

Exploration of Indonesia's Character Communication Approach: The Lewis Culture Model

Nisa Addina Haqi

Corresponding Author: Andika Putra Pratama
Master of Business Administration, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: The rich cultural tapestry of Indonesia is a source of pride and strength, but it can also be a significant obstacle for firms looking to establish themselves in this fast-paced market. Indonesia, an archipelago of thousands of islands, is home to a diverse range of ethnic groups. According to the Indonesian Badan Pusat Statistik (2022), the country has around 1.300 ethnic groups distributed across the country. Everyone speaks a distinct language, believes in different cultural values and conventions, and uses different techniques to act and react in a scenario. As a result, expanding businesses in Indonesia must pay particular attention to cultural hurdles and how to adapt to such a diverse environment in order to effectively penetrate the home market. The sheer diversity is astounding, and organizations must embrace it in order to flourish in this complex climate. Despite being one country, Indonesia's diversity still has significant cultural boundaries that impede daily and professional interaction, leading to miscommunications/misconceptions. This article discussed the intercultural communication in the diverse cultural groups of Indonesia and identified the updated characteristic of Indonesian communication approach using the spectrum of Lewis Model. The outcome is expected to enhance the quality of Business Communication in Indonesian market.

KEY WORD: Indonesia, Intercultural, Communication, Business

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I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Intercultural competence is defined as the ability to communicate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and it consists of three components: cultural awareness (including a comprehensive understanding of one's own culture and attitudes toward other cultures); cultural knowledge awareness; and developing intercultural interaction skills and the ability to use them effectively in intercultural situations (Jiaquan, 2009).

Culture is defined as a group's communication pattern, problem-solving methods, and how a group sees and transmits its common values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, including its sense of self, group, environment, authority, and power (Tuleja, Elizabeth A, 2022).

In her work, she refers to four factors as "The Building Blocks of Culture," which are the underlying cultural structures that can cause variance

a. Values

These are psychological assessments of the things, concepts, and ideas that are most important to us. They are obtained from trusted sources at a young age, before rational thought begins to play a role in what is understood and considered to be true. The world is a certain way for a person due of what their parents, teachers, coaches, and religious authorities have taught them. Most of the time, the recipients are unable to contest such views and must simply accept them as the norms, the standard of how things should be done. Such ideals undergo alteration and/or shifts throughout time as a result of media and globalisation.

b. Beliefs

While values are portrayed as the block's foundation, belief is how an individual sees the truth, as a tool for self-evident. As a result, believers might anticipate various types of feedback. Even if each group has a different style of thinking/backstory, beliefs consist of what is right or bad; truthful or false.

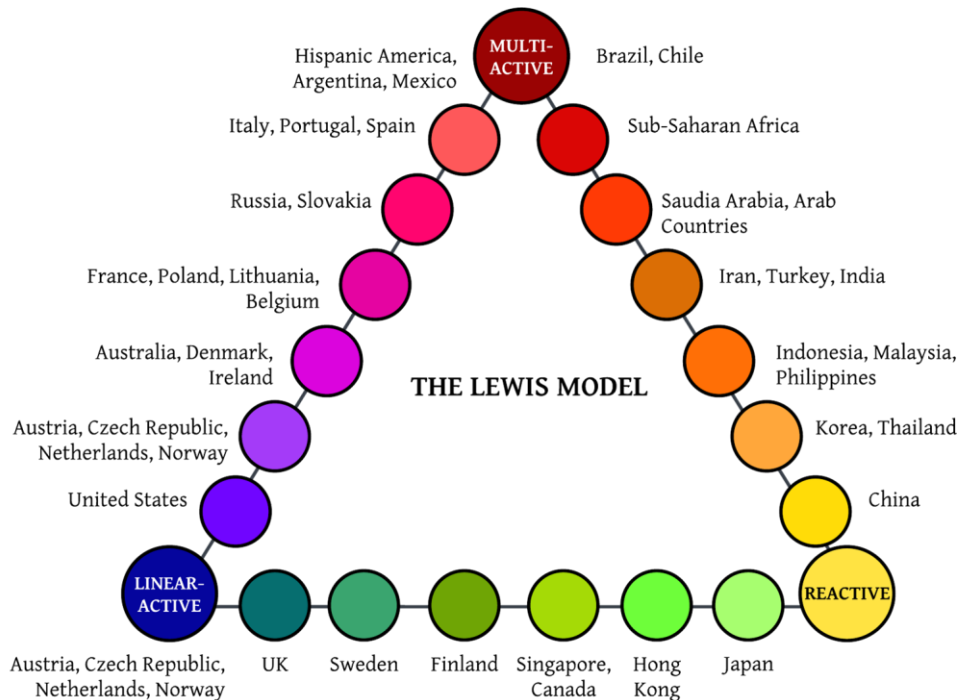
c. Attitudes

The author claims that attitudes and beliefs are in sync. It is a navigation phrase that means direction or position. As a result, an attitude gives context and guidance for our beliefs and serves as a road map for our long-term perspectives on general thinking and life. If one of your basic ideas is that living a healthy lifestyle is important, you might believe that smoking cigarettes is harmful. For example, the mindset that arises from holding that viewpoint would counsel the culture to not only refrain from smoking but also to encourage others to do so.

d. Behaviors

Behaviors are produced once all the structures are established. It is easier to see and notice directly. Behaviors can be connected to expression, body language, tone, and language utilized in communicational elements.

Figure 1: Adapted Illustration of The Lewis Model from *Business Insider*



Being aware of the counterparts' distinct cultural standards displays respect—that you have spent time knowing their practices in order to develop lasting connections with them (Tuleja, Elizabeth A, 2022). According to Kutz (2012), business managers in the United States that implement cross-cultural communication techniques stand to gain a great deal from improved employee performance as well as a boost to their company's bottom line.

The Lewis Model, developed by Richard D. Lewis, provides a valuable framework for understanding and navigating intercultural encounters. The research provides comprehensive study from the communication approach to what each type of the model demand to generate a favorable interaction. The Lewis Model has generated the following tripartite comparison by country using data from 50,000 executives enrolled in residential courses and over 150,000 online questions completed by 68 different nationalities. The purpose of the Lewis Model is to suggest which specific cultural group a person would identify with. Lewis designated Reactive, Multi-active, and Linear-active as his three typologies.

1. **Linear-active** is task-oriented and extremely organized planner, finish action chains by completing one task at a time, ideally following a linear agenda.
2. **Multi-active** individuals are emotional, talkative, and impulsive, place a high value on relationships, family, and people in general. They are not good at sticking to schedules and like to multitask.
3. **Reactive** people listen well and never start conversations or actions. Instead, they would rather hear out and understand the other person's viewpoint before responding and forming their own.

Based on the results of the questionnaires, Lewis concludes that in general, the illustration above shows the coordinates of each culture in his designed typologies spectrum. For further detail of the spectrum explanation and the characteristic, Richard Lewis pointed several highlights of his theory. The model can assist people in changing their communication style by offering helpful advice on how to interact with other ethnic groups in an efficient manner. For instance, when speaking with a linear-active culture, one should be succinct, accurate, and factual; conversing with a multi-active culture, on the other hand, calls for friendliness, enthusiasm, and empathy.

Table 1: The Schematic Overview of The Spectrum Characteristics

LINEAR ACTIVE	MULTI-ACTIVE	REACTIVE
Talks half the time	Talks most of the time	Listens most of the time
Does one thing at a time	Does several things at once	Reacts to partner's action
Plans ahead step by step	Plans grand outline only	Looks at general principles
Polite but direct	Emotional	Polite, indirect
Partly conceals feelings	Displays feelings	Conceals feelings
Confronts with logic	Confront emotionally	Never confront
Dislikes losing face	Has good excuses	Must not lose face
Rarely interrupt	Often interrupt	Doesn't interrupt
Job-oriented	People-oriented	Very people-oriented
Sticks to facts	Feelings before facts	Statements are promises
Truth before diplomacy	Flexible truth	Diplomacy over truth
Sometimes impatient	Impatient	Patient
Limited body language	Unlimited body language	Subtle body language
Respects officialdom	Seeks out key person	Uses connection
Separates the social and professional	Mixes the social and professional	Connects the social and professional

The urgency of analyzing and observing the Indonesian cultural communication approach using the Lewis Model stems from several critical factors. As mentioned above, Indonesia's cultural landscape is incredibly diverse, encompassing various ethnicities, languages, and traditions. The Lewis Model provides a structured framework to understand these cultural differences, addressing the nuances of communication styles across the archipelago.

The Lewis model can be applied in business communication in the following ways:

1. Recognizing different communication styles: By using the Lewis model, people can better understand how their own communication style differs from others' and adjust it to better communicate with various ethnic groups.
1. Resolving communication conflicts: Individuals can utilize the Lewis model to handle communication disputes in the workplace, improving relationships and reducing misunderstandings by acknowledging the communication preferences of various ethnic groups.
2. Training and development: The Lewis model can be applied to cross-cultural communication training programs to assist people become more proficient communicators and better equipped to handle a variety of work-related scenarios.
3. Assessing cultural differences: The model can be used in surveys to examine cultural variations and how they affect corporate culture, offering insights into the ways in which distinct ethnic groups might affect different facets of company.
4. Benchmarking and comparison: Firms can benchmark and compare their corporate culture with that of other firms by using the Lewis model, which makes it possible to compare national cultures and social behaviors in a variety of departments, companies, and nations.

As Indonesia continues to play a pivotal role in the global economy, businesses and organizations engage in cross-cultural collaborations, making it essential to comprehend the Indonesian cultural

communication approach for successful partnerships, negotiations, and operations within the country. With the prevalence of cross-cultural teams in today's interconnected world, understanding Indonesian communication styles is crucial for promoting effective team dynamics and reducing potential conflicts.

Furthermore, given that Indonesia is a diplomatic body that interacts with many other nations, diplomats must have a sophisticated grasp of Indonesian communication in order to forge fruitful alliances and successfully negotiate agreements. Applying the Lewis Model ensures cultural awareness in varied interactions, which benefits Indonesia's educational system, tourism industry, and hospitality sector and promotes unique travel experiences. Last but not least, the model may be used to spot possible communication problems and offers advice on how to clear up cultural misconceptions brought on by disparate norms and expectations. In conclusion, the Lewis Model's ability to close cultural gaps, promote understanding, and enable fruitful interactions across a variety of disciplines in Indonesia's complex cultural tapestry underscores the significance of using it.

1.2 Research Objectives

The research objective of the paper is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Indonesian cultural communication approach using the Lewis Model. The study aims to explore the cultural diversity within Indonesia, examining various ethnicities, languages, and traditions to understand how they influence communication styles.

1.3 Research Methodology and Data Analysis

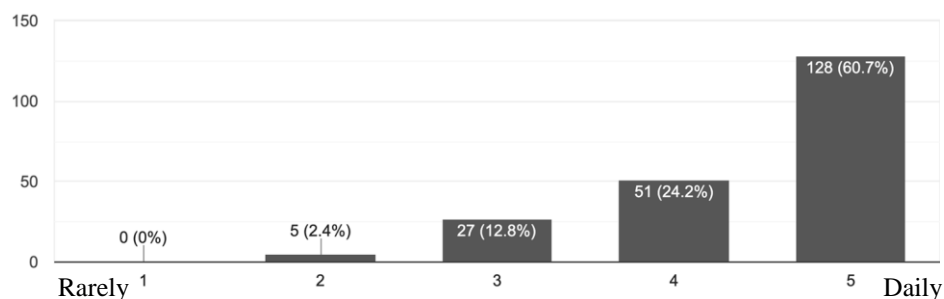
In order to monitor cultural behavior and the spectrum, information is gathered via an online survey that asks participants to reflect on their own behavior during a debate.

In order to guarantee that they cover pertinent study issues and get the required data, the survey questions and questionnaire were meticulously crafted. In order to obtain candid insights into participants' viewpoints, attitudes, habits, and qualities in a more transparent manner, the online form was anonymous.

Following the sorting of the data, the researcher examined it using The Lewis Model and its beliefs about communication inclinations and approaches. This led to the development of exploratory data analysis (EDA), which is a visual method for identifying outliers, clusters, and patterns in data. As per Richard Lewis' observation, the author employed a modified Lewis model framework along with scattered plots to visualise data and determine the overall pattern of the spectrum. Additionally, the author examined the current coordinate of Indonesia in the diagram. 211 respondents from throughout Indonesia completed the online survey, and the results were analyzed using this methodology.

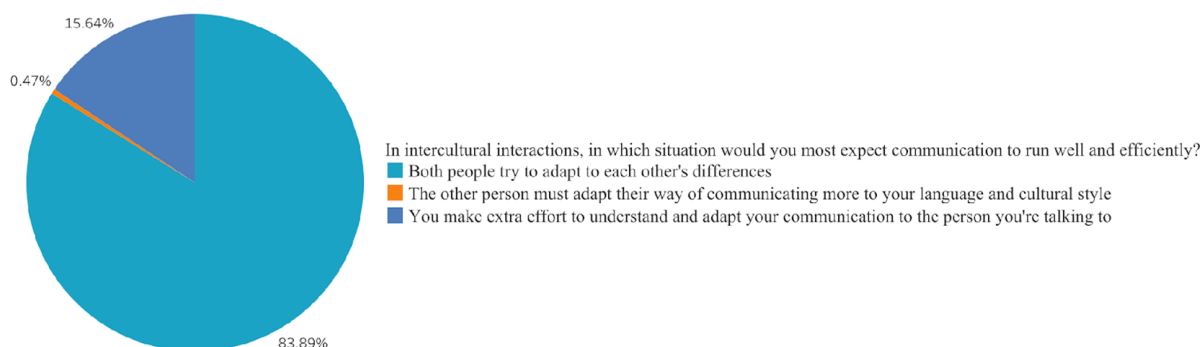
1.3.1 Data Analysis to Identify the Indonesia Communication Approach

Figure 2: The Rate of How Frequent The Respondent Involved in Intercultural Communication



The above-mentioned image shows the frequency of interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, ranging from 1 (very never) to 5 (often). The fact that 128 out of 211 respondents said they

Figure 3: Intercultural Interaction Adaptation Preferences



frequently encountered this kind of interaction in their daily lives demonstrates how cosmopolitan Indonesian society is.

Following the analysis illustrated in the above graph, the researcher dug deeper into the complexities of Indonesians' preferences in intercultural engagement. The data demonstrated a significant preference among respondents, with a significant 83.89% preferring a mutual effort from both parties, or more, to justify their different ideals and standards throughout encounters. This demonstrates a great desire for reciprocity in the process of studying and recognizing different cultural perspectives. Surprisingly, a minority of 15.64% of respondents expressed a preference to take on the burden of making an extra effort oneself in intercultural exchanges.

This subset of people may prioritize self-initiated attempts to bridge cultural divides, implying a wide range of tactics and expectations within the larger framework of intercultural communication preferences among the surveyed Indonesian population. The intricacies revealed by these preferences provide vital insights into the dynamics of international relationships and offer light on the various tactics people use to effectively traverse cultural differences.

Moving on to an identification of Indonesian based on The Lewis Culture Model, the researcher used The Schematic Overview of the Spectrum Characteristics by Lewis Model as presented on Literature Review and reversed the process of analysis, by examining the pre-defined characteristic of each category and its correlation with Indonesia's current communication approach. To meet the goal, the questionnaire was created utilizing the 15 highlights given in the model overview.

Table 2: The Correlation of Indonesian Characteristics to Lewis Model

Q.n	LINEAR-ACTIVE		MULTI-ACTIVE		REACTIVE	
Q1	74,408%	4,961%	6,635%	0,442%	18,957%	1,264%
Q2	59,200%	3,947%	37,000%	2,467%	3,800%	0,253%
Q3	47,900%	3,193%	44,100%	2,940%	8,100%	0,540%
Q4	48,300%	3,220%	24,600%	1,640%	27,000%	1,800%
Q5	52,600%	3,507%	33,600%	2,240%	13,700%	0,913%
Q6	55,000%	3,667%	19,400%	1,293%	25,600%	1,707%
Q7	20,400%	1,360%	76,800%	5,120%	2,800%	0,187%
Q8	76,800%	5,120%	12,300%	0,820%	10,900%	0,727%
Q9	22,749%	1,517%	63,981%	4,265%	13,270%	0,885%
Q10	62,600%	4,173%	10,400%	0,693%	27,000%	1,800%
Q11	69,200%	4,613%	15,200%	1,013%	15,600%	1,040%

Q12	60,200%	4,013%	10,000%	0,667%	29,900%	1,993%
Q13	20,400%	1,360%	32,700%	2,180%	46,900%	3,127%
Q14	71,100%	4,740%	11,800%	0,787%	17,100%	1,140%
Q15	49,800%	3,320%	6,200%	0,413%	44,100%	2,940%
	52,71%		26,98%		20,32%	

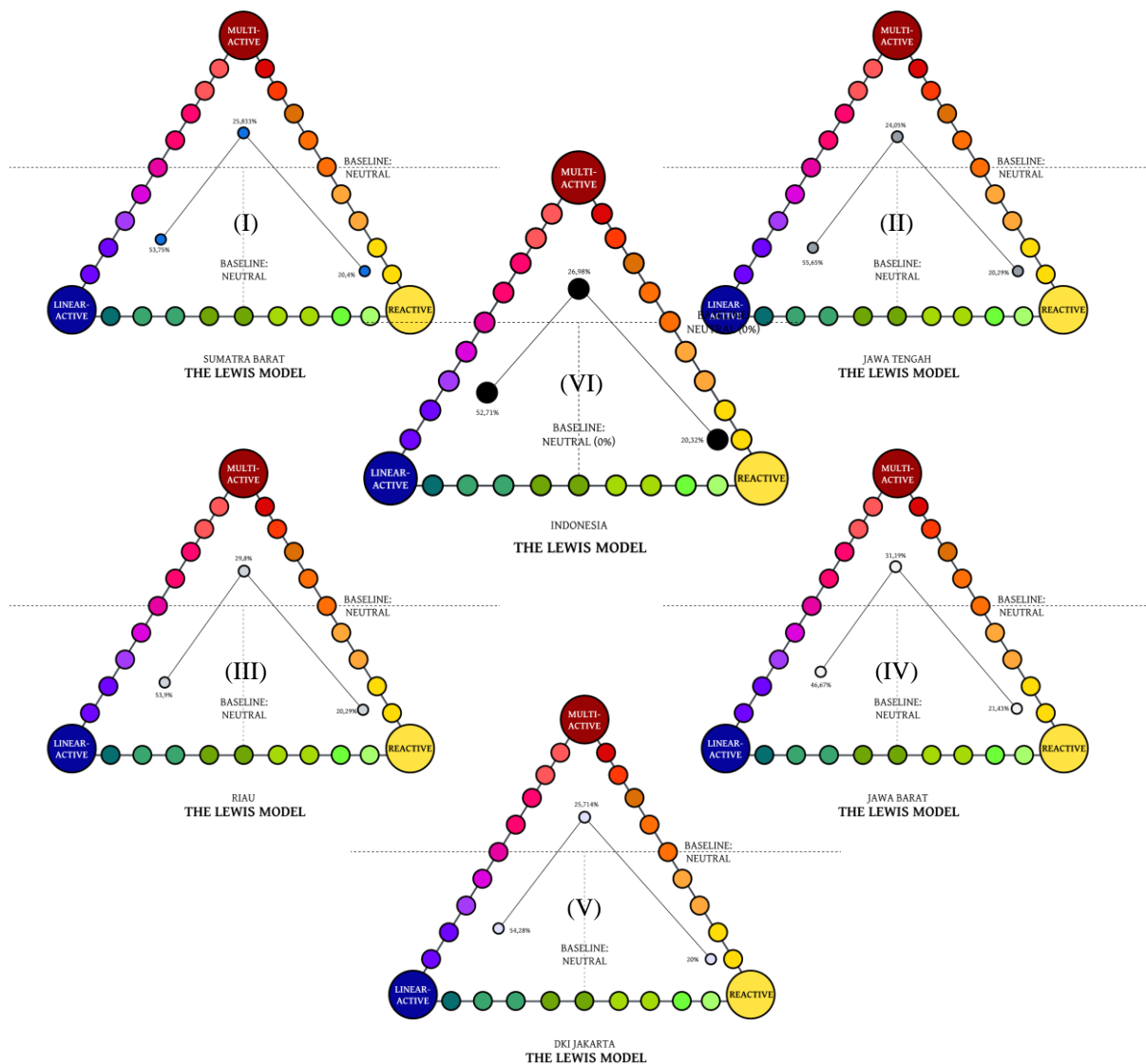
The left column labeled as Q.n referred to the question asked, or the row number of Table 1. The study's findings, which are displayed at the bottom of Table IV.2, indicate that more than half of Indonesian culture (52,71%) leans toward Linear-Active, or values structure and control. The participants also indicated 26,98% of their tendency as Multi-Active, meaning they prioritized relationships. Finally, the Reactive type, who values civility and respect in interpersonal interactions, took part for 20,32% of the personality.

Table 3: The Correlation of Five Samples of Indonesian Cultural Characteristics to Lewis Model

REGION	LINEAR-ACTIVE	MULTI-ACTIVE	REACTIVE
SUMATRA BARAT	53,75%	25,833%	20,417%
RIAU	53,913%	29,86%	20,29%
JAWA TENGAH	55,652%	24,058%	20,29%
JAWA BARAT	46,67%	31,19%	21,43%
DKI JAKARTA	54,286%	25,714%	20,0%

The five backgrounds were highlighted because of their dominant responses for the online survey. Table 3 reveals a consistent pattern in the communication strategy for Sudut Buka Mata Agency. The backgrounds of respondents from Sumatra Barat, Riau, Jawa Tengah, Jawa Barat, and DKI Jakarta predominantly align with the Linear-Active cultural style, followed by Multi-Active and Reactive styles. This pattern allows the Business Management Communication Plan to develop versatile methods for effective engagement with both internal and external stakeholders.

Figure 4: The Modified Version of Lewis Culture Model for (I) Sumatra Barat, (II) Jawa Tengah, (III) Riau, (IV) Jawa Barat, (V) DKI Jakarta, (VI) Indonesia



Finally, the researcher was able to generate the modified Lewis Model combined with scattered plot graph, as illustrated on Figures above and defined the general pattern of Indonesian Lewis Model spectrum orientation.

The scattered plots of different profiles in the modified figures above are capable of showing how cultural background and their characteristic in communication are undeniably complex. Each background has the essence of everything, just like how Indonesian matches quite well with the characteristic of Linear-Active, but also contained the personality of Multi-Active, and Reactive. Each category impacts the way one's behaving in different social environment. Yet, although the overall result of the questionnaire and its analysis might show consistency, it is very possible for some individuals to suit other communication approach who are far separated from the common spectrum.

1.4 Findings and Interpretation

The study has identified that by using the measurement of highlighted characteristic for each Lewis Model categories, the cultural communication approach of Indonesian and the five cultural background samples have been shifted from the initial position which was defined by Richard Lewis in 1990s. Instead of dominated by the features of Reactive—Multi Active as illustrated in Figure 1, after the recent observation, Indonesia has now shifted into Linear Active and balancing tones of Multi Active and Reactive.

The researcher interpreted that the change in communication approach of a particular background might happened because of globalisation and transformation of human's lifestyle. The technology advancement

and one click away information from around the world infused the way we live and react, thus, influencing the way we communicate.

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