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# **Inter-Ethnic Tolerance and Cross-Cultural Communication: Its Relationship and Importance in a Multicultural Society**

By:

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and  
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**Date:** May 31, 2011  
**Location:** IJAS Room Two, Congress Center  
**Time:** 09:15 – 10:55  
**Chair:** The first person to present in this session.  
**Duration:** Out of consideration for others, each presentation should be limited to 15 minutes or less.  
**Track:** Business and Economics I

Investigation of cognitive performance under the influence of daylight in an office room

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**Designing Student Teaching Evaluations in a Business Program**  
**Dmitry Chulkov and Jason Van Alstine**  
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**A Gandhian alternative for the economy**  
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Effects of online Service quality dimensions on satisfaction, value and online behavioral outcomes

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**Happy High Performing Managers: Self-Sustaining 'Urban Myth' or a Cause for Optimism?**  
**Peter Hosie, Michael Willemyns and Brian Lehaney**  
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**Negotiation style of expats in the automobile industry**  
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**A new attempt to the Karsel factors: Using mimetic words to research people's senses and emotions**  
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**The fear beyond valence**  
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The study of desired characteristics of graduated students in business administration for small and medium enterprises in Phranakhoisuyathaya province

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Are you superstitious? A survey on Chinese attitudes towards homophonic word taboo

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Incommensurability and the argument from slight inferiority: Why stubbing your toe does not rule out God's existence

**Morgan Luck**  
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Professional identities of part-timers

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Heidegger on world and death

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Inter-ethnic tolerance and cross-cultural communication: Its relationship and importance in a multicultural society

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**Date:** May 31, 2011

**Location:** IJAS Room One, Congress Center

**Time:** 11:00 – 12:55

**Chair:** The first person to present in this session.

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**Track:** Teaching and Education I

Two sides of a coin: Communication, wait time and voice among emerging adults in the classroom

**Shella Kreyszig**  
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Recommended instructional technology for K-12 students in the Arab Region

**Abdallah Tubaishat**  
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Project-related writing in higher education

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**Date:** May 31, 2011

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**Track:** Social Sciences and Humanities II

Empowering Indian women: Education a vital component

**Komal Kahlon**  
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Visitors' satisfaction in Cameron Highlands, a popular tourist destination in Malaysia

**Abdul Malek Bin A. Tambi, Wan Shahrul Aziah Wan Mahamad and Nor Zarina Mohd Salim**  
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Counselor competency, self-efficacy, and inmates' readiness to change in drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation centers in Malaysia

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Naturalism in Indian philosophy

**Shuchita Mehta**  
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Wealth distribution through Islamic estate planning: Concept and practice in Malaysia

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Applying John Dewey's continuum of education to digital audience awareness in university composition courses

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Cultural and technological transfers between France, Germany, and Romania (1900-1950): Literature and photography

**Raluca Herghelegiu and Oana Petrovici**  
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**Date:** May 31, 2011

**Location:** IJAS Room Two, Congress Center

**Time:** 12:20 – 12:55

**Chair:** Federica Teppa, De Nederlandsche Bank & Nelspar, The Netherlands. f.teppa@dnb.nl

**Track:** Multidisciplinary Research Posters I (click [here](#) for information about poster format)

Benchmarking and deregulation in the trucking industry in Malaysia

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# Inter-Ethnic Tolerance and Cross-Cultural Communication: Its Relationship and Importance in a Multicultural Society

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**Abstract:** Malaysia is a multi-cultural country, as a result of colonialism and economical geography. Such diversity makes tolerance a requirement for survival. Without tolerance, there can be a lot of tension or even conflict as a result of miscommunication in the society. Literature has demonstrated that effective inter-cultural communication is critical to the establishment of favourable inter-group relations (Gudykunst, 1986; Hall, 1976). This study aims to identify the importance and relationship of inter-ethnic tolerance and inter-cultural communication in multi-cultural Malaysia. A total of 310 undergraduates were involved in this study and the results indicated there is a positive correlation between inter-ethnic tolerance and inter-cultural communication. This study provides statistical evidence on the importance of inter-cultural communication in a multicultural society.

**Keywords:** Inter-Ethnic Tolerance, Inter-Cultural Communication, Multicultural Society, Youth

## Introduction

Although the era of the British colonialism is long over, the effects of colonialism still live on. Mass migrations during the colonial regime have resulted in the multi-cultural mosaic of present day Malaysian society. A noted historian and Pulitzer Prize winner, Arthur Schlesinger, suggested, conflict is inevitable when people of diverse cultural, ethnic, religious, or linguistic backgrounds converge in one place. As one turn the pages of Malaysian history books, one will note records of several ethnic conflicts in this country. Though these ethnic conflicts were localized (only a small district in the country was affected), such 'small' and continued disturbances frighteningly reveal the frailty of the politico-social fabric (Chandra Muzaffar, 2001). These conflicts were ignited by racial and ethnic tensions they were very often political in origin.

Over the years, the Malaysian government has taken various initiatives; through numerous activities and channels to achieve tolerance and unity among the different ethnic groups in the country. This is crucial because according to Professor Dr. N. Radhakrishnan (2007), the Chairman of the Indian Council of Gandhian Studies, "Intolerance of ethnic, religious, linguistic or other differences continue daily to extract a tragic toll of violence and suffering throughout the world" (p.114). Therefore, achieving inter-ethnic tolerance is an essential goal and this underscores the necessity for inter-cultural communication.

Communication is the heart of all human relationships. Through open and sincere inter-cultural communication, people regardless of group or cultural orientation, can work together to achieve great things. Peck (1987) argues that effective communication can ultimately remove walls and barriers of misunderstanding that separate human beings. The whole idea of inter-cultural communication is when one communicates with people from different cultures, one will learn about their values, history, habits and personality. One will also come to realize that although the cultures are different, all human beings share the same basic desires and needs such as food, shelter and love. All human beings also share the same pain when faced with the demise of loved ones or suffering as a victim of ill health. Thus, through



communication, one realizes that there is not only one way or one perspective of seeing things but there are many other ways too; for instance, from the different culture and religion perspectives. Through communication too, one will begin to understand the need to be tolerant towards differences (and most of these differences are superficial in nature). This suggests a possible relationship between tolerance and inter-cultural communication, which left to be furthered explored.

The results of a study conducted by Yee, Azimi, Wong and Jegak (2008) between year 2005 to 2006, on the level of inter-ethnic tolerance among Malaysian youth revealed that the level of inter-ethnic tolerance among the youth were moderately high with mean values between 3.4 to 3.5 (on a Likert Scale of 1 to 5). However it is unclear if such high inter-ethnic tolerant behaviors among the youth would also contribute to better inter-cultural communication. Indeed, inter-cultural communication scholars have called for more research on the unexplored field within social psychology, i.e. the relationship between inter-cultural communication barriers and inter-group attitudes (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988; Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishida, 1989). Therefore, this study aims to further expand the study to explore if there is a relationship between inter-ethnic tolerance and inter-cultural communication in the Malaysian context.

## Inter-Cultural Communication

Communication is the dynamic process of encoding and decoding verbal and nonverbal messages within a defined cultural and sociological environment. As inter-cultural communication refers to the communication between people from different cultures and because cultural differences are bound to exist, the potential for misunderstanding and disagreement is great. Misunderstanding and disagreement very often leads to ethnic tension and ethnic tension can become violent which will often end up as ethnic conflict or ethnic crisis. Therefore, it is apt to say that any racial slur indeed, is a powerful trigger to conflicts across cultures.

Successful interaction with people from different cultures requires a degree of communicative competence. According to Dodd (1995), competent inter-cultural communicators are willing to approach inter-cultural situations and are sensitive to the differences in them. Effective inter-cultural communication also requires cognitive, affective, and behavioral adaptations that can be difficult especially for people who have no or little experience interacting with people from the different ethnic groups (Dodd, 1995; Gudykunst, 1986; Lustig & Koester, 1999). Hence, in order to develop an in-depth understanding on the challenges to inter-cultural communication, the field of inter-cultural communication research has been divided in two main traditions; the functionalistic approach and the post-structuralistic approach.

The functionalist research tradition identifies culture as a barrier against an effective communication (Samovar, Porter & Jain 1981, Samovar & Porter 1972/1991, Brislin 1986, Gudykunst 1983, 1994, 1995, Hall 1959, Sarbaugh 1979). This is because culture is not homogenous. People from different ethnicities have different cultures; different values and different belief systems. Thus, culture shapes communication and communication is therefore culture-bound. People from different cultures communicate differently. The verbal and nonverbal symbols one uses to communicate with friends and families are strongly influenced by one's culture. Therefore, the processes of inter-cultural communication require individuals to understand others effectively as well as to make sense of selves and the cultural rules that govern interactions (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934). The receiver in the inter-cultural

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communication must be able to put the information he/she perceives into a meaningful context. Putting perceived information into a meaningful context means a person must have a certain amount of prior information about a particular ethnic group he/she is communicating with. Such a relationship means that "understanding requires pre-understanding" (Allwood, 1985). Hence, the starting point for reaching mutual understanding in inter-cultural communication requires learning about other people's cultures. Unless there is understanding of the different cultures and attempts to communicate to improve understanding of the different ethnic groups, it is very difficult to achieve a harmonious and peaceful multi-ethnic society. Hence, effective inter-cultural communication is critical to the establishment and maintenance of favorable inter-ethnic relations (Dodd, 1995; Gudykunst, 1986; Hall, 1976; Kim, 1986; Martin, 1993).

According to Spitzberg (1997), most models of communicative competence include cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. The cognitive component refers to how much one knows about communication. The affective component includes one's motivation to approach or avoid communication. The behavioral component refers to the skills one has to interact competently. Hence, an inter-culturally competent communicator is motivated to communicate and knowledgeable about how to communicate, and skilled in communicating. In addition, an inter-culturally competent communicator is sensitive to the expectations of the context in which communication occurs. They can also interact effectively by adapting messages appropriately to the context. In essence, an inter-culturally competent communicator understands the rules, norms, and expectations of the relationship and do not violate them.

In the same vein, inter-cultural communication requires one to be mindful that although the person with whom one is interacting is from a different cultural group, he or she is also an individual. Only through inter-cultural communication can one ever get to know the person as an individual. The results of the study conducted by Yee et. al. (2008) revealed that the model (predictors) for inter-ethnic tolerant behavior includes three competencies; the social/personal competence, cognitive competence and vocational competence. While social/personal competence refers to a person's views and corresponding judgment towards issues related to inter-ethnic relationship; cognitive competence refers to the understanding of social, politic and cultural norms of different ethnic groups and vocational competence refers to self belief and options awareness as well as resiliency towards inter-ethnic tolerant behavior. Therefore, these factors which are central to inter-cultural communication competence, strongly impact the favorability of inter-ethnic contacts (Giles & Johnson, 1981; Gudykunst, 1986; Lustig & Koester, 1999).

In order to broaden the understanding on the relationship between inter-ethnic tolerant behavior and inter-cultural communication, this study also aims to use the predictor model developed by Yee et. al. (2008) to determine the relationship between the predictors of inter-ethnic tolerance and inter-cultural communication. This is to determine if the predictors of inter-ethnic tolerance are also possible predictors of inter-cultural communication. By critically investigating the dynamics of inter-ethnic tolerance and inter-cultural communication, this study provides statistical evidence to show the importance and relationship between inter-ethnic tolerant behavior and inter-cultural communication in a multicultural society. But first a definition of inter-ethnic tolerance and its importance is in order.



## Inter-ethnic Tolerance

Tolerance can be defined as the absence of prejudice if what is disliked, towards those "whose practices, race, religion, nationality differ from one's own" (Robinson et al., 2000 p. 3). It involves a conscious rejection of prejudiced attitudes, beliefs and responses. Recognizing and rejecting prejudicial views moves a person from simply being a narrow-minded bigot who shows restraint (Burwood & Wyeth, 1998) to a person who is tolerant both in judgment and conduct.

Tolerance is necessary when difference or diversity is present because it is only when confronting diversity that our acceptance of others is truly tested (Robinson, Witenberg & Sanson, 2000; Vogt, 1997; Witenberg, 2000). Therefore, Dubos (1981, para. 2) suggested, "Human diversity makes tolerance more than a virtue; it makes it a requirement for survival," "Toleration makes difference possible, difference makes toleration necessary" (Walzer, 1997, p.12). This suggests tolerance towards cultural, religious and ethnic differences is very essential in a multi-ethnic society. Without tolerance, tension could arise.

Following a comprehensive survey of the various ethnic groups conducted in Canada, Berry and Kalin (1995) concluded that "tolerant individuals" show little differential preference for various groups. Therefore, Malaysia, a multi-ethnic country which came into being as a result of common shared experiences but had no existing common nationalism or common ethnicity, made tolerance very crucial. Efforts towards national integration through tolerance and understanding became a national pursuit to bring together culturally and discrete groups into a single territorial unit and establish national identity (Weimar, 1965). This process reflects a deep recognition and commitment to the idea that racial harmony in plural societies is of paramount importance to national peace and stability.

## Research Methodology

This study involved a total of 310 respondents. Although the sample of this study involves only the undergraduates from the University of Malaya, an attempt was made to ensure that the sample adequately represented the ratio of Malay, Chinese and Indian population in the country.

A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to obtain information and responses from the undergraduates. The questionnaire was divided into several sections. The first section contains items from the inter-cultural communication sensitivity scale (ICS) to measure the inter-cultural communication variables discussed in this study. According to Chen and Starosta (2000), inter-cultural communication competence has two pre-requisites which are inter-cultural awareness and inter-cultural communication sensitivity. Research has suggested that individuals with higher inter-cultural communication sensitivity tend to do well in inter-cultural communication settings (Peng, 2006).

The inter-cultural communication sensitivity items used in the first section of the instrument were those of Chen and Starosta's (2000) which contains 24 five-point Likert items with nine items reversed scored. The ICS scale was intended to measure individuals' feelings about interacting with people who have different cultural backgrounds. The 24 statements include "I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures," "I respect the values of people from different cultures," and "I am open-minded to people from different cultures." The alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.88.



The second, third and fourth section of the instrument was adopted from an earlier instrument developed by Yee et. al. (2008). This instrument was developed to determine the predictors of inter-ethnic tolerant behavior in the Malaysian context. Inter-ethnic tolerant behavior in this study was defined as the acceptance, respect and appreciation of another ethnics' beliefs, cultures, religions and practices. In the second section, there were a total of 16 items to measure the cognitive competence of inter-ethnic tolerance with five points Likert scale ranging from (1) not willing to put efforts to understand cultural differences and inter-ethnic relations issues to (5) put much effort to understand cultural differences and inter-ethnic relations issues as expressed in the statements. The alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.80.

The third section consists of 23-items measuring the personal/social competence of inter-ethnic tolerance with the alpha reliability coefficient of 0.75. A five point Likert scale ranging from (1) not willing to accept the opinions or views on life in a multi-ethnic society and ways in promoting inter-ethnic integration to (5) readily willing to accept the opinions and views as expressed in the statements was used.

The fourth section measures the vocational competence of inter-ethnic tolerant behavior which consists of 10-items formulated on a five point Likert scale. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree of their self-efficacy ranging from (1) not true at all to (5) very true. The alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.91. The last section contained items to identify the respondents' social demographic background.

## Results

The age of the respondents in this study ranged between 18 to 28 years old with the majority in aged 20 to 21 years (see Table 1).

Table 1: Age

Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
18	3	1.0
19	44	14.2
20	139	44.8
21	94	30.3
22	19	6.1
23	5	1.6
24	1	0.3
25	3	1.0
26	1	0.3
28	1	0.3
Total	310	100.0

The majority (56.5%) of the respondents in this study were female undergraduates. This is unavoidable as public universities in Malaysia appear to have a bigger percentage of female undergraduates (see Table 2).



**Table 2: Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	135	43.5
Female	175	56.5
Total	310	100.0

In order to determine if there is a relationship between inter-ethnic tolerant behavior and inter-cultural communication, a correlations analysis was conducted. The analysis revealed that there are significant positive correlations between inter-ethnic tolerant behavior and inter-cultural communication sensitivity [ $r(310) = .448, p < .0001$ ]. This suggests the more an individual exhibited inter-ethnic tolerant behavior, the better will be his/her inter-cultural communication (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Correlation analysis between Inter-Cultural Communication Sensitivity and Inter-Ethnic Tolerant Behavior**

Correlation Analysis			Inter Ethnic Tolerant Behavior	Inter-cultural Communication Sensitivity
Inter Ethnic Tolerant Behavior	Pearson Correlation		1.000	.448**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000
	N		310.000	310
Inter-cultural Communication Sensitivity	Pearson Correlation		.448**	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N		310	310.00

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In order to determine the relationship between the predictors of inter-ethnic tolerance and inter-cultural communication, a three predictors multiple linear regression model was used. The three-predictor variables were social/personal competence (X<sub>1</sub>), cognitive competence (X<sub>2</sub>) and vocational competence (X<sub>3</sub>). Based on the results obtained, all the three predictor variables were highly significant predictors of inter-cultural communication. The three predictors collectively explain 25.8 percent of the variance in inter-cultural communication. The cognitive competence of ethnic tolerance was a better predictor ( $\beta = .259, p < .001$ ), followed by the personal/social competence ( $\beta = .243, p < .001$ ) and vocational competence ( $\beta = .170, p = .001$ ) (see Table 4).



**Table 4: Results of Regression Analyses - Relationship between the Predictors of Inter Ethnic Tolerance and Inter-Cultural Communication**

Predictors	Inter-Cultural Communication			R-Square	F-value	P
	r	B	t-value			
Cognitive Competence	.429	.259	4.441	.258	35.442	.000
Personal/Social Competence	.393	.243	4.369			
Vocational Competence	.303	.170	3.239			

Discussion

As more research is called for to explore the relationship between inter-cultural communications and inter-group attitudes, the results of this study have revealed that tolerance towards people of a different culture and ethnicity will result in better inter-cultural communication. The correlation analysis results in Table 3 suggest a positive relationship between inter-ethnic tolerant behavior and inter-cultural communication.

As the results (in Table 3) suggest; better inter-ethnic tolerant behavior correlates to better inter-cultural communication. This indicates that greater appreciation, greater acceptance and respect one have towards the different cultures, will enhance better inter-cultural communication. This is because tolerance calls for the cultivation of attitudes of openness, positive interest in differences and respect for diversity (UNESCO, 1994).

Contrary to the functionalistic approach mentioned earlier, this study suggests that people should move away from the idea that *culture functions as a barrier* in inter-cultural communication. Although different culture will have different beliefs, different values and different understanding, it is certainly not a barrier to learn and understand the other cultures. This is clearly demonstrated by the multi ethnic Malaysians who interact with each other (though culturally different) on a daily basis. The results of this study has demonstrated that what are more crucial are not the culture differences but being tolerant; the act of respecting and appreciating the differences and accepting them as a reality of life. With the current development of ICT, fashions and trends across the globe as well as sophisticated transportation systems, the world is almost becoming borderless. Hence, there is a greater need to accept cultural diversity as the way of life in this new globalized world.

In addition, identity is not something fixed but fluid depending on the surrounding environment that influences it. A person who lives in a multicultural and multi ethnic society will tend to develop multiple identities as a result. Discussing multiple identities, Majid Tehranian (2004), who is a professor of international communication at the University of Hawaii and director of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, emphasises that it is important that every individual recognises that they have a choice of multiple identities, at the local, national, regional and global levels. Such a realization will enable one to see beyond their own cultural identity and differences across cultures; instead they will begin to appreciate the similarities across all humanities. When one possesses such



awareness, there will be greater appreciation, acceptance and respect towards one another, irrespective of cultures. Inter-cultural communication thus becomes possible and less complicated. In addition, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1903), a forward-thinking geographer, educational theorist and religious reformer who lived and worked during the tumultuous early decades of Japan's modern era also argues that every individual needs three different types of self consciousness. Firstly, a person needs be concerned about both home and local communities; that is being 'local.' Secondly, the person needs to have the sense of belonging to a nation and thirdly, that person should also see him/herself as cosmopolitan, a citizen of the world. Thus, it is erroneous to confine one's thinking that a person has only one identity and practices only one culture thus limiting inter-cultural communication.

The results in table 4 also highlighted another aspect of the functionalist research tradition in inter-cultural communication where the receiver ought to have a certain amount of prior information about a particular ethnic group he/she is communicating with. Based on the results of the multiple linear regression conducted (see Table 4), all the three predictor variables ( $X_1$ ,  $X_2$  and  $X_3$ ) of inter-ethnic tolerant behavior collectively explain more than a quarter (25.8 percent) of the variance in inter-cultural communication. This suggests that cognitive, personal/social and vocational competencies are essential for an inter-cultural communication.

The operational definition of cognitive competence ( $X_1$ ) in this study refers to the understanding of social, politic and cultural norms in navigating one's behavior tolerantly towards different ethnic groups. This is the better predictor of inter-cultural communication and as such, for inter-cultural communication to be effective, indeed it requires both the communicator and receiver to have knowledge of the different cultural groups involved, and also the understanding of the social and political setting where the different cultural groups come from.

The operational definition for the second predictor of inter-cultural communication, social/personal competence ( $X_2$ ); refers to a person's views and corresponding judgment towards issues related to inter-ethnic relationships. This suggests, when people are able to understand, judge and be sensitive of the differing cultural contexts involved in an inter-cultural communication, they will be able to choose from their behavioral repertoires the kinds of verbal and nonverbal actions most appropriate for the situation. Otherwise, communication and particularly using only one's style of communication can be the source of many problems in a multi-ethnic society. For example, in the context of multi-ethnic Malaysian society, one has to be very cautious and sensitive in choosing the choice of words used in inter-cultural communication. For instance, '*babi*' which means pig or pork are forbidden among the Muslim community. Hence, it is utmost disrespectful to use this word when communicating with the Muslims. Another example would be the use of the word '*kling*' towards the Indians. This word has a racist connotation as it distinguished the Indian community with the other communities based on the colour of their skin. Therefore, the results in this study aptly indicate that communication does not happen in a vacuum. It is dependent on the context in which it occurs. As this variable makes for a stronger variance in inter-cultural communication after cognitive competence, this supports the notion that identified cultural knowledge and awareness are central to inter-cultural communication competence.

The third essential characteristic for an inter-culturally competent communicator identified in this study is vocational competence. Vocational competence ( $X_3$ ) is defined as having the self belief and resiliency towards inter-ethnic tolerant behavior. In the past thirty-five years, a substantial body of research has been conducted on the nature and prevalence of



communication apprehension. Inter-cultural communication apprehension has been found to be the highest among the different types of communication apprehension (Anarbaeva, 2006). Inter-cultural communication apprehension is an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with a person from a different cultural group (McCroskey, 1983). People with high communication apprehension are more likely to avoid communication and therefore less likely to assert themselves or approach others (Neuliep & Tyan, 1998). Studies have shown that high communication apprehension may have an impact on a person's behavior and relationships with others (McCroskey & Richmond, 1988; Neuliep & Ryan, 1998). Hence, the results in table 4 which reveals vocational competence ( $X_3$ ) as the third significant predictor of inter-cultural communication suggest the importance of having self-belief and self-efficacy in inter-cultural communication. This competency is essential to overcome inter-cultural communication apprehension which is often present in inter-cultural communication. Psychological literature has shown that inter-cultural communication difficulties are potential causal factors underlying prejudice and discrimination. Other correlation and experimental evidence also pointed to a connection between inter-cultural communication barriers and prejudice. Therefore, by being vocationally competent, inter-cultural communication apprehension can be overcome and inter-cultural communication will be more effective which will eventually leads to better understanding and tolerance instead of being prejudicial or stereotypical.

## Conclusion

As Walzer (1997) suggested, "Toleration makes difference possible, difference makes toleration necessary" (p.12). This study has revealed that in the study of inter-cultural communication in a multi-ethnic society, it is necessary to understand the psychological and sociological elements found in intergroup human behaviors. Inter-cultural communication is when one communicates with people from different cultures. Therefore, having tolerant behavior towards other ethnicities and cultures is vital for effective inter-cultural communication. Suffice to say; when one possesses tolerant behavior and acceptance of differences, one will be able to communicate with people of different cultures and background. Then real dialogue will result and this will help achieve understanding. Better communication then promotes further understanding and tolerance. Based on the results and findings of this study, a model has been developed (see Model 1).

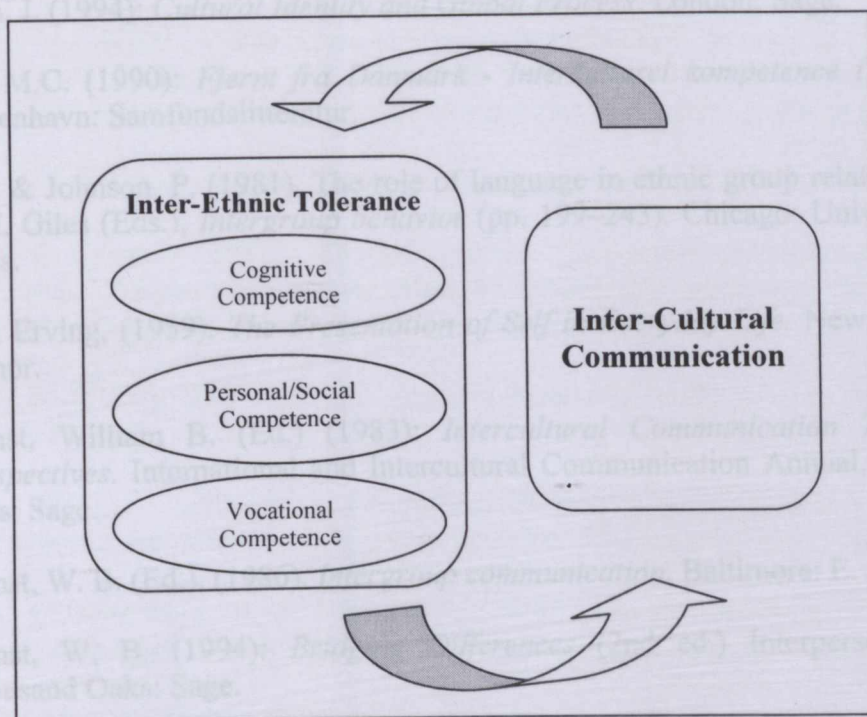
The significant relationships between the three predictors of inter-ethnic tolerance and inter-cultural communication have strengthened the understanding on the essential competencies required for successful inter-cultural communications in a multi-ethnic society. Being knowledgeable of different cultural norms, social and political settings are important for better inter-cultural communication. In addition understanding the context in which inter-cultural communication takes place will enable communicators choose the most suitable verbal and nonverbal actions deemed most appropriate for the context. Finally one must have confidence and assurance when interacting with others from different worlds.

## Suggestion

Basically this study has shown the importance of the relationship between inter-ethnic tolerant behavior and inter-cultural communication. Although, this study was only limited to the undergraduates in the University of Malaya a further refined model incorporating a larger number and variety of respondents, ranging from different age groups to different social stratum should be developed.



**Figure 1: Relationship between Inter-Ethnic Tolerance and Inter-Cultural Communication**



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