

Understanding Implicit and Explicit Bias

A study rooted in the theories of worldview and conceptual change.

Implicit bias describes the feelings and thoughts a person carries towards other people, situations, and experiences or associated stereotypes without their conscious knowledge.

An explicit bias (or a conscious bias) results from learning and exposure over time. A person generally uses their explicit bias when interacting with a group or society that is outside of their first culture or primary group. This includes things such as race, ethnicity, education level, and even age (Burgess and van Ryn, 2004).

A modified version of the research question?

What would happen if you engaged in a situation using a culturally conditioned conceptual framework without the understanding that this framework existed?

Discussion

1. Where did your concept of good (leadership, missions, medical care, ...) originate?

2. How was this reinforced?
 - a. Parents
 - b. Mentor
 - c. Education
 - d. Experiences

3. Describe tensions that have been experienced that you attribute to cultural differences and describe how they impacted your views and practices?

4. Imagine this framework is challenged? What do you think would happen? Would the framework change OR would you use the framework to interpret the situation and make decisions?

5. What would lead or has led to changes in your conceptual framework?

Conceptual Framework

Transformational Experiences and Conceptual Change					
	Incomplete	Inaccurate		Incommensurate	
Existing Framework	Missing	Different <i>(False)</i> belief	Different <i>(Flawed)</i> mental model	Category mistake	Missing schema
Catalyst for change	Gap Filling	Belief refuted, replaced or ignored	Many beliefs or assumptions refuted or holistic confrontation	Reassignment to an alternative category	Build new or reassign to new schema
Changed Framework	More complete understanding	Belief revision	Mental model transformation	Categorical shift	Schema creation

Adapted from Chi, 2013.

Barriers to change

- **Rules.** National organizations are not able to dictate change through rigid structures. Instead, missionaries see these restrictions as burdensome and a distraction from engaging in the second culture.
- **Set theological or doctrinal convictions.** When missionaries move into the local church in a second-culture setting with an agenda, such as changing doctrinal beliefs, they are unwilling to examine cultural differences and hold tightly to their first-culture truths.
- **Unrealistic expectations.** Second-culture leaders who expect to come and make leadership impact immediately become frustrated. Their focus on impact takes away from the intentionality needed in understanding their own worldview and a willingness to assimilate new ideas into their worldview (Wesch, 2018).
- **Inability to adapt to shifts.** In Josiah Venture, the roles of second-culture workers changes; additionally, strategies and programs in national organizations change over time. These shifts can cause fluctuation; as a missionary experiences new information and challenges they need an ability to adapt.

Catalysts for change

The following themes emerged as potential catalysts for change included:

Disorientation	Entering a second culture significantly disrupts the life and leadership of a missionary.
Language	Language deeply shapes the content and process of thought within a leader (Hiebert, 2008).
Differentiations in Time	Culture connects how a person relates the past, present, and future (Kearney, 1984).
Variances in Space	Culture embeds mental maps used to explain the world and how it operates.
Perceptions and Assumptions	Perception is the lens that assigns meaning (Kearney, 1984); assumptions are perceived truths in a worldview system (Kearney, 1984).
Differences in rights and wrongs	Culture embeds a sense of right and wrongs ideals (Moreau, 2009).
New information	Missionaries may encounter new experiences, information, or knowing that adds missing elements and develops and enhances existing frameworks (Chai, 2013).

Disorientation

Moving to a second culture disrupts the complex and dynamic system that comprises the worldview of a second-culture worker. The worldview must adapt as new information, experiences, and emotions are encountered (Hiebert, 2008; Wesch, 2018). The following participant quotes illustrate this theme:

Missionary Quotes:

- Culture shock is so strange. When you are in it, there are so few things you can fully grasp and understand. (James)
- As we entered the culture, we were like deer in headlights. (Lucas)
- I felt like I knew what I was doing coming into a different culture. I had led all kinds of small group works with college students for years in the U.S., so I feel like I would be able to transition to leading groups overseas. However, I often found long, awkward pauses and silence in leading groups that did not happen in the U.S. . . . Shepherding was also more challenging. This seemed to go against Eastern and

Central European culture, where trust must be earned before sharing deeply.
(Ethan)

- The American in me is overwhelmed—how am I supposed to try to get something done? (Mia)
- Americans are willing to try; nationals want more answers before starting. Americans are willing to start things and solve the problems as they go. We are willing to act like we know what we are doing. (Mia)
- The gospel is the same but how you go about it is different. For missionaries who move to a second culture with a lot of experience, it can be a real shock. (William)

National Leader Quotes:

- Missionaries feel paralyzed as they enter into the culture. They cannot express themselves because they do not have an understanding of language or culture. The first 2 years are complicated for missionaries and not easy. Often missionaries have to survive this season. (Karl, National leader)

Language

Language shapes a person's pattern and process of thought at a preconscious level (Hiebert, 2008). Analyzing language and identification similarities and differences helps identify different domains in culture (Kearney, 1984). The words people use reflect signs one's culture imbedded in worldview that shape meaning and thought process (Hiebert, 2008).

Henri, a national, noted the importance of language and assimilation, saying:

- If I had to come up with a top-10 list for factors of success, language would be the first three. Language influences every aspect of life: job effectiveness, ministry, self-confidence, everything. Missionaries who are not able to gain fluency in the language have not lasted long and have struggled to lead others. Learning the language gives a missionary freedom as they interact with the culture. It allows a missionary to understand what is going on around them.
- Learning language is a major part of learning the culture; the two are deeply connected. Language is a code for understanding culture. As an American understands the language, they can use the language as a tool in their leadership.

The American may still feel limited communicating in their second language, but the national language will resonate with nationals in a way that English cannot accomplish.

- Language has expressions that are cultural. An American expression may not exist in the national language or the way to express something may not be communicable at a heart level through translation.
- This is expressed in the language they use—vocal expressions, body language, words. Nationals communicate with a softer tone of voice, more somber expressions, and less body movement. There is a gap between the two stories because of the different communication styles of the different first cultures.
- Language and vocabulary impact directness. We are more direct than Americans. In this way, a missionary can appear passive and sometimes they need to be more aggressive or assertive. As American missionaries learn the language and start using it, they often become more direct. I have one missionary whom I have noted, she speaks very differently when she is using the national language versus English. It is clear she understands the culture when she is using the national language.

Markus, a national, noted the importance of knowing the language, saying:

- The first 3 years in the country for the second-culture worker are primarily focused on language and shooting roots into the culture. Our leadership views this as a key time and a healthy approach.
- The national language impacts both the content and style of communication. This is a real challenge for second-culture workers. For example, the national culture is more direct. Thus, for a second-culture leader, learning the language is an absolute key. The language allows the leader to get the nuances of culture. It is significant for communication, and it communicates at a heart level.

Language helps missionaries understand the thinking of nationals. Karl, a national, said, “New missionaries see our culture as straightforward. They often perceive national leaders’ actions as power plays. This, in part, is due to the differences in language; our language does not have the politeness of the English language.”

The following participant statements also highlighted the impact of language:

- I jumped right into a leadership role rather than taking time to learn the national language. This was a huge mistake. (Elijah)
- I remember sitting through meetings, 3-hour meetings, and not understanding anything because there was no one to translate. It is just the worst feeling – you want to communicate, but you can't! (Emma)
- Learning a language is hard work and very challenging. It takes time to learn. During that season of language learning, it is often hard to understand what is happening around you. (James)
- When speaking the language, I do speak more directly. Still not as directly as a national but more directly than when speaking English. I just see this as speaking the language. (Mia)

As missionaries learn the language of their second culture, not just words but cultural beliefs and ideals expressed through the communication process, their worldview is impacted. Language can reshape personal domains (Kearney, 1984) without a person realizing the shifts (Hiebert, 2008).

Differences in Views on Time

The concept of time connects how a person joins events of the past, present, and future. Time impacts how an individual relates to the people and culture around them (Kearny, 1984). The following participant quotes illustrate this theme:

- I was leading a program that equipped national leaders. Often the nationals attending would arrive late or miss sessions. This drove my American side crazy. I had to realize I was more time oriented than those in this culture. Their late arrival was not a slight against me or a sin against God, and it was simply a different perspective on time. (William)
- I think part of it for the nationals is about vision for the future. And I think that is a cultural thing, the mindset in this country in the past has had to focus on a person's next meal not what they would be doing in 5 years. We are really blessed as Americans to always have that forward-thinking mentality and a belief that one has

control over their destiny. (Emma)

- Here, time is thought of more in terms of events. (Emma)
- Americans seem to pull the trigger much quicker and give thoughtless time in a meeting before needing to get someplace. In meetings, I often want to push the national leader to move the meeting on—to make a decision—much sooner than the national leading it. It is a big leadership difference. I don't know if it is because they value opinions or something else but it clearly feels cultural. In contrast, Americans are willing to stick their head out and make a decision and don't worry as much about the consequence of how that impacts the views of others. (Elijah)

The U.S. missionaries and nationals had a different orientation of time and credibility. This element of time was a tension for missionaries. The following quotes from William illustrate this theme:

- Cultures view a leader's credibility differently. In American culture, you have an A grade unless you lose it. In this culture, when I meet you, you have a D or F grade.
- American leaders often come into this culture and expect to be respected. They miss the reality that respect is earned over time. They may see ambition or pride and not react well; this can harm your work long term.

Missionaries often have a short-term orientation. A missionary, generally, feels pressure to have significant results in a few years. They can feel pressure to report successes to people who are supporting them in their journey. Nationals have a longer-term view. They are less worried about the short-term progress and more focused on changes over time; they may have more of a generational viewpoint. National leaders looked at results in terms of decades but missionaries from the United States talked about them in terms of years:

- American missionaries must also navigate a difference in time orientation. The American culture is more oriented toward short-term success. Missionaries have raised significant funding and need something to report to donors. Nationals feel less pressure for immediate results and generally think about the results in terms of years. I think this pressure felt by an American missionary is a blend of culture and missionary process. (Markus)

- Americans are ready to make big changes and have an immediate impact. (Karl)

As missionaries experience a different view of time, it changes how they view their relationship with their surroundings (Kearney, 1984). This changes their conceptual framework.

Incompatible Concepts of Space

A missionary has created mental maps in their first culture (Hiebert, 2008). These maps explain how the world operates, including the connection of the past and present. Missionaries use their map of space to explain the environment and responses of the world around them (Kearney, 1984). The following participant quotes illustrate this theme:

- In the American culture, if you are honest, people generally open up, here that is not the case. Even if I open up first, it took a long time for people to share anything. It had to be modeled again and again in this culture. (Ethan)
- A second leadership lesson came from the awkwardness of living in a second culture. I realized I could not wait to feel comfortable in a situation before moving forward. I found that as I keep leaning into the awkward, eventually, it did not become awkward anymore. In my first culture, I would try and avoid it or get around the awkwardness in some way; however, as a missionary, I have been forced to lean into awkwardness. (Elijah)

Josiah Venture expects second-culture workers to live incarnationally:

- The first 3 years in the country for the second-culture worker are primarily focused on language and shooting roots into the culture. Our leadership views this as a key time and a healthy approach. (Markus)
- The biggest challenge for missionaries is the feeling of knowing nothing that comes with working in a second culture. It can be extremely frustrating because the missionary had knowledge and experience, but they are discounted because they are an outsider. A missionary that is teachable and flexible who can push through this season needs humility. Eventually, this incarnational living will pay off but it takes time. (Karl)
- With the leaders that have time, I can walk with those leaders for a few years. This not only gives time for skill development for the leader; more importantly, it allows

for incarnational ministry. We get to spend time together. These relationships often see more fruit. (James)

Incarnational living moves the second-culture worker into a new cultural system. Engaging in a new cultural system initiates change (Hiebert, 2008). A missionary must either adapt to the new system in which they live or live according to the standard of their first culture in the second culture. The missionaries interviewed adapted.

Whiteman (2003) defined the following practices as incarnational living:

1. We start with people where they are embedded in their culture, and this frequently requires downward mobility on our part.
2. We take their culture seriously, for this is the context in which life has meaning for them.
3. We approach them as learners, as children, anxious to see the world from their perspective.
4. We are forced to be humble, for in their world of culture we have not yet learned the acquired knowledge to interpret experience and to generate social behavior.
5. We must lay aside our own cultural ethnocentrism, our positions of prestige and power.
6. To be incarnational means we will be very vulnerable; our defenses will have to go.
7. We make every effort to identify with people where they are, by living among them, loving them, and learning from them. (p. 409)

These practices seem formational, allowing a missionary to experience transformation in their worldview constructs.

Missionaries continually adjust their worldview framework. Culture changes over time (Goheen, 2014). Missionaries with years of experience noted this challenge of culture shifts. Leadership practices contextualized differently over their years of second-culture work. Living in the second culture allowed the missionary's leadership to continue to evolve along with the cultural system.

Differences in Perception and Assumptions

The lens through which a second culture ascribes meaning is perception. As a missionary experiences cultural differences, they use the lens of perception as they attempt to give meaning to these new experiences (Kearney, 1984). Perception changed as a result of their second-culture experience. Noah noted:

These 10-minute monologues felt like a waste of time. Now, I see them more like a dance. As I was here longer, I saw how the dance led into a more beautiful conversation and a depth that might not be reached without it.

Perception is the viewpoint a missionary uses to assign meaning (Kearney, 1984). Perception may be more important than truth. Understanding perception is important and takes personal understanding. To find their perception, a missionary must understand their personal presuppositions and ideals. As a missionary understands the underlying elements of the culture, their lens shifts, leading to new understandings.

Assumptions are perceived truths held in a worldview (Kearny, 1984). As missionaries had experiences that exposed assumptions, they experienced reorientations in their worldview in assumptions bound to their first culture. Missionaries may assume working with nationals with a similar passion for Jesus would have the desired leadership outcomes. Markus indicated:

One challenge for an American missionary is sorting out unhealthy elements of culture and personal unhealth. An American missionary was working alongside a national leader in both a local church and in the national organization. It was clear to the missionary that the national deeply loved Jesus; however, the national leader led through exercising power in an unhealthy way. The missionary thought the leadership was reflective of the national culture and missed that it was actually an abuse of power, creating an atmosphere of fear in both the local church and national organization. It was hard to separate the stereotype in the national culture; leadership in this country tends to be a bit more authoritarian and toxic leadership. Thus, this missionary missed something that should have been dealt with early on in the relationship.

First-culture assumptions led this missionary to miss leadership unhealth. The assumptions were resistant to change until the missionary more fully understood the situation and were aware of their misunderstanding.

Missionaries needed to shift leadership ideals when leadership ideals were based on false assumptions. The following participant quotes illustrate needed assumption shifts:

- As a younger leader, I would become frustrated when people would not listen to me. I could try and use position to motivate or push through what I wanted to accomplish but a person convinced against their will is still of the same opinion, especially a national in this country. (William)
- The growth has been slow. The students with a church background were far from Jesus. It took time to be able to build those trust bridges to speak some hard words to challenge them on that stuff. We are trying hard to be a community that accepts people regardless of what is a part of their life and a place where truth can be spoken with a lot of grace. (Ethan)

Like perception, as missionaries realize false assumptions, new assumptions are created. These new assumptions change the lens of the leader.

Exposure to New Rights and Wrongs

Missionaries carry a sense of right and wrong leadership ideals from their first culture (Moreau, 2009). Missionaries reflected evolving evaluative frameworks as they gained experience and understanding of their second culture. Mia said:

The previous youth group leader had a national. Under their leadership, nothing was happening. The role of the leader is to be the engine, including making decisions and directing the team. I try and navigate culture by making my statements as suggestions rather than commands.

Emma's first impression of leaders in her country was, "Leaders were either strong and aggressive or spontaneous, unplanned, and full of personality. Very few leaders seem to consider the details or the long-term picture." She interpreted this short-term orientation as bold faith. Correctness was not the issue; rather, it was the impact on her personal framework. Emma noted, as a missionary, she had learned bold faith; it had become more a part of her framework of leadership. After years of experience in the culture, Emma said she "was able to start making culturally better decisions."

Unless a leader recognizes the shift in leadership ideals and feelings, their leadership framework may not transform (Chi, 2013). A lack of transformation in the evaluative dimension could lead to a disconnect and lack of understanding in the missionaries second culture (Adeney, 1995; Chuang, 1996; Moreau, 2009). As the evaluative dimension transforms, a leader's lens of the culture morphs (Hiebert, 2008).

New Information

When a mental model is incomplete, new information or experiences fills gaps (Chi, 2013). As a missionary enters a new culture, they may experience health in the national church that they did not experience in the United States. James said, "I appreciate that the church in my second culture is more focused on family. In my experience, American churches were run more like a business." Experiences like these add missing elements to the framework of a missionary, leading to a more complete understanding or knowing (Chi, 2013).

Josiah Venture, the missions organization, repeatedly helped fill gaps for second-culture workers. The following participant quotes illustrate the important role a missions organization can fill:

- In JV, we try and be authentic and speak straight with people. This is a value throughout the national organization. This value is embedded along with humility so that one knows what is being spoken is done out of love and concern. Even in my national organization, creating this third culture—not American or national—can be a catalyst for personal growth and growth in the emerging leader. (Emma)
- From my first experience as an intern, I was very impressed with the leaders within JV. (James)
- The national organization limits leadership roles and has new missionaries focus on language and culture their first 2 years (Karl)
- The organization has care systems in place; this helps a lot (Karl)
- One pattern in navigating the complexity of culture for Americans is a person, a national, who opened doors for the American and helps them sort through if a situation is a cultural variance, a leadership issue, or just a personality difference. (Markus)

- If a missionary sees the strategic significance of the shift, wider work than just one local church, they most likely will make the change. (Markus)
- One key to change in Josiah Venture is the organizational culture. American missionaries have benefited from the approach to missions within Josiah Venture. The international organization has provided an overriding kingdom language that has benefited our organization and communication between national and Americans. (Markus)

Living in a second culture exposes underdeveloped areas in a worldview including areas such as missing information, experiences, and understanding (Chi, 2013). Interviews revealed the missions organization plays a key role in helping the missionary accurately integrate these elements into their worldview. Without this guidance, a missionary could misunderstand and misplace these experiences in their framework.

Keys to Adaption

A Calling

One of the themes that motivated missionaries to move toward worldview transformation was calling. Calling inspired missionaries to persevere through disorientation and misunderstanding and push for understanding and transformation. The following participant quotes illustrate the importance of calling:

- These events caused my wife and me to really examine if we were being called to this country. When we realized that we really did feel called to be there, it reshaped our posture. We were willing to do anything to be a part of accomplishing the mission God had given us both personally and in our role within the national organization. (Noah)
- This is part of the reason I am here, to equip those young leaders, that have a heart to lead and be used by God but don't necessarily know how to lead. Equipping these leaders looks different than my experience of equipping a leader in the U.S. (James)
- The national organization has learned to recruit second-culture staff to the mission and not a role. In part, this is because roles often change and in part because role and calling are different. The organization has found calling to be more important in

longevity and impact than recruiting people to a specific role. (Markus)

- We want to recruit them to be part of the mission. (Markus)

A person's worldview system holds deeply held beliefs about life and leadership (Sire, 2009). This system tends toward preserving the existing framework (Schwarz, 1999), and living in a second culture, especially in an incarnational manner, challenges systems of knowing and understanding of missionaries. *Calling*, the idea that they moved to a second culture in response to God to serve His family, drives a missionary to consider how to assimilate into a second culture, rather than rejecting different norms found in the new culture (Liljedahl, 2011). Calling reshapes the posture of how missionaries engage in their second culture; it helps motivate them to assimilate and reshape their worldview framework.

Navigating Paradox

Second-culture work pushes the worldview system toward disequilibrium (Hiebert, 1985; Wesch, 2018; Whiteman, 2003). In this time of cultural instability, a missionary experiences cultural contradictions. Things that apply to second-culture missionaries do not always apply to nationals. In this study, standards contextualized differently for missionaries and nationals, feeling hypocritical. Markus, for example, indicated, "Missionaries, both nationals and Americans, need to be able to live with paradox." Second-culture missionaries lived in this tension throughout the process of worldview transformation.

Because conceptual change is usually gradual (Vosniado, 2007), second-culture workers persevere through the process, resisting the natural tendency to move back to their original framework. Second-culture workers navigated this season of paradox to reach transformation (Liljedahl, 2011; Vosnaidou, 2007).

Sometimes a second-culture leader may need another second-culture leader to give them perspective. Elijah, a missionary, noted:

Occasionally, as I led with this national leader, he would send me to the other side of the country to spend time with an experienced missionary couple. Often, this happened when we ran into cultural tensions. I didn't realize it at the time; this was a part of the

national's strategy to keep our relationship healthy. He didn't presume to know how I was feeling or what I was experiencing because this was his first culture.

Interviews indicated first-culture workers have a challenging time empathizing with the disorientation second-culture workers experience. Some second-culture workers, who have endured this season of transition, can help other missionaries realize differences and modify and adapt their framework.

Common Character Traits

A set of character traits emerged throughout interviews. These traits emerged from first-culture embedding (Hiebert, 2008) and second-culture transformation (Wesch, 2018). These themes seem to capture attitudes and ideals important in transformation in Josiah Venture leaders.

Humility

A missionary from the United States carries assumptions their first culture shaped that they view as correct (Hiebert, 2008; Pluedemann, 2009; Wesch, 2018). Humility allows a missionary to set aside or examine these assumptions so that transformation can take place. The following participant quotes illustrate this character trait:

- I learned that a leader leads through humility. (Elijah)
- While Americans viewed leadership as a good attribute, nationals in this country viewed a leader as a heavy-handed overlord. No one wanted to be a leader. Maybe I am exaggerating but the picture is an important one to catch. The culture here, even today, really values humility as a leadership trait. This picture helps understand the need for humility in leaders. (William)
- Instead, 99% of the missionaries in Josiah Venture come with a very humble posture. They lead, engage with others, and live from a posture of servanthood. It is not loud or demanding. (Henri)

Patience and Adaptability

The process of change generally takes time (Vosniadou, 2007). Missionaries often sacrifice position, relationships, and comfort (Sills, 2008; Trotter & Trotter, 2019); navigating these challenges takes patience when disoriented and away from support systems.

A second-culture leader adapts as they encounter new knowledge, viewpoints, and experiences (Hiebert, 2008). Adapting includes a willingness to change and shift categories and schema in a worldview (Kearney, 1984). For example, Emma indicated:

In my younger, leader days, I would have panicked. After a few years in this culture, we—the national team and local partners—decided to pause and pray. We pushed the launch back 1 week, asking as many people as possible to fast and pray that God would provide the right opportunities. My old self would have seen the initial roadblock as God canceling this opportunity. The cultural influence made me see the closed door as a way for God to grow my faith and the faith of those I was leading.

Bold Faith

Entering a second culture involves risk and unknown (Trotter & Trotter, 2019). A missionary chooses this interaction, knowing it has the potential to change their worldview (Hiebert, 1985, 2008; Kraft, 2001). Engaging in this process in bold faith allows the missionary freedom to embrace change as a part of their faith journey. For example, Emma indicated:

As a missionary, I have been pushed to step out in bold faith. I have realized even when I don't have a plan, God provides. Leading in a second culture has led me to more boldly rely on God and live out bold faith. The result is far less self-reliance. I think the American culture overvalues self-reliance and as a result, American's are often overly confident in the wrong things. Living in a second culture has pushed me to be confident in the right things, focusing on what God wants to do. I think my reliance has shifted from myself to the Lord.

Relationship Focused and Team Oriented

Entering a new culture means entering a new social structure (Wesch, 2018). Relationships, both in the social structure and Josiah Venture, provide guides who can explain, affirm, and shape norms in the new system. The following participant quotes illustrate this character trait:

- Together, along with our second-culture workers, we have learned we make a greater impact focused on people and not just performance. (Karl)
- Our organization highly values teamwork. We also look for second-culture workers

who are willing to lead as a part of the team. We have lost the missionaries who wanted to act independently with their own agenda. (Karl)

These characteristics seem, in part, to create a foundation for experiencing worldview transformation in a second culture.