

An Examination of Chris Argyris' model of learning in relation to its effectiveness in creating a cross-cultural, team learning environment at University of the Nations leadership training school.

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Abstract

This dissertation explores Chris Argyris' (1974) Model II communication and its interaction with personalities and cultures within an international Christian University. After a conceptual framework for changes driving modern organizations had been derived from a literature survey, Argyris' model of communication was examined in the context of the core cultural values of Youth With A Mission (YWAM). Leadership, staff and students from 12 different training locations /schools were involved in a workshop at which the Argyris model was presented and explained (N=212). All participants were surveyed before and after the workshop. Participants also completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). A subset of participants (N=54) were subsequently interviewed. The interviews and surveys were analyzed to explore different personality and cultural preferences for Argyris' material. Analysis of the pre/post surveys was guided by 25 hypothesis deduced from the relevant literature.

There was partial support for the proposition that interest in the Model II communication is different in different countries. There was fuller support for the Model from the following participants: those who rated themselves as being concerned to be more effective, those having a high priority to resolve conflicts, those more interested in learning and those without a clear communication model of their own. The analysis also showed that selfperception and culture influence interest in Model II communication. Analysis of interview data confirmed, firstly, that culture plays an important part in the use and application of Model II communication and, secondly, that a mental framework for dealing with the complexity of Model II communication is necessary.

In general Argyris' model of communication proved to be valid. However key questions were raised about the use of Model II communication in respect-based cultures where direct exchange of ideas and loss of face are avoided. It is proposed that a conceptual framework for dealing with complexity and cultural identity issues be developed for use by those working with Argyris' Model II communication in international organizations.