, the questionnaire included self-designed questions. It consists of questions regarding the intercultural communication management procedure followed by Tesco. The questions have been used in a close-ended and open-ended format to collect necessary information. Other than that, graphical analysis techniques have been used to analyse the data. Graphical analysis has been performed by using different bars or pie diagrams to show the participants' responses. As the main purpose of this study is to evaluate and identify the barriers faced by Tesco in managing intercultural communication, statistical analysis will not be suitable as this technique is mainly used for analysing the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The chosen graphical analysis method would be effective in identifying barriers faced by Tesco in managing intercultural communication and the impact of these barriers on the overall performance of the company.

## 1.8 Dissertation Structure



**Figure 1.4: Dissertation Structure**

(Source: Self-created)

Figure 1.4 suggests a total of six chapters associated with the research study.

Chapter 1 of the study – ‘Introduction’, includes the initial analysis of the research topic. Also, an overview of different barriers to intercultural communication within an international business – Tesco context is discussed with the support of reliable data sources. The aim and objectives in this section have set the targets of the research. Based on the research aim and objectives, here some key questions are also developed. The background of the study along with the research rationale and problem statement are also incorporated in this chapter.

Chapter 2 - ‘Literature Review’, involves a detailed discussion of the different themes, viewpoints, and aspects related to the research topic based on the available secondary sources. A literature review is developed in the context of the research topic by comparing and contrasting the previously published research. This chapter has also identified the literature gap in the study. The selected secondary sources have helped to gather core knowledge about the research topic and theories associated with intercultural communication have further enhanced the significance of this chapter.

The third chapter – ‘Research Methodologies’, is a thorough discussion of how all the informative data based on the primary quantitative study was collected. The advantages and disadvantages of the research methodological choices are properly discussed in this study. The justification behind the methodological choices, made in this research is to evaluate the barriers to intercultural communication faced by Tesco.

Chapter 4 – ‘Findings and Analysis’, and Chapter 5 – ‘Discussion’ are crucial in this research due to the presence of data findings and discussion. Chapter 4, consists of data analysis output like charts, tables, and graphs. On the other hand, the main significance of Chapter 5 is that it has developed a comparison of the literature review with primary data.

Chapter 6 – ‘Conclusion and Recommendations’ consists of a summary of the entire research process. Along with that, recommendations have also been provided in this section, based on identified barriers to intercultural communication in Tesco.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The review of the previous literature concerning intercultural communication supports an understanding of the existing barriers to intercultural communication at Tesco, as well as, strategies and management processes used to reduce the obstacles related to intercultural communication. Moreover, the earlier studies are fundamentals for developing an in-depth research on barriers to intercultural communication within Tesco's multinational workplace. Therefore, the literature review is critical to analyse and compare the findings from various research papers on the targeted research topic to identify the literature gaps for initiating further research.

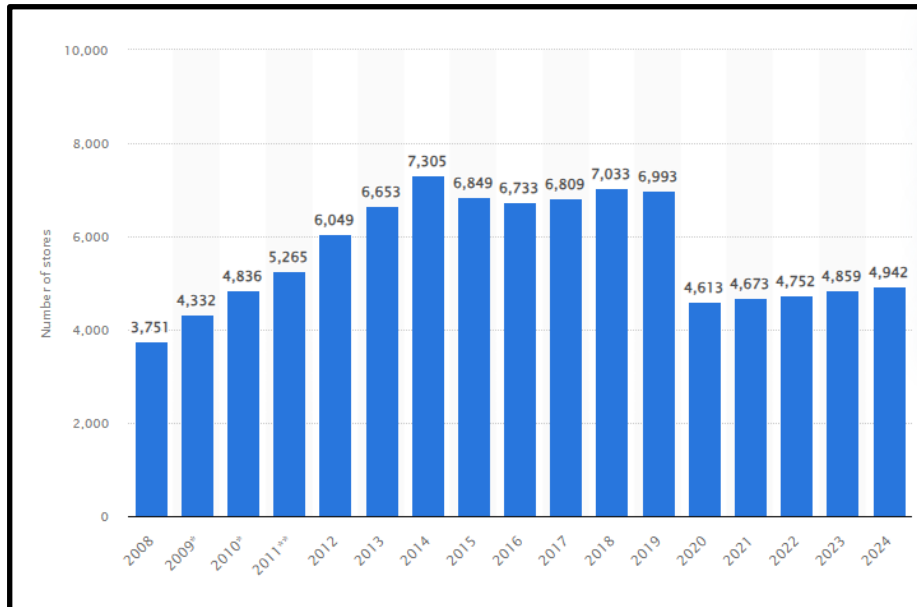
### **2.2 Organisational Background of Tesco**

Tesco Plc is one of the world's largest retailers headquartered in the UK, operating across various formats including hypermarkets, supermarkets and convenience stores. Tesco initially concentrated on offering affordable groceries to the working-class consumer segment. Rosnizam et al. (2020) opined that international expansion is a cornerstone for Tesco's development and diversification strategy, which helps the brand in the European, Asian and US markets. Tesco's business strategy circles around the motto 'Every Little Helps', designed to meet customer value and focus on operational value with innovation. Tesco has pioneered the usage of loyalty cards or Club cards to capture consumer information for personalised marketing and operational improvements.

In recent years, Tesco has faced issues including changing consumer behaviour, competitive pressure, regulatory challenges and barriers to intercultural communication, which drive Tesco to determine suitable strategies for attracting consumers and improving cross-cultural communication to boost brand awareness. As commented by Stanikzai and Ali (2024), Tesco maintains consistency in operations across its expanded market while adapting to

consumer preferences and local market conditions by increasing its online presence and expanding digital capabilities. However, Tesco's organisational background underscores commitment to consumer satisfaction, strategic diversification and operational excellence, positioning Tesco as a leader in the retail landscape globally.

The dropping number of Tesco stores may be attributed to barriers in intercultural communication impacting operational efficiency and market adaptability. According to a report published by Statista (2024), before COVID-19 Tesco had a total of 6,993 stores operating worldwide, however in 2024 the total store count was reduced to 4,942 due to the mismanagement of local expectations, ineffective marketing strategies and supply chain disruptions, creating cultural misunderstandings which leads Tesco to close stores with poor performance to reduce operating costs. As per the view of Meng (2024), without effective cross-cultural communication tailored to different cultural contexts, Tesco may face challenges to maintaining a competitive edge in the diverse international markets resulting in consolidation and closures of stores to mitigate losses. Therefore, addressing the barriers through improving culturally sensitive strategies and localised business management techniques could allow Tesco to navigate challenges more accurately and maintain its global existence.



**Figure 2.1: Dropping number of Tesco stores worldwide**

(Source: Statista 2024)

### 2.3 Needs for cross-cultural Team Management and Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is an understanding of the message among people from different cultures (Aririguzoh 2022). In the recent globalised marketplace, organisations operate in diverse cultural contexts, transiting multiple regions and nations. Therefore, effectively addressing cross-cultural units and promoting intercultural communication is pivotal for organisations to increase success rates in the varied market environment. Intercultural communication is essential for maintaining high-standard business performance as it encourages people of different backgrounds to work together while communicating with respect for one another. Effective communication relates to maintaining good relationships with all stakeholders. As per the view of Setti, Sommovigo and Argentero (2022), effective communication skills are needed to overcome language barriers and convey instructions accurately after understanding the non-verbal cues of employees in a cross-cultural team. In a similar vein, Imakwuchu and Billy (2018) have stated that organisations need to invest in cross-cultural communication programs and advanced tools to improve communication and language

training workshops to improve the cross-cultural communication skills of the employees. Thus, open and clear communication is crucial to promoting collaboration, enhancing team cohesion and reducing misunderstandings.

As stated by Bandaranaike and Gurtner (2016), cultural sensitivity is vital for multinational companies' stakeholders to respect and understand the diverse cultural practices, norms and values to increase the expansion of organisations in new markets. Cultural differences often make people interpret the message differently, and both: the process of sending and the process of receiving a message are influenced by cultural paradigms. That is why employees in intercultural environments need to acquire basic knowledge about cultural differences and how to address them. Additionally, Li and Longpradit (2022) have opined that cultural awareness practices include understanding differences in the decision-making process, communication styles, and diverse working ethics in different markets to boost the success rate of organisations in foreign markets. The statement sheds light on the phenomenon of distorted perception - individuals see reality through the lens of their beliefs, values, and experiences, which are highly influenced by their culture. Considering this, it can be deduced that the perception of reality and determining what is 'normal' differs from culture to culture.

Similarly, Bond-Barnard, Fletcher and Steyn (2018) have stated that organisations can achieve team collaboration and cohesion with team-building activities and projects that encourage cultural interaction by emphasising shared values and celebrating inclusivity and diversity. In comparison, Imam and Zaheer (2021) have mentioned that building cohesive cross-cultural teams needs strategies which foster mutual respect, trust and collaboration among team members to increase the performance of the organisation. Additionally, Dominique (2020) has mentioned that the team-building activities in Tesco include cultural awareness workshops; multi-cultural potluck launches collaborative projects and team outings to local cultural landmarks that encourage cross-cultural cooperation and interaction to enhance



employee productivity and reduce misunderstandings in the workplace. Companies should strive to determine what makes employees feel appreciated and important so that they are encouraged to innovate and share their ideas. To enable employees to do so, Tesco and other businesses need to foster an atmosphere of open communication, in the workplace. A positive, diverse work environment, where belonging is emphasised, results in multiple profits, from high employee satisfaction and engagement to higher profits. Therefore, organisations need to increase cultural awareness programs and training for their managers and cross-cultural teams to navigate diversity in cultural nuances effectively. A supportive and inclusive team environment in the organisation is crucial to boost innovation and productivity reducing the cultural friction among diverse teams.

As cultures are evolving, continuous learning is crucial to gain up-to-date knowledge, which helps to avoid stereotyping, misunderstandings, and assumptions. As opined by Zheng et al. (2015), intercultural competencies are dynamic skills which need ongoing learning and development to foster inclusivity and cross-cultural communication in the organisation. At this point, it is noteworthy to emphasise the concept of ‘learning-and-effectiveness’ which emerged in the 1990s and focuses on integration. The stream promotes diversity while appreciating distinctiveness (Reza, 2023). Therefore, organisations need to involve intercultural competency-building practices that contain updates on cultural shifts, industry best practices and geopolitical revolution to stay agile and responsive to the dynamic and vast market conditions.

Furthermore, organisations’ employees must be flexible and adaptable in receiving and responding to the changing business environment and cultural differences. According to Sabuhari et al. (2020), the flexibility approach includes adjusting the business strategies, operational management practices and consumer service strategies to link the company goals with the cultural expectations and preferences of the stakeholders. Team members, who

develop characteristics such as flexibility, empathy, and tolerance, are more likely to communicate effectively.

Traditional approaches suggest that outsiders should adjust to the local norms. These theories, however, are old-fashioned and rather ineffective in today's multinational realities. Imposing new norms and customs can cause stress, especially in the case of nonconformist individuals. This also makes companies lose different viewpoints, which impacts innovation negatively. On the other hand, Bovee, and Thrill (2020), emphasize the 'you' attitude, which means the message's sender shows an empathic approach and considers not only what he wants to share, but also, what the receiver needs and wants to know. It is important to adjust the way a piece of information is announced to the receiver, so that they have a better understanding of the concept, however, it might limit innovation, or result in a loss of interest in the conversation. Mlambo, Silén and McGrath (2021) have stated that organisations are required to encourage continuous education on global trends and cultural diversity among their managers and workforce to promote intercultural communication in the workplace. Therefore, workers in firms ought to adopt cultural diversity as a possibility rather than a challenge permitting multinational companies to capitalise on opportunities and meet the requirements of the diverse consumer base.

As stated by Al Rahbi, Khalid and Khan (2017), strong leadership qualities in managers are essential in setting the tone for effective communication and cultural sensitivity within organisations. It is challenging for supervisors to connect with people of diverse backgrounds, motivate them, and encourage them to cooperate to ensure harmony. Communication can serve in two opposing ways, either it enhances prejudice, racism and other negative positions towards foreigners, or it helps in reducing them. In a workplace, leaders have to organise their teams in a way that leads to inclusion, acceptance and, in turn, better business performance. Additionally, Bennett and Hammer (2017) opined that understanding cultural perspectives and

contexts aids in resolving conflicts and communication gaps swiftly and sustains a positive working culture. Thus, organisations need to foster a culture of diversity in leadership roles at all organisational levels to cultivate a supportive atmosphere where employees from all backgrounds feel cherished and valued. As stated by Oino and Asghar (2018), managers and executives at Tesco lead by standard, emphasizing the benefits of adequate communication and cultural competence in attaining business success. The leadership support and commitment from the leaders encourage employees to adopt communication strategies to foster cultural diversity and contribute to enhancing Tesco's performance in a rapidly evolving market.

Moreover, cultural diversity in international organisations can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings within diverse teams. Misunderstandings cannot be eliminated, but by being aware of the existing differences, the probability of conflict can be reduced significantly. According to Demchuk et al. (2024), multinational companies need to equip their managers with expertise in cross-cultural conflict resolution, negotiation and mediation to reduce communication issues among team members. To support the statement, Homan et al. (2020) have informed that organisational leaders can demonstrate respect for diversity and amplify their willingness to learn from diverse cultural perspectives by fostering open dialogue within the cross-cultural team. Thus, organisations need to embrace advanced conflict resolution to create harmony in the work environment and encourage team productivity.

## **2.4 Communication strategies implemented by Tesco to manage cross-cultural teams**

As the company has focussed on improving its marketing practices in the international market, effective communication strategies are vital for managing diverse, cross-cultural teams successfully. Tesco has implemented several strategies to reduce miscommunication within, cross-cultural teams, promoting intercultural understanding, maximising productivity and enhancing cooperation.

As per the view of Hall and Theriot (2016), Tesco prioritises cultural awareness training to educate the workforce on diverse business practices, cultural values, norms, and communication styles to enhance collaboration. On the other hand, Singh and Hess (2020) have stated that the technologies used for cross-cultural communication, like, conferencing platforms, project management software, instant collaboration tools and instant messaging apps are to enhance team collaboration. Hence, by comprehending cultural nuances, workers at Tesco can avoid misconceptions and create stronger connections within cross-cultural groups. Communicating the message with consideration of the audience's cultural background helps to ensure that it will be remembered and retrieved. Understanding the cultural differences between coworkers can also reduce the risk that the purpose of the message will not be achieved. Here, cultural pluralism is a concept that emphasises acceptance of different cultures. This viewpoint assumes being aware and respecting differences, as well as, avoiding judgment and assumptions. It is not effective for communication to expect people of different cultural backgrounds to act according to certain standards. Helmreich, Merritt and Wilhelm (2017) have stated that cultural awareness training equips team members with the sensitivity and knowledge required to interact respectfully and effectively with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds.

As commented by Rukmani (2022), Tesco leverages advanced digital tools to facilitate collaboration and communication among cross-cultural teams to enhance the productivity of the company in an international context. This suggests, that with the use of digital tools, cultural boundaries causing problems in communication, are becoming less visible. Tesco utilises advanced technologies for enhancing real-time communication, virtual meetings and document sharing across diverse time zones and different locations enhancing information exchange with seamless teamwork. This suggests that Tesco takes steps to reduce cross-cultural communication barriers to stay competitive in the changing business environment.

Besides the above-mentioned factors, as opined by Luring and Klitmøller (2015), language skills are vital for effective communication in multicultural and multinational teams. Additionally, Brannen, Mughan and Moore (2020) have stated that companies invest in language proficiency training programs to support employees in improving their language and communication skills, particularly in the non-English speaking market to reduce misunderstanding within multinational teams. Thus, the language skill development practices in Tesco facilitate clearer communication, reduce language barriers which can hinder the productivity and collaboration of the team, and enhance comprehension power of delivering feedback and instructions.

According to Gupta and Bhaskar (2016), most international companies utilise team-building activities which encourage cultural exchange, promote diversity and foster companionship among team members to reduce communication barriers. Similarly, by reviewing the diversity and inclusion management practices of Tesco it can be identified that Tesco also arranges different team-building activities to promote an inclusive environment. Thus, the team building initiatives are used in Tesco for creating opportunities for shared experiences and team personal connection enhancements to foster mutual understanding and team cohesion.

On the other hand, Brannen (2020) has stated that Tesco demands routine feedback from cross-cultural teams to identify the areas for improvement and examine the effectiveness of the ongoing communication strategies. Similarly, Tombleson and Wolf (2017), determine that clear communication includes demonstrating responsibilities and roles, creating communication protocols and establishing anticipations for reporting and feedback. Hence, continuous evaluation of the feedback helps in determining relevant, responsive communication strategies to align business goals with fostering collaboration to co-create organisational success. As mentioned by Azan and Karimah (2022), Tesco establishes policies

and utilises clear communicational channels to ensure information flows effectively within cross-cultural teams. Pradhan, Panda and Jena (2017) have opined that the regular feedback loops allow multinational companies having different cross-cultural teams to adapt interaction methods and communication approaches based on cultural dynamics, team dynamics and changing business needs in the international market. Therefore, clear guidelines in Tesco aid in mitigating misunderstandings, maintaining transparency and streamlining the decision-making process in multicultural teams in diverse organisational contexts.

Diversity in its broader meaning is a set of features describing an individual (Bovee, Thrill, 2020). By 'diversity' authors often refer to race or gender, but it also includes age, language, religion, beliefs, education and working experience. Some are inherent, while others are acquired. Strong diversity in a workplace leads to an atmosphere of open conversation. Employees can feel free to share their ideas, and opinions, which improves creativity. Even a basic awareness of the existing cultural differences within the workplace can strengthen communication effectiveness. International companies must take steps towards embracing cultural differences as opportunities rather than threats, empowering teams towards achieving organisational goals rather than struggling with limits.

## **2.5 Barriers faced by Tesco in managing intercultural communication**

Tesco faces several barriers to managing intercultural communication. These barriers arise from differences in communication styles, inconsistent business practices, cultural norms and language proficiency. Effective management practices are needed to address the challenges, minimise the rate of store closure and increase the efficiency of the cross-cultural teams to meet the preferences of the customers.

One of the main barriers that exist in relation to intercultural communication is the presence of cultural differences and diversity that bring different communicational styles and norms to the workplace, which makes daily operations problematic. As opined by Brett, Behfar

and Kern (2020), in high-context cultures, implicit cues and indirect communication styles are common; on the other hand, in low-context cultures, direct and explicit communication is prioritised to maintain interaction. Tesco fails to navigate these differences in communication styles to ensure the instructions and messages are understood fully and the intentions of communication are clear. Considering the above, different communication styles can be associated with distinct ways of thinking, which, in turn, are shaped by a culture. Different thinking styles influence the process of decoding, which suggests that culture and communication are interconnected. Bovee and Thrill (2020) have commented that in a workplace, contextual differences are visible, especially in terms of problem-solving, decision-making, negotiations, and hierarchy. In the case of high-context culture, people will consider the results of the decision, while members of low-context culture will look at the methods used to make a decision.

To be able to decode messages correctly, while communicating interculturally, cultural awareness and sensitivity are crucial. The lack of these two can hinder the communication between multicultural employees within a team. Bennett and Hammer (2017), suggest that workers may inadvertently humiliate or estrange consumers or colleagues from different cultural backgrounds without understanding their cultural norms, practices and beliefs. Therefore, building cultural competence and respect for each culture is necessary to foster inclusivity in the organisation through education and multicultural training programs.

Other than that, language differences are evident in Tesco, which disrupts effective communication with the multinational workforce. This suggests that language and culture coexist and the uniqueness of a language impacts the perception of reality. As mentioned by Hajro, Gibson and Pudenko (2017), English serves as a primary language for business, however, employees have varying levels of language proficiency increasing miscommunication in the workplace. Therefore, misunderstandings arise in the Tesco workplace when multicultural

teams struggle to comprehend the instructions given in English accurately and express themselves. The difference between British and American English versions is often significant, as well as, in different languages, the same words can carry different meanings. Dialects and jargon make intercultural communication even more difficult. The level of skills varies in a working space. Regardless of fluency and advancement, people never stop learning. It is human nature to learn constantly throughout life. One's effort to learn a second language should always be respected and approached with patience and support.

Furthermore, aligning Tesco's workplace culture with local cultural norms and values in diverse markets is crucial for achieving operational success and fostering employee engagement. As highlighted by Rosnizam et al. (2020), Tesco faces issues in measuring the differences in work ethics, decision-making, hierarchy and management practices in the international context which can create friction and hinder the performance of multicultural teams. Hence, Tesco needs to shape and re-evaluate the organisational practices and ongoing policies to reverberate with local cultural anticipations, while upholding the market standards and core values of the organisation.

Beyond that, non-verbal communication through facial expressions and gestures may bear vital meaning in intercultural communication. Nonverbal communication supports determining correctly the meaning of the message. According to Missaoui (2015), different interpretations of non-verbal causes by multicultural teams can lead to misinterpretations and misunderstandings of the intervention behind the message. Tesco's multinational teams are not protected from this barrier; thus, Tesco's employees need cultural competency training for identifying and accurately responding to non-verbal signals in different cultural contexts.

Jackson (2015) has stated that employees from different cultures often have different perspectives or bias that affects the team work capabilities. As stated by Gino and Coffman (2019), complying with diverse legal frameworks, across different nations, is vital for meeting



ethical requirements and reducing bias in intercultural communication. However, Al Ariss and Guo (2021) state that a preconceived understanding of certain cultures can lead to misjudgements, unfair treatment and missed opportunities for team collaboration. Therefore, Tesco needs to adhere to the local regulatory framework and promote awareness of unconscious bias to encourage employees to engage in cross-cultural communication to boost the company's productivity.

Also, operating business across different time zones creates logistical barriers to collaboration and communication. As per the view of Taras et al. (2019), coordinating projects, scheduling meetings and resolving the customer's issues in real-time can be problematic where the multicultural team is geographically dispersed. Therefore, Tesco needs to build effective technological solutions for connecting the employees efficiently in different time zones and foster effective communication strategies for bridging the logistical gaps, to encourage seamless interactions within multinational teams.

## **2.6 Recommendable strategies for Tesco to improve intercultural communication**

Tesco ought to develop a structured certification program that enriches workers in intercultural competence. As stated by Jackson (2015), intercultural competence certification could include modules on global communication strategies, leadership in multicultural teams, cultural sensitivity and conflict-resolving practices across cultures, to reduce misunderstanding in an inclusive team. As per the view of Walton et al. (2015), cultural immersion experiences like rotational assignments in different locations, international interactions or cultural immersion experiences are vital for navigating cultural diversity in the evolving business environment. The cultural immersion experience is pivotal for Tesco employees for allowing first-hand experience in myriad cultural contexts and building understanding and empathy towards diverse cultural perspectives. Tesco needs to utilise VR technology to assemble simulated systems which replicate intercultural communication barriers. As commented by Lin

et al. (2020), VR training provides a secure environment for workers to receive immediate feedback, practice cross-cultural communication and grow confidence to navigate and mitigate issues in real-life multicultural scenarios.

According to Ashikali, Groeneveld and Kuipers (2021), international businesses need to implement targeted leadership development activities to develop cultural intelligence among leaders. Tesco needs to provide coaching and learning opportunities to team leaders to promote inclusive team management approaches for solving barriers to expanding intercultural communication. As stated by Vohra et al. (2015), organisations need to ensure the communication systems and platforms support multilingual features, culturally sensitive content and accessibility features to reduce the communication gap between multicultural teams. Tesco also needs to implement inclusive communication platforms to meet the cultural norms and diverse linguistic preferences of customers and workers. As stated by Jackson et al. (2018), engaging with local communities' aids in fostering cross-cultural understanding and team collaboration. Therefore, Tesco needs to establish partnerships and engagements with cultural organisations and local businesses in different regions to facilitate cultural exchange and intercultural dialogues through hosting cultural events, and combined community initiatives.

## **2.7 Underpinning theories**

### **2.7.1 Communication Accommodation Theory**

Communication accommodation theory can be used by Tesco to effectively reduce barriers to intercultural communication across its multicultural teams and global operations. As per the view of Elhami (2020), CAT declares that individuals adjust their communication styles to align with or accommodate the cultural norms, expectations and values of their team members. Tesco can encourage convergence by instructing its workers to adjust their

communication styles to fit those of their customers and team members from different cultural backgrounds. Employees, however, should not be expected to adjust or change their personality to fit the business society.

As opined by Giles, Edwards and Walther (2023), convergence training involves adopting similar language usage, communication norms and non-verbal cues to build rapport and facilitate cultural understanding. Other than that, Tesco can also support divergence initiatives where needed, supporting workers in retail stores to retain their communication preferences and cultural identity to enhance interaction and communication with others (Pines, Giles and Watson 2021). Tesco can use specific accommodation strategies like cultural sensitivity workshops, language skill training and intercultural communication skill development to promote inclusivity and teamwork. CAT emphasizes the benefits of sensitivity and awareness towards cultural differences; therefore, Tesco needs to foster cultural awareness by encouraging cultural competence among global teams (Gueta, Harel-Fisch and Walsh 2023). Therefore, Tesco needs to adopt and apply the CAT to create a more communicatively active and competent workforce to meet the needs of the customers and increase operational efficiency in the international business context.

### **2.7.2 Hall's high-low context theory**

As stated by Gao (2024), Hall's theory of high-low context of communication categorises cultures based on their communication approaches and styles, highlighting the explicitness and implicitness of messages conveyed in multicultural organisations. Tesco can apply the theory by understanding the high-context and low-context cultures whereas high-context cultures depend heavily on the implicit understanding in communication and non-verbal cues. Contrastingly, low-context cultures value clarity, directness and explicit verbal communication. Therefore, Tesco operating multicultural teams in Asia and Middle Eastern countries need to foster high-context communication patterns. In the UK and the US, it is

required to adopt low-context communication to reduce misconceptions and service delays. As commented by Ho, Whittle and Eaves (2020), companies need to encourage employees to accept a more nuanced and indirect communication style when interacting with customers and colleagues from high-context cultures to build relationships and develop mutual understanding.

Hall's high-low context theory can be applied to the cultural sensitivity workshops, to educate workers on the differences between high and low contexts of communication to equip them with approaches to adjust their interaction based on the cultural context in the operating market. As opined by Qi (2021), Hall's high-low context theory is applicable in forming diverse cross-cultural teams by appointing leaders with cultural competence to promote inclusive communication techniques which respect the cultural diversity of individuals. Tesco also needs to establish continuous feedback loops to capture insights from multicultural employees on their experiences with cross-cultural team management to utilise Hall's high-low context theory in the communication strategies for support between intercultural transactions.

## **2.8 Literature gap**

The literature by Ashikali, Groeneveld and Kuipers (2021) efficiently highlights the strategies for enhancing cross-cultural communication, however, it fails to provide details on the impact of communication in day-to-day operations in Tesco. This phenomenon locates a gap, which needs to be mitigated to reduce the rate of misunderstandings in shaping the daily operations of Tesco. On the other hand, the literature by Gino and Coffman (2019) highlights the digital tools used in managing cultural competencies in the organisation but fails to describe the ways to leverage digital tools in bridging cultural gaps. This gap also needs to be further explored for shaping intercultural communication practices and determining effective training programs for promoting respect and collaboration among diverse teams.

## **2.9 Identified questions for further research**

Intercultural communication aids in increasing the success of the business in an international context by managing the expectations of cross-cultural teams. From the literature review the background and strategies for cross-cultural communication in Tesco are identified however, there are some gaps which need to be further evaluated to reduce the skill gaps of future researchers.

The questions that can be approached after finding the literature gap are as follows:

**Q1:** How do the barriers of intercultural communication impact day-to-day operations and the decision-making process at Tesco?

**Q2:** What are the different barriers faced by Tesco in managing intercultural communication?

**Q3:** How does Tesco leverage communication tools to bridge cultural gaps among global teams?

**Q4:** How effective are the training programs of Tesco to enhance cultural competency level of the employees?

## **2.10 Conclusion**

The literature review of the previous studies highlights the intercultural communication barriers faced by Tesco and the possible mitigation strategies to manage cross-cultural teams. However, the previous studies provide partial data which fails to meet certain sections of the research questions; therefore, literature gaps are identified to inform the clear and convenient research on the topic facilitating further research questions. The literature gaps instructed to apply the data collection process and data analysis strategy by selecting a research method to gather further information on the topic and reduce the skill gaps of future researchers.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodologies**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The research methodology of this paper consists of two main components: data analysis and data collection strategies. The main importance of this chapter is that it provides proper justification behind the methodological choices made to evaluate the different barriers faced by Tesco in managing intercultural communication. Along with that, another importance of this methodology is that it also provides ethical considerations made to maintain the quality of the research.

### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

Research philosophy is articulated as a set of shared values, common perspectives and beliefs of the researcher. Khatri (2020) has also mentioned that it is effective in dealing with nature, sources and the development of knowledge and ideas that appear to be profound in the completion process of the research topic. The key types of research philosophies are interpretivism, positivism and pragmatism. In the context of current research, pragmatism research philosophy has been chosen over other philosophies. The selected philosophy focuses on implementing research findings in real-life practices (Saliya 2023). Since such philosophy is associated with seeking solutions based on data and knowledge gathered through the research process, it is useful to identify barriers to intercultural communication at Tesco and recommend strategies to reduce them. By selecting such an approach, it was possible to conduct the study independently, without the limitation in data interpretation and collection, as it allows more flexibility than the other two approaches. Thus, the selected philosophy is justified to study the barriers of intercultural communication.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

A research approach can be defined as schedules, plans and disciplines that are followed to develop a research study. To determine a logical flow of the research work, it is crucial to select and identify a suitable research approach which is highly pertinent to the research aim. The research approach can be divided into various categories such as deductive, inductive, abductive and others (Pandey and Pandey 2021). For conducting the present study, a deductive research approach has been selected to identify the barriers to intercultural communication. It can be added that the deductive approach has been regarded as being concerned with the development of hypothetical knowledge which is based on various theories. Besides, it has been decided to develop a generalised theory through collecting specific information and data on intercultural communication, therefore it is stated that the selection of such an approach is justified here. Thus, the selection of a deductive approach has been appropriate for the current study, since the inductive approach focuses more on generalised data and would not be effective for the study.

### **3.4 Research Design**

Research design refers to a proposed strategy and structure for a research study, depending on which research tends to be conducted (Dzwigol 2022). It mainly offers a comprehensive framework to gather and evaluate data on the respective research topic. Research design has also been categorized into several types such as descriptive, explanatory and exploratory designs. Here, a descriptive research design has been selected to develop a reliable and valid theory on the research topic. The use of such a design has also assisted in exploring extensive data available on the barriers to intercultural communication due to high flexibility. This design enables the development of statistical interpretation of the research

topic. Thus, it is stated that the selection of a descriptive design is justified here to critically evaluate the barriers to intercultural communication.

### **3.5 Research Strategy**

Research strategy is a specific approach which plays a key role in determining the nature of the research. The development of a research strategy is an integral part as it involves the analysis and collection of data (Ocaña-Fernández and Fuster-Guillén 2021). In this study, a primary quantitative research strategy has been selected to analyse the research topic and assess the key research issues. It is stated that the quantitative research approach mainly focuses on the development of a mechanistic approach to the research study. It also involves the quantification of data to acquire a desired result for answering the research questions. In line with the objectives of the study, the quantitative research method has helped to gain a deeper understanding of research aspects. Over the secondary strategy, the primary strategy is more accurate and reliable as it delivers unbiased findings. Thereby it is stated that as a research strategy, the selection of a primary quantitative research method is justified for this study and has also helped to meet the research aims.

### **3.6 Research Sample**

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of the population of interest in a research study (Rahman et al. 2022). Here, purposive sampling has been chosen to select participants for this study as data was gathered from only Tesco employees who have a minimum of one year of experience. Purposive sampling is an example of non-probability sampling which means that the selection of participants was based on their availability. A sample size of around 100 employees was targeted to identify the barriers to intercultural communication and a consent form was sent accordingly, out of which only 50 employees took part in the survey.



Although it is sufficient for the research, Rahman (2023) studied that to get meaningful research the minimum number of answers to survey questions, should be at least 100. One of the core reasons for selecting the organisational employees only for the survey over others includes direct exposure and collection of accurate organisational data. Thereby, it is stated that the selection of a purposive sampling strategy remained advantageous for collecting data. The selected samples were reached by visiting the nearby Tesco stores to avail consent of managers. Organisational managers were informed first about the purpose of the research and its content in general, and then they were sent out an online questionnaire to complete and share with employees. The whole process of collecting sampling data through the questionnaire was approximately 10 days and it took around 4 minutes to be completed by individuals. It was also ensured that the survey link remained open for ten days to improve the participation rate of the target population.

### **3.7 Research Instrument**

As a research instrument, here, the survey has been used to collect primary data on the barriers to intercultural communication. The survey is an effective strategy to help accumulate ample information regarding the research topic. It is emphasized that participants remain anonymous. Moreover, such research allows for gathering unbiased data cost-effectively. A structured questionnaire using both open-ended and close-ended was formed to collect the data systematically. For the survey session, a questionnaire based on both the demographic and subjective questions has been developed. After selecting the respondents, a survey link was shared with the participants and they were asked to fill that out within 10 days. The questionnaire has been prepared based on the knowledge gathered through conducting the literature review. The survey questions used in this research along with its sources are presented below.

Questions	Options	Sources
Which of the following communication barriers have you experienced in a multicultural environment of Tesco?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language differences</li> <li>• Cultural differences</li> <li>• Different communication styles</li> <li>• Misinterpretation of gestures</li> <li>• Lack of familiarity with customs and traditions</li> <li>• Others</li> </ul>	(Wirtz and Jerger 2016)
Which of the following factors do you think contribute to communication barriers in a multicultural environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different languages spoken</li> <li>• Different cultural norms and values</li> <li>• Lack of awareness and understanding about other cultures</li> <li>• Different nonverbal communication cues</li> <li>• Power imbalances</li> <li>• Others</li> </ul>	(Dominique 2020)
Which of the following strategies do you find effective in overcoming communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active listening</li> <li>• Use of visual aids and gestures</li> </ul>	(Oino and Asghar 2018)

barriers in a multicultural environment? You can select multiple options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking help from interpreters or translators</li> <li>• Building cultural awareness and sensitivity</li> <li>• Adapting communication style to match the other person's</li> <li>• Others</li> </ul>	
In your opinion, what role does effective communication play in promoting inclusivity and diversity in a multicultural environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crucial role</li> <li>• Important role</li> <li>• Some role</li> <li>• Limited role</li> <li>• No role</li> </ul>	(Wu et al. 2019)
Do you think organisations should provide training programs to address communication barriers in multicultural environments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Not Sure</li> </ul>	(Hajro, Gibson and Pudelko 2017)

**Table 3.1: Questionnaire Development**

### **3.8 Data Collection Process**

Data collection is a significant aspect of research methodology as it determines the nature of data collected for the research conduction (Lobe et al. 2020). Two prominent types of data collection are secondary and primary methods. It is stated that primary data is mostly collected from the field under the supervision of an open investigator. Conversely, secondary data is easily available and accessible to support any research study. Here, concerning the research method, primary quantitative data collection has been used. With the support of survey techniques, the necessary data regarding barriers to intercultural communication has been collected. The selection of the primary data collection process has also remained noteworthy to conclude an accurate and valid research outcome since it reduces the scope of collecting biased data.

### **3.9 Data Analysis Process**

Data analysis can be referred to as a technique through which collected data is evaluated and analysed to conclude a theory or any hypothesis (Zawacki-Richter et al. 2020). It is stated that for the purposes of answering the research question effectively, it is essential to conduct the synthesis of collected data through a critical and meaningful approach. In the prospect of the present study, all data has been collected through the primary data collection method. Data is derived from the survey and thoroughly reviewed and analysed to identify similarities or trends associated with the data. Quantification of those data has been done here with the method of graphical analysis to come up with an insightful outcome related to the research context. Over the statistical tests, graphical analysis has been considered since there are no dependent and independent variables associated with either the research topic or the study aims to investigate any relationship between variables. Thereafter, the selection of a graphical analysis

method to analyse the primary data and effectively address all the research questions is justified for this study to derive a suitable outcome.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

In the path of conducting any research, research ethics is a crucial aspect for retaining the validity and reliability of the research (Wohlin and Runeson 2021). A robust code of ethics has been followed while working on this thesis to avoid different ethical dilemmas. Furthermore, during the survey process, no participant was forced to take part in the survey and individuality was respected. The identification of participants has never been disclosed under any circumstances. A consent form has been delivered to each participant as well to keep all employees aware of the purposes of the present research. The consent form highlights that participants can withdraw from this survey without stating a reason at any given point in time. While doing the research, no cultural stereotypes or partialities have been involved to make the study more impactful.

### **3.12 Chapter Summary**

In summary, it is stated that the present research has been done responsibly, and all the methodologies have been selected in such a manner that helped to conduct the research as per the objectives and aims of the research. The study has been conducted with the help of pragmatism research philosophy along with a descriptive research approach and deductive research design. It is also stated that the selected methodologies were suitable for the research subject. Over the secondary, primary data was impactful to deliver a realistic outcome. All legal and ethical principles associated with the identification of barriers to intercultural communication have been maintained, so that an insightful research outcome could be derived.

## **Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis**

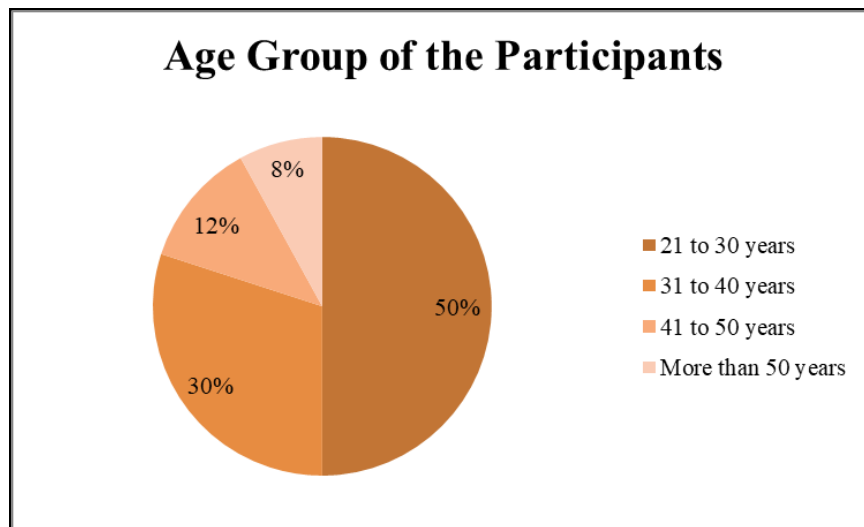
### **4.1 Introduction**

Data analysis is one of the most important chapters of the dissertation that helps to investigate collected data which is essential to meet the research objectives. The research aim of this study is to evaluate the different barriers to intercultural communication faced by Tesco employees. As the aim has tried to conduct a subjective study, a graphical analysis using the survey results collected by surveying the employees of Tesco has been performed.

### **4.2 Response Rate**

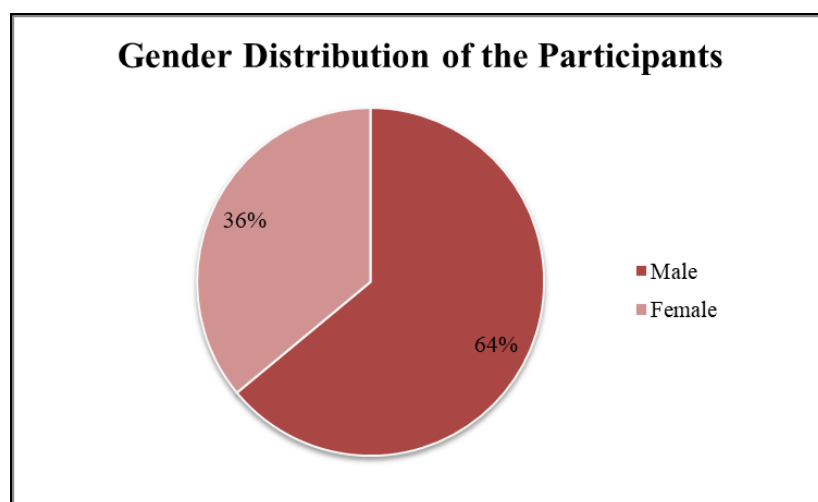
Response rate mainly refers to the ratio between the number of participants aimed to survey and the actual number of survey participants. Here, the number of targeted research participants indicates the number of Tesco employees with whom the survey link has been shared. Here, the survey link has been shared with approximately 98 employees from Tesco. However, in this survey among those candidates, only 50 employees responded. Based on these values, it can be estimated that the response rate of this survey was approximately 51% ( $50/98 \times 100$ ). As the response rate of this survey is higher than 50%, it can be stated that half of the potential participants were willing to answer survey questions.

### 4.3 Demographic Analysis



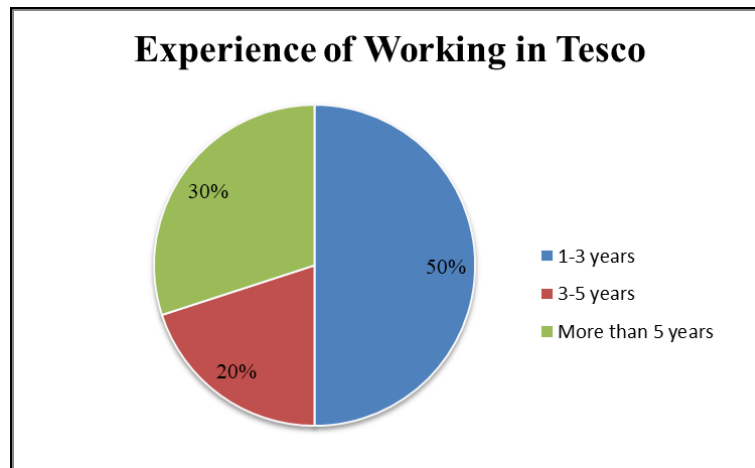
**Figure 4.1: Age Group of the Participants**

The above figure presents the average age group of the participants. It can be seen that 50% of the employees have confirmed their age between 21 to 30 years old. Other than that, it can also be highlighted that 30%, 12% and 8% of the participants have confirmed their age group as follows: between 31 to 40 years old, between 41 to 50 years old and more than 50 years old respectively.



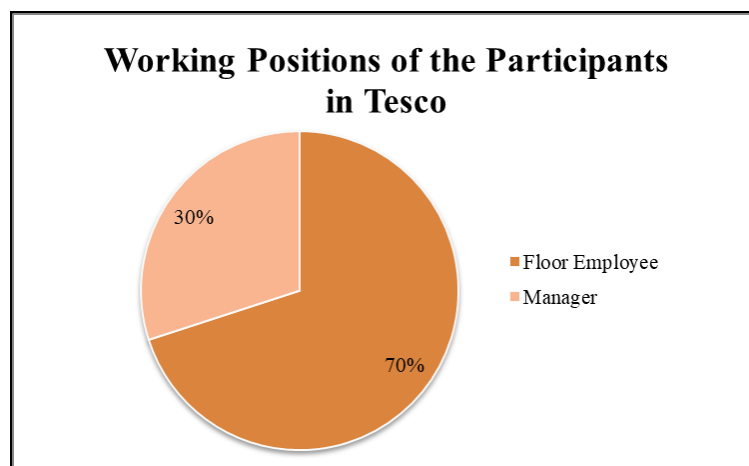
**Figure 4.2: Gender Distribution of the Employees**

From the above figure, it can be seen that 64% of the participants have confirmed their gender as male, whereas only 36% of the employees have chosen the gender as female.



**Figure 4.3: Experience of Working in Tesco**

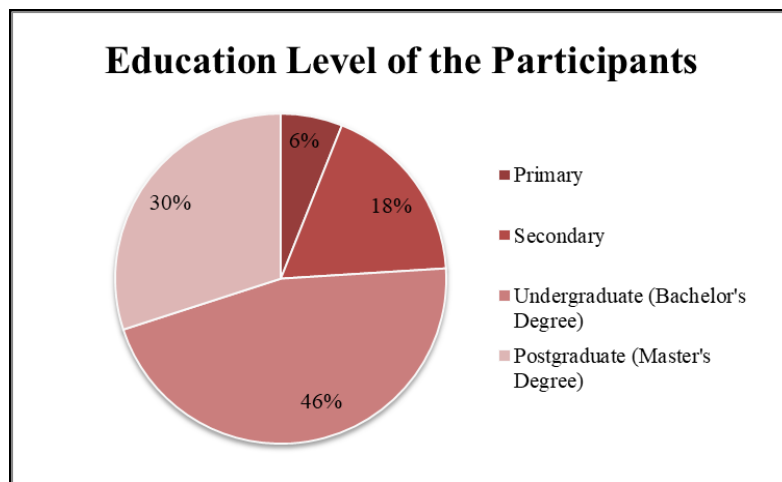
The above figure reflects that 50% of the survey participants have confirmed that they have 1 to 3 years of experience working at Tesco. On the other hand, 30% and 20% of the employees have confirmed their working experience as more than 5 years and between 3 to 5 years. Based on these statistics, it can be evaluated that the data gathered about the cross-cultural practices in Tesco would be relevant and accurate as the participants of this survey are long-term employees of Tesco.



**Figure 4.4: Working Positions of the Employees in Tesco**

The above figure shows that 70% of the employees have confirmed that they work as floor employees at Tesco. On the other hand, 30% of the employees have confidence that they are currently surveying in managerial positions at Tesco. The number of managers taking part in the survey is the number of managers contacted to conduct the survey.

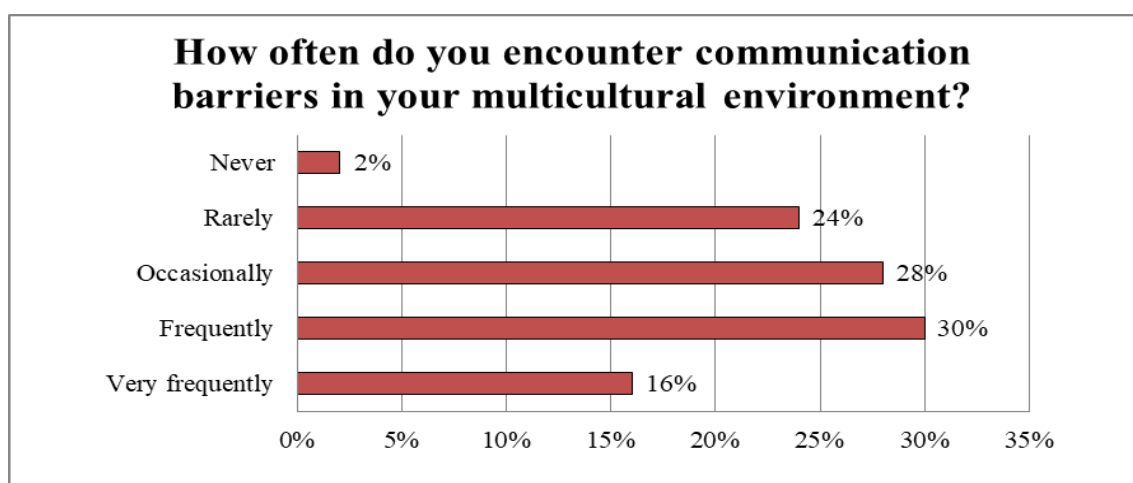




**Figure 4.5: Educational Background of the Employees**

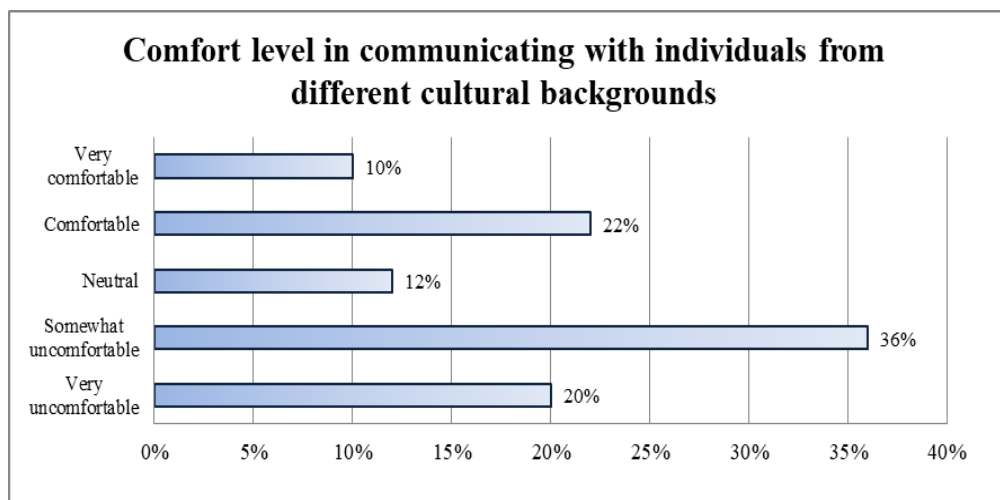
Lastly, as a demographic attribute, this survey has gathered information about the educational background of the employees. From the above diagram, it can be depicted that 46% of the employees have confirmed their educational level as an undergraduate degree. On the other hand, 18% and 30% of the employees have confirmed their educational level as secondary education and postgraduate degree. Only 6% of the individuals have stated that they have completed primary-level education. Thus, Tesco's HR department is more willing to hire candidates with a level of education higher than the primary.

#### **4.4 Intercultural Communication at Tesco**



**Figure 4.6: Communication Barriers Faced by Employees in Tesco**

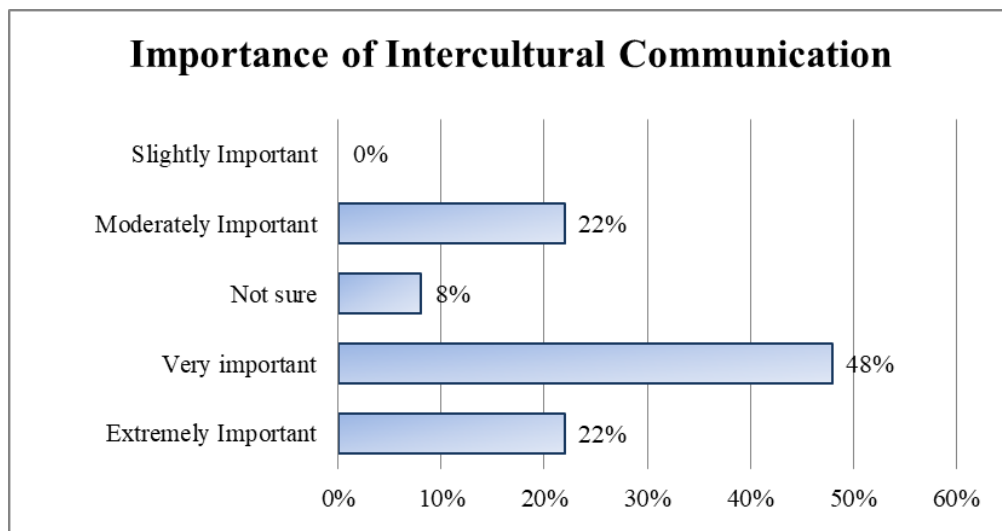
The above diagram reveals that most of the surveyed employees at Tesco have confirmed that they often encounter difficulties in intercultural communication. The data shows that 30% and 16% of the respondents have confirmed that they frequently face barriers or difficulties in managing intercultural communication. On the other hand, 24% of the surveyed employees have confirmed that they rarely face issues in communicating, while 2% confirmed that they have never experienced any issues in managing cross-cultural communication.



**Figure 4.7: Comfort Level in Communicating with Individuals from Different Cultures**

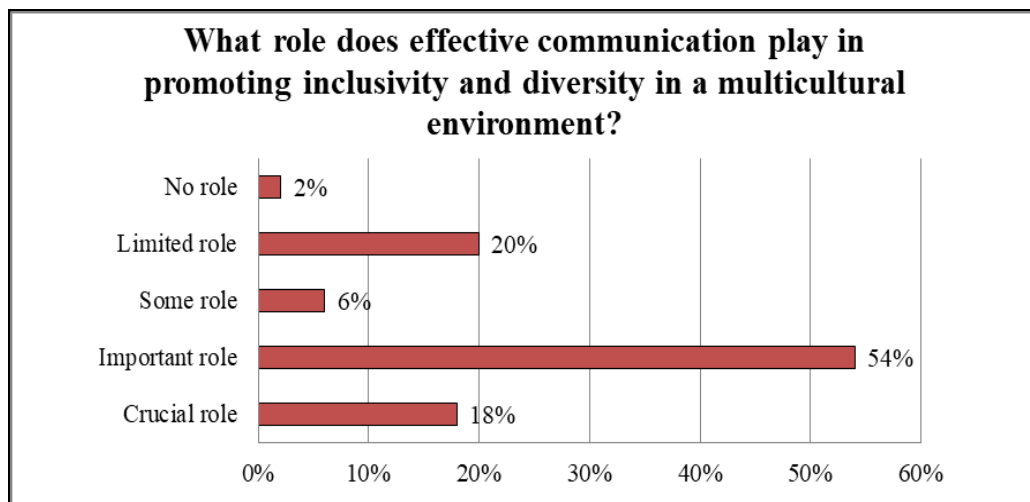
From the above diagram, it can be seen that 22% and 10% of the participants have stated that they feel comfortable communicating with coworkers from different cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, 36% and 20% have stated that they do not feel comfortable communicating with individuals from other cultural backgrounds.

#### 4.5 Importance of Intercultural Communication at Tesco



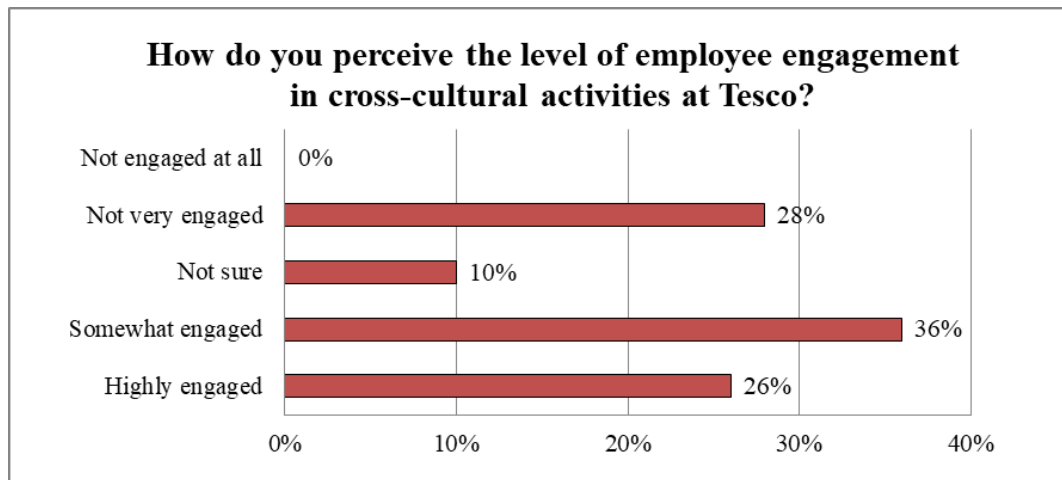
**Figure 4.8: Importance of Cross-cultural Communication**

The above figure shows that the employees of Tesco, who have taken part in this study have also agreed with the fact, that intercultural communication is an important factor behind the organisational success of Tesco. It can also be derived that 22% and 48% of the surveyed employees have confirmed the importance of intercultural communication by selecting options like “extremely important” and “very important”. Another 22% have selected the option “moderately important”. Only 8% of the participants have confirmed that they are not sure about the importance of intercultural communication. However, as the majority of the participants have supported the influence of intercultural communication, it can be considered as an important factor behind organisational success. For instance, by improving the intercultural communication skills of the teams, the company would be able to strengthen the capabilities of the employees to communicate with the individuals despite their cultural background, which might positively influence the brand image.



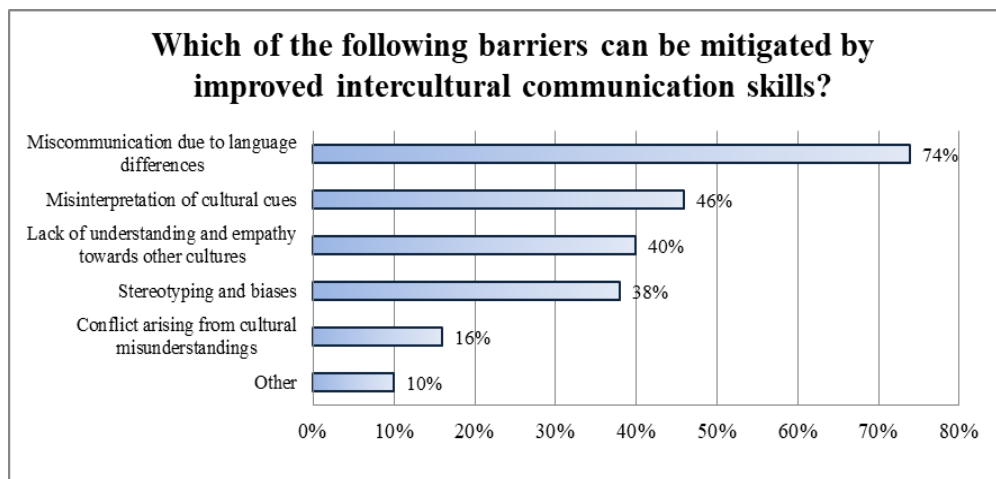
**Figure 4.9: Role of Effective Communication in Promoting Diversity**

Based on the previous discussion, it can be stated that intercultural communication is an effective factor for organisational success in the globalisation era. The cross-cultural skills of the employees enhance their proficiency in dealing with customers or suppliers across different cultural backgrounds. Another important aspect of cross-cultural communication is that it helps in promoting diversity within the workplace. Here, in this survey, 54% and 18% of the employees have confirmed that improvement in intercultural communication processes might help promoting diversity and inclusion within the workplace. However, only 2% and 22% of the participants have rejected the positive influence of communication in promoting diversity. For instance, employees having cross-cultural abilities often become able to develop bonds with other individuals despite their cultural backgrounds. Therefore, intercultural communication management has the potential to enable Tesco employees to easily understand the local languages, non-verbal signs, mores and values to develop strong bonds with the customers.



**Figure 4.10: Importance of Employee Engagement in Cross-cultural Management**

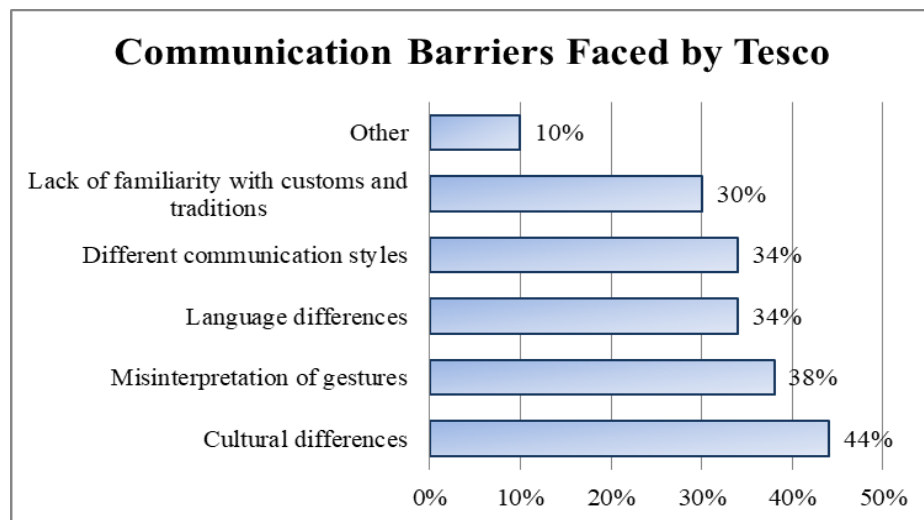
Another important factor of intercultural communication is employee engagement. A higher level of employee engagement increases the chances of improvement in intercultural communication. From the above diagram, it can be seen that only 26% of the participants have claimed that the employees of Tesco are highly engaged, while the majority of the participants have stated that Tesco employees are only somewhat engaged. On the other hand, 28% of the survey respondents have confirmed that the employees are not engaged with the organisational practices. Based on these statistics it can be determined that the employee engagement level among the employees at Tesco is relatively low, which can pose a significant barrier to successful intercultural communication. As Tesco has hired staff from different cultural backgrounds it has increased the diversity within the workplace. However, the lack of effective employee engagement initiatives has confirmed that these employees often hesitate to communicate with other employees due to cultural differences, which further increases the need for improvement in the field of intercultural communication strategies.



**Figure 4.11: Importance of Improving Intercultural Communication**

From the discussion of this paper, it can be easily identified that Tesco often faces different kinds of barriers due to the presence of cultural differences among the employees. The above diagram reveals that a strong intercultural communication management process could be effective in mitigating those barriers caused by cultural differences. It can be identified that 74% of the surveyed have stated that strong intercultural communication could be effective in overcoming misunderstandings or conflicts caused by language differences among the employees. 46% of participants have confirmed that by improving intercultural communication processes, the company would be able to resolve the challenges posed by different cultural values and traditions among the employees. This improves cultural competency level and guides the employees to be respectful towards every culture. Besides these advantages, 40%, 38% and 16% of the participants have highlighted that improving cross-cultural communication can be beneficial for overcoming the lack of understanding and empathy towards other cultures, the presence of stereotyping and misunderstandings among the employees resulting in conflicts.

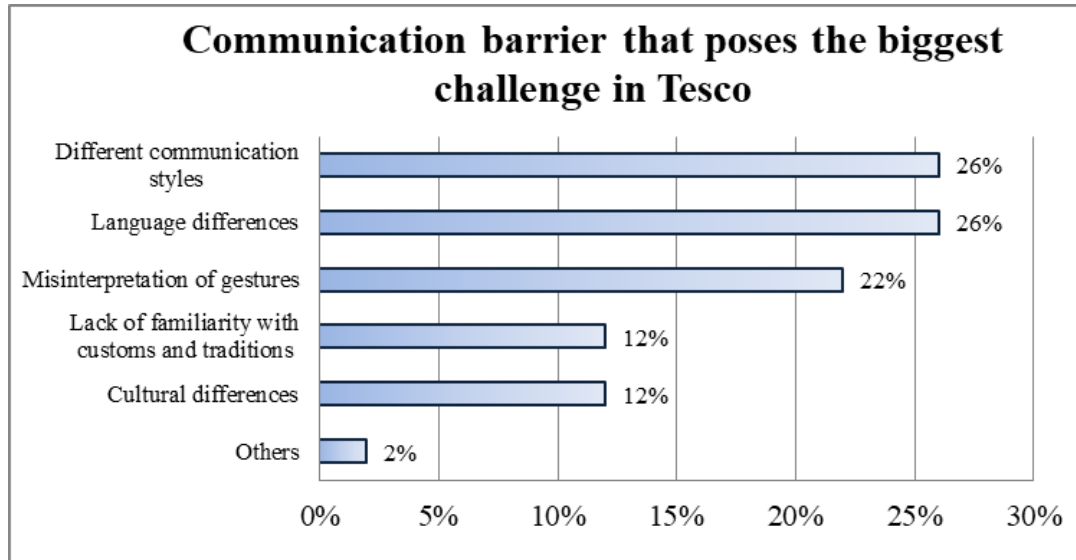
#### 4.6 Intercultural Communication Barriers Faced by Tesco



**Figure 4.12: Communication Barriers Faced by Tesco**

Based on the survey results, it can be determined that the main challenge faced by employees at Tesco in the intercultural communication methods is the rising cultural diversity among the employees, which has been supported by 44% of the participants. Also, 38% of the surveyed have stated that they often face issues in communicating with individuals from other cultural communities due to misinterpretation of gestures. For instance, in response to an open-ended question, one of the participants expressed, “I usually use different gestures and non-verbal communication skills, which often become disrespectful for many customers or suppliers from different cultures.” Specifically, it can be highlighted that different cultures often use different gestures or cultural cues to express their respect towards others, which can sometimes seem disrespectful to those who do not have proper knowledge about the other cultures. For instance, in Asian culture, there is a trend of using different gestures or following non-verbal communication, which might become disrespectful for Western countries prioritising verbal communication to develop deeper bonds. Other than that, 34%, 30% and other 34% of the surveyed employees have expressed that the main barriers they faced while dealing with individuals from different cultures are different communication styles, lack of familiarity with different customers and language differences respectively. For instance, one

of the survey respondents stated “Last week, I felt hesitation in communicating with my new team members due to the preferences of different communication styles,” which further highlights the presence of cross-cultural barriers within Tesco.

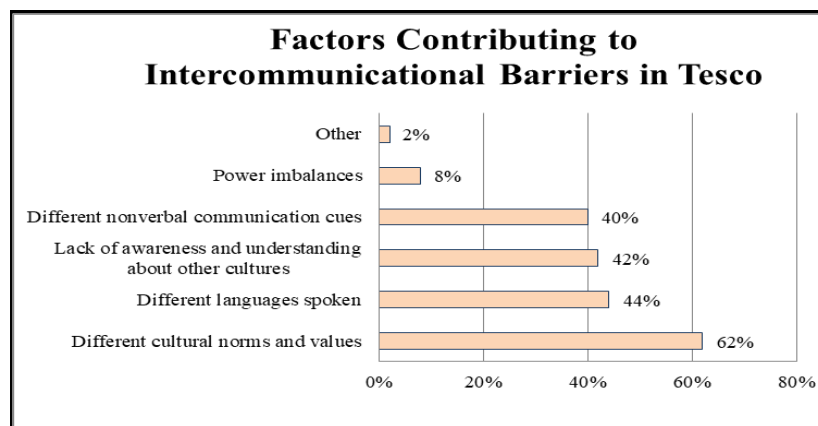


**Figure 4.13: Communication Barrier that Poses the Biggest Challenge**

The above discussion has successfully identified different barriers faced by Tesco due to the presence of cultural differences among the employees and an ineffective intercultural communication strategy. Figure 4.13 is useful to focus on the main intercultural communication barriers that have posed significant challenges for Tesco in managing its overall organisational procedures. From the above data, it can be seen that 22% and 26% of the individuals have selected intercultural communication barriers like misinterpretation of gestures, language differences and the presence of different communication styles respectively. Responding to open-ended questions, one participant stated “At a global company meeting, I struggled to understand a colleague's heavy accent and unfamiliar idioms.” This statement effectively describes the vicious impact of intercultural communication barriers within the organisation. Due to language or cultural differences, employees often hesitate to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds which causes a negative atmosphere among the employees. Similarly, due to these language differences, the employees often fail to address



the different needs of the suppliers or customers leading to a higher dissatisfaction rate and poor brand image in the international market.

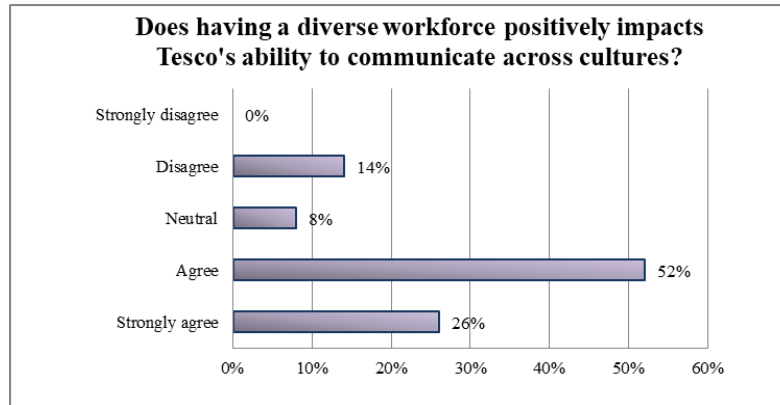


**Figure 4.14: Factors Contributing to Intercultural Communication Barriers**

From the above chart, it is visible that the main cause behind poor communication between employees from different cultural groups is the presence of different cultural norms and values, which have been supported by 62% of the employees. Due to the different cultural values and customs, employees from different cultures often have different perspectives on the organisational procedure, which often leads to conflicts among the employees. Furthermore, 44% and 42% of the employees have stated that different native languages and lack of awareness and understanding about other cultures are the main problems leading to organisational conflicts from ineffective intercultural communication processes. For instance, one participant expressed “I faced issues during communication in the team due to cultural differences.” Thus, it can be stated that in the presence of factors like language or cultural differences, the employees often avoid communicating with each other, which also contributes to the development of conflicts and misunderstandings negatively impacting the overall organisational procedures. Other than that, 40% of employees have stated that different nonverbal communication cues are another factor causing intercultural communication barriers. For instance, due to cultural cues, the employees’ behaviour is often influenced by stereotypes. This can lead employees to refuse to participate in different employee engagement

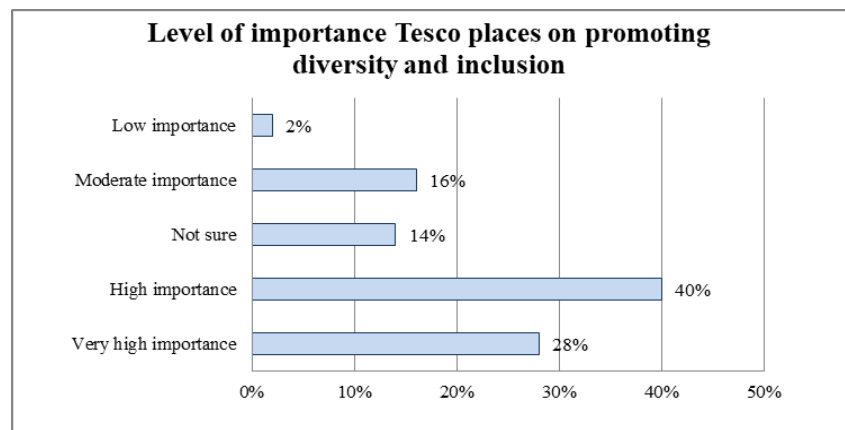
activities offered by the company, which further elevates the cultural differences among the employees.

#### 4.7 Actions Taken by Tesco to Mitigate Those Barriers



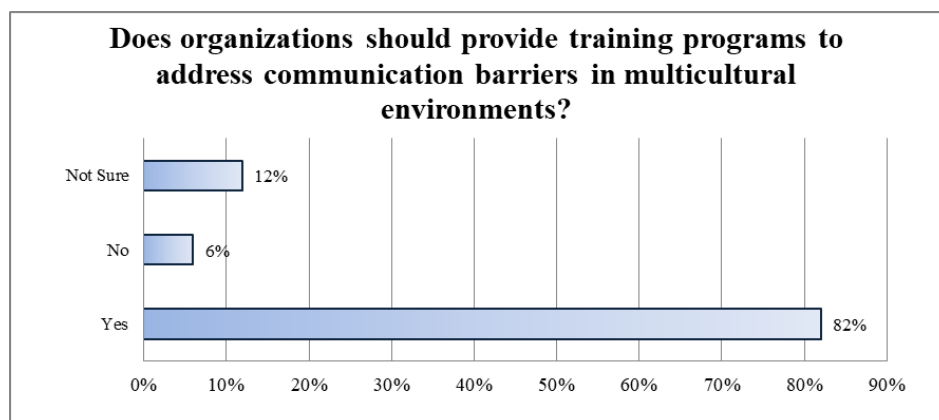
**Figure 4.15: Importance of Diverse Workforce in Promoting Cross-cultural Communication**

Through the above question, it is attempted to identify the importance of establishing a diverse and inclusive working environment in promoting cross-cultural communication among employees. From the above diagram, it can be seen that almost 52% and 26% of the respondents have confirmed that promoting a diverse workplace could be an effective way to boost cross-cultural communication. Through establishing diversity in a workplace employers would be able to promote engagement among employees from different cultural backgrounds. Promoting diversity also entails employees being more respectful to every culture and guides in developing new language learning skills. However, 14% of the respondents have denied the influence of diverse workplace in promoting cross-cultural management and 8% have expressed that they are not sure about this fact.



**Figure 4.16: Level of Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in Tesco**

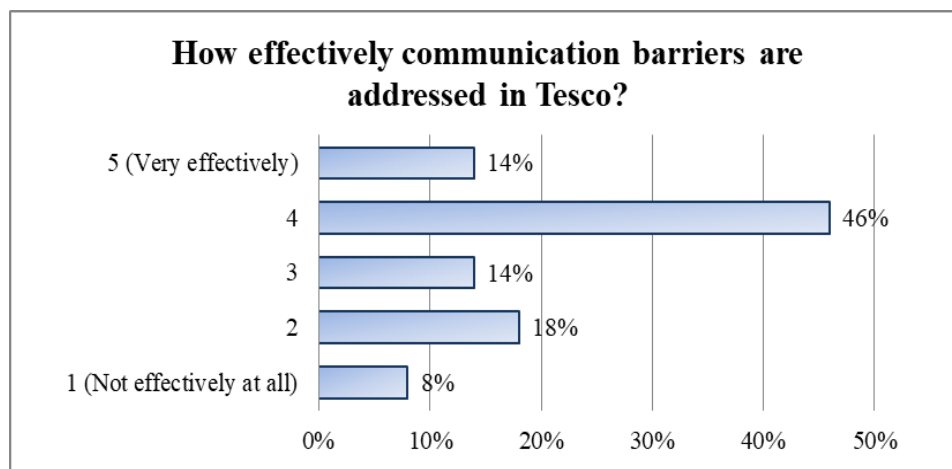
From the above discussion, it can be proven that promoting diversity is effective in promoting cross-cultural communication in Tesco. Furthermore, this question has been framed to investigate how much importance Tesco has put on promoting diversity and inclusion within the workplace. From the above diagram, it can be seen that over 60% of the employees have confirmed that Tesco puts high or very high importance on emphasising diversity and inclusion practices within the workplace.



**Figure 4.17: Importance of Training Programs to Avoid Intercultural Communication**

From the above diagram, it can be depicted that more than 80% of the surveyed employees have agreed that organisations need to arrange different training to improve communication processes in a multicultural environment. For instance, the main two trainings, which could boost the diverse and inclusive environment within Tesco, are cultural competency training and local language learning training. However, only 6% of the participants have

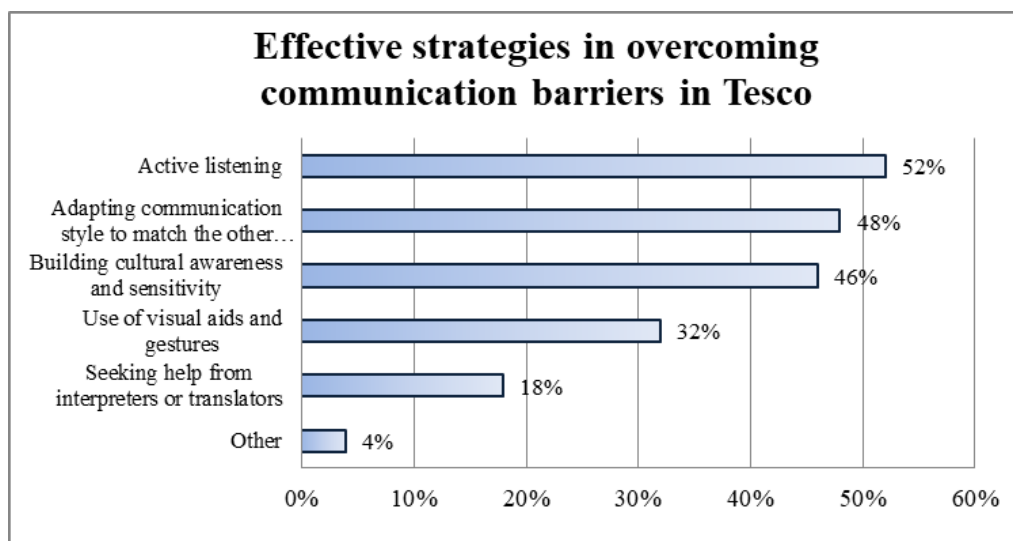
completely ignored the effectiveness of training and development programs in improving multicultural communication.



**Figure 4.18: How Effectively Communication Barriers Are Addressed in Tesco**

The last question has mainly tried to investigate the effectiveness of the strategies or actions taken by Tesco to improve the intercultural communication method. From the above diagram, it is visible that 60% of participants voted in favour of the intercultural communication process of Tesco. However, above 20% of participants have expressed that the cross-cultural communication management strategies implied by Tesco are not effective in addressing the current intercultural barriers faced by the majority of the employees.

#### 4.8 Recommendations to Improve Cross-cultural Communication



**Figure 4.19: Strategies in Overcoming Communication Barriers**

Other than investigating the barriers faced by Tesco in managing intercultural communication management, this survey has successfully listed down different recommendable strategies to overcome those issues. For instance, 52% of the participants have stated that practising active listening could be the most effective way to overcome cross-cultural communication barriers. On the other hand, 48% and 46% of the respondents have highlighted other strategies to overcome intercultural communication, which are: adapting communication styles to match other cultural values and building cultural awareness among the employees respectively. By supporting this statement, the participants have further expressed “To enhance diversity and inclusion at Tesco, I recommend implementing the following strategies: cultural training, diverse leadership, employee resource groups, and feedback mechanisms.” By adopting these strategies, the company would be able to foster a positive workplace environment, which also might be helpful for the company in establishing collaboration among the employees despite the cultural differences. The majority of the employees taking part in this survey agreed with the importance of establishing a diverse and inclusive workplace environment to reduce cross-cultural communication challenges. For instance, one of the participants stated “Deploying people from different countries helps Tesco to bring innovation in diversity and inclusion-related aspects.” By considering these statements and concerns raised by the participants it can be stated that to overcome the cross-cultural communication barriers, development of a diverse and inclusive workplace environment is important. An inclusive workplace environment expresses equal values to every individual, regardless of culture, which also enhances the cultural competency level among the employees resulting in improved cross-cultural team management.

#### 4.9 Inferential Statistics to differentiate between managers and floor employees

	Employees' Position in Tesco	
	Floor employee	Manager
Communication barriers		
Language differences	13	4
Cultural differences	19	0
Different communication styles	16	1
Misinterpretation of gestures	12	5
Lack of familiarity with customs and traditions	12	3
Other	3	2

**Table 4.1 Cross-tabulation Analysis between Employee's Position and Communication Barriers**

From the cross-tabulation analysis between the employees' positions and communication barriers faced by Tesco, it can be seen that all the employees as well as managers have confirmed the same types of intercultural barriers at Tesco. The above data shows that both: the managers and employees have confirmed that the main barriers present at Tesco in managing cross-cultural communication are different communication styles, language differences, misinterpretation of gestures and lack of familiarity with customs and traditions respectively. Similarly, 3 floor staff and 2 managers have chosen the option "other" to specify the other challenges that they have encountered during their employment at Tesco. The surprising fact that can be witnessed from the above cross-tabulation analysis is that 19 floor employees of Tesco have confirmed that cultural differences are one of the main barriers faced by Tesco in managing cross-cultural communication. Due to cultural differences, employees often hesitate to communicate with each other. However, no managers have selected cultural differences as a barrier to intercultural communication.

	Employees' Position in Tesco	
The success of Tesco in Addressing Communication Barriers	Floor employee	Manager
1 (Not effectively at all)	4	0
2	9	0
3	7	0
4	12	11
5 (Very effectively)	3	4

**Table 4.2 Cross-tabulation Analysis between Employee's Position and Success of Tesco in Addressing Communication Barriers**

Here, another cross-tabulation analysis has been presented to distinguish between employees' and managers' perspectives on the intercultural communication management process at Tesco. The above analysis reveals that among the 35 employees, only 15 employees have agreed that the initiatives taken by Tesco are effective in addressing communicational barriers. On the other hand, 13 employees have stated that the strategies taken by Tesco are not effective, while 7 employees have confirmed that they are not sure about the effectiveness of those strategies. However, all 15 managers have confirmed that all the strategies taken by Tesco are effective in promoting effective cross-cultural communication. Thus, from these statistics, it can be revealed that there is a strong perception difference between managers and employees regarding the cross-cultural management process at Tesco. The main reason behind this perception divergence could lie in the positional differences. Managers are mainly responsible for guiding the employees to perform within a team and for improving the cross-cultural management process within a team. Other than that, managers have more professional experience which also improves their communication skills and their overall performance.

Thus, as they have more experience and improved communicational skills, managers often face fewer issues during intercultural communication.

#### **4.10 Key Findings of the Research**

Tesco's cultural awareness initiatives are centred on fostering cultural diversity, eradicating barriers between cultures, and minimising miscommunications. One of the main strategic focuses are Tesco's efforts to encourage cross-cultural communication is language skill development. Tesco's main language of business is English. Consequently, stakeholders, less proficient in English could find it challenging (Presbitero 2021). Here, the main results show that only 10% of the surveyed said they feel extremely comfortable engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds, while 22% said they are comfortable. 12% of participants, nevertheless, are undecided on the issue. 26% are deemed to be somewhat uncomfortable, while 12% are uncomfortable. It suggests that around 50% of Tesco employees find it rather uncomfortable to communicate across cultural boundaries. These results bring us to Imakwuchu and Billy (2018) who have claimed that multinational corporations like Tesco should fund language training courses, sophisticated communication tools, and cross-cultural communication initiatives to enhance staff members' cross-cultural communication abilities.

Cultural variations can have an impact on organisation's performance level as well as the productivity and happiness of its personnel (Sabuhari et al. 2020). For example, low context refers to communication systems that are more plain and straightforward, whereas high context refers to communication systems that involve many indirect exchanges, such as gestures or even silent communications. Because of these disparities, there could be miscommunication or misinterpretations in the multicultural setting. Language barriers, misinterpreting gestures, unfamiliarity with local clients, and cultural variations among personnel are the additional concerns brought to light by this survey. Aririguzoh (2022) has brought up the challenge of linguistic hurdles in companies' global operations. English is the primary language used in



business communications; hence individuals from non-English speaking backgrounds often struggle with language obstacles that prevent them from communicating with one another. This is particularly noticeable in places where the majority of people don't speak English well, which causes them to misunderstand managers' directives, criticism, and working policies.

The paper's main conclusions have shown that to overcome obstacles to cross-cultural communication, stakeholders must employ active listening. On the other hand, ÓhÉigearthaigh et al. (2020) have claimed that those whose first language is not English must get language training programs as it lessens the obstacles to communication among co-workers. However, nearly 48% and 46% of the respondents, respectively, have mentioned additional methods to overcome intercultural communication, such as modifying communication techniques to align with the values of other cultures and raising employee understanding of other cultures. Similar to these findings, Mlambo, Silén, and McGrath (2021) have mentioned that an emphasis on a varied selection process ensures that Tesco's workforce is diversified enough to serve global markets. Being culturally varied and making sure that no specific cultural marginalisation is favoured in the advancement of career prospects and advancement are two examples of this.

#### **4.11 Chapter Summary**

Based on the overall analysis of the quantitative data collected through the survey it can be stated that the majority of the employees in Tesco often faced several difficulties while communicating with the customers or employees from different cultural backgrounds. The main barriers faced by Tesco in managing cross-cultural communication are lack of familiarity with local cultures and customs, different communication styles, misinterpretation of gestures, language differences and cultural differences respectively. Other than that, the analysis also shows that different cultural values, language differences and different non-verbal communication cues are the main factors leading to barriers in intercultural communication. Moreover, the participants have expressed that active listening or the use of visual aids are the main strategies that can be implemented to resolve intercultural communication issues.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the findings related to Tesco's intercultural communication practices. It identifies positive and negative trends, highlights connections with the findings from the literature and reflects on the objectives investigated in the study. Moreover, it discovers and explains emerging and emergent phenomena about the company and identifies their consequences for Tesco's business.

### **5.2 Discussion with Literature Review**

#### **5.2.1 Cross-Cultural Communication and Team Management at Tesco**

Being a multinational corporation, Tesco must adopt effective cross-cultural communication practices to deal with its employees across different cultural settings. There are several key practices that the company adopts in the management of cross-cultural teams. Cultural awareness is the first step taken by the company. Diversity training is an integral part of Tesco's operations. This training is necessary to create awareness among the employees of various cultural norms, beliefs, and practices at the workplace for respectful and efficient communication with co-workers (Tesco 2024). Cultural awareness at Tesco focuses on the promotion of cultural differences, the disappearance of cultural barriers, and the reduction of misunderstandings. Tesco promotes language training to increase the employees' language competence, which helps to mitigate language barriers among them. This approach is highly important in understanding team members' ideas and expressing thoughts adequately. It helps to increase team cohesiveness and output too.

Another key area addressed by Tesco's management, as part of its cross-cultural team management strategy, is the use of digital tools. As Tesco operates in different countries, its employees are likely to be in different time zones and geographical locations. Therefore, tools such as video conferencing tools, project management tools, and instantaneous messaging apps

are vital. These tools also help to facilitate communication, cooperation, and real-time information exchange (Presbitero 2021). In addition, Tesco prioritises leadership commitment to cultural issues while enabling cross-cultural communication. Organisation's leaders and managers are supposed to act according to the values and principles of diversity, communicate actively, and respect cultural differences (The Economic Times 2023). This top-down commitment strengthens cross-cultural communication and increases cross-cultural interactions. Based on data from the findings only 10% of the participants reported that they are very comfortable interacting with people from other cultural backgrounds, while 22% reported that they are comfortable. However, 12% of the participants have no opinion on the matter. Another 26% are moderately uncomfortable, while 12% are extremely uncomfortable. It indicates that some Tesco employees experience discomfort in some degree of cross-cultural communication.

### **5.2.2 Barriers to Intercultural Communication within Tesco**

There are different challenges that Tesco has to overcome in this aspect. Cultural differences can affect the performance level of the organisation and impact the employees' productivity and satisfaction (Sabuhari et al. 2020). For instance, high context refers to communication systems that involve many indirect interactions that may include gestures or even silent messages, while low context refers to more straightforward communication systems, involving direct messages. These differences might cause misunderstandings or misinterpretations due to the mistaken response in the multicultural environment (Aririguzoh 2022).

Lack of cultural sensitivity also increases the communication problem within Tesco. Lack of knowledge and appreciation of the diverse rules and ethics in various societies may lead to the creation of a feeling of being excluded by fellow employees (Rosnizam et al. 2020). It occurs in inappropriate jokes, remarks on cultural differences, or a complete

misunderstanding of cultural customs and traditions. This is because such incidents threaten the cohesiveness of teams and negatively influence the formation of the inclusive culture needed within organisations. Additionally, prejudice and stereotypes have a substantial influence on intercultural communication in Tesco. Sometimes people have preconceived notions they hold about particular ethnic groups and this tends to result in prejudice, prejudiced judgment, and restricted cooperation.

Furthermore, geographical distributions and time zones affect communication patterns in Tesco's vast operations around the world (Li and Longpradit 2022). The need to collaborate for meetings and projects that operate on different time schedules makes it difficult to work around the clock. Therefore such difficulties hinder the cohesiveness of a team (Shirazi et al. 2020). Overcoming these barriers needs to entail the adoption of flexible organisational schedules which would allow all members of the project team, including those irrespective of their location, to remain active and knowledgeable. The primary findings demonstrate that Tesco faced various issues concerning communication such as culture, gestural clues, language, communication manners, and others. These factors can all be referred to as barriers to interdepartmental communication within the company.

### **5.2.3 The Need for Intercultural Communication in Enhancing International Business Practices**

In the context of today's multinational and globalized business environment, the understanding of intercultural communication is one of the critical components of successful cross-cultural business. For Tesco, which has its operations across geographic borders, clear intercultural communication is of paramount importance. Additionally, globalisation helps the company deal with multicultural environments and learn the local consumer practices to personalize the marketing techniques (Lin et al. 2020). Therefore, by understanding cultural variations and having an appreciation for such differences, Tesco can design individualised

products in the market and satisfy specific needs. In this way, it promotes customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Another essential factor in intercultural communication is to ensure that companies create unity within the working environment; therefore, when there are several employees in an organisation, including some people from distinct ethnicities, it is essential to establish an effective communication channel to prevent misunderstanding (Shahid 2022). Cultural competency in leaders is effective in performing cultural sensitivity, handling culturally-related issues that are likely to occur within the groups, and eliciting and managing the performance of employees from different backgrounds (Ilie 2019). Findings highlight that the majority of survey respondents think that Tesco offers training to minimize communication issues, while others are not sure or completely disagree. Such observations depict Tesco's efforts to embrace the main ideas of diversity, specifically, its efforts to address the issues of diversity and communication barriers in the company.

#### **5.2.4 Strategies for Enhancing Intercultural Communication and Promoting Diversity and Inclusion**

The implementation of extensive cultural sensitivity training for workers at different organisational levels allows the comprehension of cultural differences of their colleagues with multicultural backgrounds and increases respect for other cultures (Santos 2024). Thus, employees can avoid misunderstandings that may arise due to the different cultural backgrounds of the employees at Tesco. Additionally, it is necessary to provide language training programmes to those individuals whose first language is not English. It helps to mitigate the communication barriers among employees. These programmes improve communication between the staff and help endorse customer relations among other employees since they allow the local employees to communicate fluently (Setti et al. 2022).

Moreover, a focus on diverse selection during the hiring process guarantees that the staff of Tesco is diverse enough to cater to markets across the world. Diverse employees bring new ideas to the table and this indirectly leads to improved decision-making in the organisation. This, in turn, makes Tesco recruit diverse employees. The creation of Employee Resource Groups for diverse cultural and identity backgrounds allows employees to connect, voice their concerns and express their needs (Tesco Plc 2024). These groups can also provide suggestions to Tesco's senior management that will assist the organisation in making better policies that accommodate minorities in the workplace.

### **5.3 Practical Implications**

The practical implications significantly emphasize that Tesco needs to strengthen its intercultural communication strategies to overcome current obstacles and perform best practices. By the literature review, the study supports the proposition that cultural awareness training and the practical utilisation of digital technologies are crucial for improving organisational team collaboration and customer satisfaction. Consequently, these findings enrich the current knowledge by elucidating the need to develop and implement clearer context solutions to address cross-cultural challenges and promote the existence of a diverse global employee force.

This paper has further contributed to discussing the causes and strategies related to intercultural communication management by using the case study of Tesco. Here, the main difference between this research and the existing literature is that the majority of the past papers have discussed intercultural communication barriers hypothetically and there is no mention of practical examples. Thus, by using the case study of Tesco, this research has successfully incorporated practical or real-life data to identify the most effective causes leading to cross-cultural communication.

The study is relevant as it expands the previous research further and requires providing specific interventions for different regions to enhance intercultural communication in multinational organisations. Other than Tesco, this study is significantly important for other multicultural organisations. As stated by Meng (2024), most of international organisations encounter different intercultural communication issues due to the increasing diversity among the employees. Thus, this paper could act as a guide for multinational companies to overcome intercultural communication issues. Moreover, this paper would also be significant in the academic sector to guide future researchers in developing knowledge about the different barriers and factors related to the intercultural communication management process.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

Owing to a few low areas, the research development of this study also included significant constraints. It is said that the inadequacies in trustworthy data cause the restriction of the amount of sources they cross-check. This study's limited emphasis on primary quantitative data and lack of sufficient consideration for secondary data somewhat limit the investigation of all available data on intercultural communication. Moreover, the data was collected by surveying only 50 employees of Tesco. Considering primary data collection among 50 employees is comparatively low to gather effective reliable data. Moreover, this study does not have statistical measurement techniques that could further create reliability issues for this study.



## **5.5 Chapter Summary**

The study establishes that even though Tesco has embraced intercultural communication with sizable improvements, there are still some areas that present significant communication issues concerning language and culture. It can be seen that these results support the current theories studied but there is a difference in the regional aspects. The study helps to address the issues of communication and social integration. Thus, the research provides important findings in this field.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Overall Conclusion**

In this research, emphasis has been given to identifying and critically evaluating the key barriers to intercultural communication within Tesco's operation. Findings further highlighted that with the rapid expansion of the market operation, businesses witnessed a remarkable tapestry of diverse cultures in their workforce along with unique values and perspectives. Engagement of employees from different cultural backgrounds thus leads intercultural communication to become a vital consideration to foster inclusivity within the organisational context. Intercultural communication is all about how people from different cultural backgrounds communicate with one another. As cultural background has a direct impact on the individual's language, patterns of behaviour, attitudes and other non-verbal communication tendencies, taking into consideration successful intercultural communication within the workplace is crucial. In the context of international organisations, potential intercultural communication is firmly responsible for fostering a positive work environment through bridging cultural gaps.

On the other hand, a true embracement and appreciation of diversity at the organisational level helps to foster unique ideas, innovation, better decision making and the development of intercultural competency. Different communication strategies have also been implemented by Tesco to make their workforce more culturally sensitive as well as to enhance collaboration. Tesco further invested in several language proficiency training sessions to extend organisational support to employees in improving their language and communication skills. Market data also highlighted that cultural liaisons encourage inclusivity at the workplace and profoundly help to promote intercultural communication.

Primary findings indicate that one of the key barriers to intercultural communication is the presence of cultural diversity and differences which are responsible for different

communicational styles and norms. Tesco failed to navigate those differences and due to this, it witnessed barriers to intercultural communication. Findings also put affront to the fact that a lack of cultural sensitivity and awareness hinders effective communication within diverse teams. Apart from that, Primary quantitative data indicate the presence of language differences in Tesco which disrupted the common way of communication and narrowed down the success of strategies implication. Due to different work ethics, Tesco also exhibited a difference in their decision-making process considering the area of management and hierarchical practices while upholding their market standards. The presence of individual bias also makes the process of intercultural communication more complex. Survey participants also agreed upon the fact that the provision of cultural training at the organisational level can, in that context, help the firm to accelerate the success of international operations.

The main surprising finding of this research is how cultural sensitivity or superstitions affect communication between employees. To enhance the organisation's expansion into new markets, managers and employees of multinational corporations must display cultural sensitivity by respecting and comprehending the varied cultural practices, norms, and values. Therefore, to effectively navigate variation in cultural nuances, organisations need to strengthen their cultural awareness programs and training for their managers and cross-cultural teams. Another surprising finding claimed by this research is the positive influence of digital communication platforms in mitigating communicational barriers. This dissertation reveals that the technologies utilised for cross-cultural communication, including instant messaging apps, project management software, conference platforms, and immediate collaboration tools improve team cooperation.

## 6.2 Answers to Research Questions

The present study focuses on accessing the key barriers to intercultural communication with a special reference to Tesco. One of the key questions for this research includes ways through which Tesco can implement different communication strategies to manage their cross-cultural teams. Based on the primary findings it can be said that the company can foster an open communication mode to keep its employees engaged and motivated towards accepting diverse communication. Moreover, the use of such a communication strategy can lead the firm to offer more flexibility to its organisational culture and practices. The second question of this study mainly includes key barriers that Tesco faces in managing its diverse teams and fostering successful intercultural communication.

As per the primary findings, one of the key challenges that the company faces while communicating with diverse teams is the presence of different cultural values and beliefs. The presence of language differences also contributed to making it more complex for the firm to address the barriers effectively. Furthermore, the lack of cultural awareness puts concern for Tesco to make their intercultural communication successful. The third question of the study denoted the key reasons behind improving intercultural communication at Tesco. Findings asserted that intercultural communication is essential to making unique decisions, improving problem-solving and fostering organisational innovation. As today's market has become more competitive, engagement of a diverse workforce and fostering of intercultural communication is essential for the firm to grab the benefit of an organisational innovation. In addition, the fourth question of the present research indicates strategies to be implemented by Tesco to boost its intercultural communication and establish workplace diversity.

Thus, the research has been successful in answering all research questions which has enriched the work further.

### **6.3 Research Limitations and Areas for Future Research**

While developing this study, key limitations were encountered due to the presence of some low areas. The shortcomings in the reliable data limited the cross-checking of all sources. The narrowed focus of this study on primary quantitative data and not considering the secondary data to some extent limited the exploration of all available data regarding intercultural communication. Other than that, an online questionnaire was used as a survey tool to collect data from the primary sources. However, gathering data using close-ended questions limits the flexibility of the respondents to share their perspectives about the research attribute. To overcome the barriers, an interview among the managers from Tesco also could be arranged in addition to a survey. Conducting a semi-structured telephonic interview with the managers would enable gathering more insights on the cross-cultural management process at Tesco.

### **6.4 Recommendations**

Based on the above discussion, some key recommendations, which can be considered by Tesco to overcome the identified barriers to intercultural communication, are developed as follows:

- One of the key strategies that the management of Tesco can consider to make their intercultural communication more efficient is the effective promotion and embracement of cultural diversity and differences within its culture (Ye, 2024). In that context, the incorporation of different modern technologies can help the management to identify their employee's readiness and source of lack of encouragement effectively. This can help the firm to implement strategy and make informed decisions so that can maximise its employee's acceptance level and foster successful intercultural communication. Setting a role model or case example can help to improve employee engagement in that context effectively (Devjak et al. 2023). To promote an openness towards intercultural

communication, Tesco can also consider creating a culture of open communication which makes employees feel comfortable and improves the acceptance rate.

- It is also recommended to the management personnel of Tesco to place importance on offering adequate training to improve cultural awareness. The company can implement a cultural awareness training program to keep their employees updated and educate them regarding different customs, values and communication styles which can help to build empathy and reduce existing stereotypes (Adanlawo et al. 2021). In this way, leaders have a key role to play as they are mainly responsible for strategy implication, communication, and others. Tesco can also leverage a transformational leadership approach to keep its employees motivated towards successfully embracing intercultural communication. Incorporation of different automatic systems can ease employee training as well.
- Businesses mostly face difficulties in fostering intercultural communication successfully due to the presence of a clear distinct communication gap led by different languages, thereafter the provision of language support resources can prove beneficial for the company (Dubinko et al. 2021). It can also be added that the provision of language support is effective to ensure that the important information is accurately understood and conveyed. In this context, encouragement towards open communication can help to understand the goals and purposes of such initiatives. The practice of language support in diverse team development would help to set an example for employees and enhance creativity, communication and the generation of new ideas and approaches. Therefore it is effective in navigating the ever-changing landscape of intercultural communication.
- In light of better addressing the barriers to intercultural communication, Tesco can also consider the design and implementation of different communication policies to set

norms. Framing an ethical code of conduct can also help the firm to set employee mindset, expected behaviours and maintenance of integrity at the workplace. The culture of adaptability and flexibility can also lead the firm to ensure the successful implementation of organisational policies and develop intercultural sensitivity. Establishing behavioural expectations through policy implication can positively result in accelerated successful outcomes (Browne et al. 2019).

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