

Causes of African and Asian Culture and Labor Conflicts in Zimbabwe

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Abstract Over the past two decades, there has been significant increase in the number of African students pursuing higher education in Asian universities, particularly in China. A large proportion of these graduates choose to remain in China after completing their studies, seeking enhanced opportunities. Concurrently, a growing number of Chinese nationals have migrated to Africa for business. The increasing cultural complications caused by cultural differences and communication barriers has led this study to examine the challenges, focusing on cultural taboos in both China and Zimbabwe. The research investigates the impact of foreign cultures on both Zimbabwean and Chinese societies. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study draws upon data collected through questionnaires, in-class discussions, and the authors' personal experiences. The findings offer valuable insights for travelers, diplomats, business professionals, and anyone intending to visit or reside in either Zimbabwe or China, providing guidance on navigating cultural taboos and overcoming intercultural communication challenge.

Keywords Zimbabwe, China, Culture, Taboos, Labor, Conflicts

1. Introduction

China's economic rise has attracted Zimbabwean students to its universities. Similarly, Chinese business people flock to Zimbabwe to partner with local businesses. However, a major hurdle lies in the significant cultural differences between the two peoples. [1] highlights that both Western and Chinese cultures have verbal and non-verbal communication, but each has its own taboos that need understanding. According to the Zimbabwe Investment Development Agency (ZIDA) China has become the largest Foreign Direct Investor to Zimbabwe. Statistics shows that currently Zimbabwe has 427 Licensed Chinese companies operating in various economic sectors of Zimbabwe. From the 427 companies 228 companies are in the mining sector while 95 companies in the manufacturing sector. The remaining 15 companies are shared among transport, agriculture and energy sectors. In 2023 alone Zimbabwe got about USD295 million from Chinese investors while in the year 2022 Zimbabwe earned about USD1, 3 Billion worth of investment that came from China. These statistics from (ZIDA) shows how important Chinese people should know Zimbabwean culture as well as Zimbabwean people to know Chinese language and culture. The influx of Chinese citizens to Zimbabwe is not without

its challenges.

Understanding different cultures is key to success in today's interconnected world. The vast differences between Zimbabwe and China, for example, highlight the cultural diversity across the globe. Respecting others starts with appreciating their cultural background. Culture is a complex concept. [2] acknowledges the lack of a single, universally accepted definition. [3], supported by [4], define culture as a system of interconnected values that shapes how people behave, perceive the world, and communicate. Zimbabwean culture has its own unique aspects. [5] discuss the various categories of taboos present. [6] describes Zimbabwean society as generally peaceful and non-violent, a view supported by [7]. This peaceful nature has fostered friendly relations with neighboring countries, including China. The passage concludes with a historical debate. [8] challenge the traditional belief that Great Zimbabwe represents the earliest expression of Zimbabwean culture. They argue that evidence suggests an even earlier cultural origin, dating back before the 12th century to Mapela. China is one of the world's oldest civilization with over 5000 years of traceable history. Chinese cultural stereotypes includes; ancestral worship exhibited during the Chinese tomb sweeping day, the Chinese tea culture, paper cutting, color culture, food culture and marriage systems are highly revered around all Chinese communities.

The continuous movement of people between Africa and Asia has increased over the years. African countries have

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Received: Jul. 7, 2025; Accepted: Jul. 25, 2025; Published: Jul. 29, 2025

Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/jamss>

witnessed a large number of Asian people coming into Africa to do business and investments while Asian countries particularly China, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, South Korea and many others have seen a lot of African people coming into their countries either for business, work or study. Asia and Africa have most of their lifestyle, cultures and way of doing things very different. Many instances of violence on each other have been seen or reported on both continents due to misunderstandings caused by their differences in culture and language. Because of these differences a lot of mistrust has grown high between these two people therefore the researchers took it to task to investigate the types of cultural differences, language differences and taboos that have affected a peaceful coexistence on African and Asian people. The investigations were carried out between Zimbabwean and Chinese people.

The researchers aimed at establishing the causes of misunderstanding in communication between Africans and Asians. The researchers also looked at how western culture influences both the African and Asian cultures with particular attention focused on Zimbabwean and Chinese cultures.

The following are the major research questions.

1. Would you marry a foreigner if there be a chance?
2. Can you work under the supervision of a foreign boss regardless his/her nationality?
3. Is it appropriate in your culture calling someone by his/her color?
4. Other cultures are more important than others. Yes/No?
5. Regardless that humans are friends with animals, can you call someone with a description of an animal?
6. Western culture has been forcibly forced on people by Western powers, Yes/No?

2. Methodologies and Conceptual Framework

Quantitative methodology according to [9] is useful in the establishment of correct analysis of the data collected. The authors have used this methodology extensively by way of interviewing participants, authors' cultural experiences of the two different cultures of Zimbabwe and China as well as using different literature materials.

A questionnaire was distributed to various people of African and Asian origin. 200 Chinese students, 35 Zimbabwean students, 31 students from other countries and 2 students from the United States participated.

The researchers are natives of the two countries in question. One researcher is a XXX citizen while the other researcher is a XXX citizen.

The responses gathered through the questionnaire survey. Successful responses came from 268 individuals of different countries. The biggest response were 200 Chinese students at XXX University studying Business English. The second

were 35 Zimbabwean students studying in China. The third were 31 students from various countries studying in China, while the least were 2 Americans working in China.

The survey targeted participants whose major was Foreign Language and other. Most participants counting to (A) 79% were of Foreign Language major while (B) 21% were of other majors.

According to the results from the questionnaires 55% respondents were holders of Bachelors degrees, 35% were holders of High school diplomas while 10% were holders of Masters degree.

The major group of participants were Chinese, followed by Zimbabweans then others from different countries and 2 Americans working in China.

Age demographics showed 18-25 years of age were the highest participants counting to 84%. Secondly were 26-35 years of age at 11%. Those aged 36-45 only had 3%. The lowest age group participants were 46-55 years of age at 3% and only 2% from 56 years of age and above.

The choices of the answers were (A) Agree (B) Disagree (C) Strongly Agree (D). Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire had 10 questions which needed direct answers and some which needed self opinion.

3. Comparative Culture and Disputes

Zimbabwean culture itself is heavily influenced by the [10]. Many Zimbabwean students arrive in China with limited knowledge of the culture, leading to difficulties at school, shops, and even on the streets. Traditionally, Zimbabweans used art for communication, as evidenced by the rock paintings in the Matopo Hills [11]. These paintings, with their distinct style [12], showcase a rich artistic heritage. Some contemporary Zimbabwean artists like Masamvu Misheck and Virginia Chihota have achieved international recognition. China also boasts a long and distinguished artistic tradition. [13] considers the Qing Dynasty art (1680-1795) to be exceptional, while [14] emphasize the continuity of traditional art forms in modern digital art.

[15] argues that colonialism stripped Africans of their traditional cultures, including dance, replacing them with Western styles. Zimbabwe is no exception. Zimbabwean dance is known for its energetic movements, with emphasis on the hips and legs. In contrast, Chinese dance focuses more on hand and waist movements. Zimbabweans learn various dance forms from a young age, including cultural, religious, traditional, and even Western styles. In China, dance takes many forms and serves purposes like entertainment and physical fitness. Many traditional Chinese festivals even incorporate specific dance styles.

Colonialism left its mark on Zimbabwean music before 1980. Research by [16] suggests that the music scene was largely dominated by male voices, reflecting the themes of resistance against colonial rule. This focus on social and political issues wasn't surprising. However, after Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, the musical landscape began to

shift. The emergence of female musicians marked a significant change. Their voices added a new dimension to Zimbabwean music. Additionally, catchy music jingles became a powerful tool for political campaigns [17]. Groups like the all-female Mbare Chimurenga choir from Harare's Mbare suburbs became a prime example of how music could be used to communicate political messages to the public. This emphasis on music as a tool for social commentary and inspiration aligns with the deep respect China holds for poetry [18]. In both cultures, artistic expression played a crucial role in uniting people and fostering a sense of national identity.

Traditional Medical Approaches

Both Zimbabwe and China prioritize healthcare, utilizing traditional, Western, and now blended medical approaches. Research by [19] suggests these cultures view illness similarly, with both traditional and Western medicine having a place. Zimbabwe's colonial past created a diverse healthcare landscape. Some citizens [20] favor traditional methods like rituals, dreams, and herbalism for their perceived effectiveness. The Zimbabwe National Association of Traditional Healers (ZINATHA) regulates traditional practitioners [20] (ibid). Statistics suggest more traditional healers than medical doctors existed in Zimbabwe [20] (ibid). Machinga defends rituals for providing comfort, citing the COVID-19 pandemic where traditional herbs were used despite Western predictions of high mortality. Similarly, during the HIV/AIDS epidemic, some Zimbabweans initially rejected Western explanations, leading to fatalities [21]. China also boasts a multifaceted healthcare system. [22] describes Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) using natural elements like plants, minerals, and animal products for over 4,000 years. Modern Chinese Medicine (MCM) builds on TCM by transforming traditional herbs into modern medications, exemplified by the successful development of antimalarial drugs [23]. Additionally, China incorporates ancestral worship faiths and rituals into its healthcare practices [24].

Modern Medical Approaches

Western medicines are purported by [25] to be the answer to human health problems since human civilization as he attributes the milestones taken in the medical progress in Europe. [26] views Traditional Chinese Medicine as the alternative medical health care system in Asia. In Zimbabwe however Western medical hospitals play an essential role running parallel to (ZINATHA).

Zimbabweans also believe in ancestral worship, spirit mediums and spiritual interventions. The Shona people also believe in supernatural powers whereby many things around the societies and communities have some ways and means of benefiting from them. Prosperity or poverty, sickness or healing, success or failure are all attributed to the will of the creator who speaks through the ancestors. Spiritual healing is a very rampant activity in Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans are very spiritual people as alluded by [27] in his assertion that the influence of traditional religion and the spirituality of the people in Zimbabwe in issues dealing with healing is very high. From a discussion with some Chinese students it has

been revealed that China in ancient times spiritual healing was also very common and now it is no longer viewed as a stereotypical Chinese culture even though there remains a few situations in some remote Chinese communities where this is still practiced as superstition.

Natural healing is very common in many countries. Some type of sickness or illness may be caused by weather conditions and can also as well be treated by other different weather conditions. Other sicknesses and illnesses even some chronic diseases may just need a little exercises such as blood clotting as asserted by [28].

Marriages and Child Care Cultural Conflicts

Marriages in Zimbabwe and China are traditionally recognized as a union between a man and a woman, involving both families [29]. In Zimbabwe, a bride price is paid to the bride's family, but it's seen as an appreciation for raising the bride, not a purchase. Both cultures have pre- and post-marriage customs that influence marital success. With the rise in cross-cultural marriages, some differences have emerged. China's skewed gender ratio, with more men than women, has led to women taking dominance. In Zimbabwe, female population is higher compared to men. Zimbabwe has 91.26 males per 100 females while China has a surplus of males with 51.24% compared to 48.74% females. There are many types of marriages in Zimbabwe.

1. New Marriages Law in Zimbabwe. Marriages Act [Chapter 5:15]
2. [Civil Marriage]. Monogamous marriage (one man, one wife)
3. [Registered Customary law union]. This allows one potentially polygamous marriage (one man potentially many wives)
4. [Unregistered Customary law Union] (UCLU). This is a polygamous marriage of one man and many wives

This is contrary to Chinese marriage laws which only allows one man one wife as referred in Chinese as (一夫一妻 (yì fū yì qī)). According to the new Marriage Act [Chapter 5:17] has set the age of consent to 18 years. The decline in both marriage and child bearing in China has been attributed to various reasons such as asserted by [30], the avoidance of marriage by wealthy women. Others is generally due to the cost of living and that of raising a child in China. Despite the practice of bride price, both Zimbabwe and China hold their married women in high regard. [31] argues that bride price equates women with property, but this view is challenged by [32]. In Zimbabwean culture, mothers are powerful and respected figures [33]. Similarly, China's high bride price (often exceeding \$10,000 USD) reflects the value placed on women (excluding the additional costs of a house and car). Research by [34] suggests that a majority of Zimbabwean women support the practice of bride price. The passage also touches on Zimbabwe's legal stance on same-sex marriage. [35] highlights the law against same-sex marriage, supported by most Zimbabweans due to cultural values emphasizing procreation [36]. However, respect for mothers within Shona culture extends to honoring husbands by their wives [37].

Many Zimbabweans believe in intermarriages. [38] asserts that the situation in Zimbabwe is currently marked by intermarriages mainly of Zimbabwean women to foreigners particularly to Nigerian and Chinese migrant entrepreneurs who for the sake of wanting to acquire local citizenship so they opt to conveniently offer high bridal price to get married to local Zimbabwean women. According to [39] intermarriages between Chinese with foreigners is on record high. The rise being attributed to the need to do business joint ventures with foreign experts in China. In Zimbabwe, child-rearing is primarily the responsibility of parents. Only in working families or those facing single parenthood do grandparents take on childcare duties [40]. Zimbabwean culture values children as the future, fostering a peaceful environment within families [41]. China presents a contrasting picture. Traditionally, grandparents play a larger role in raising children [42]. Family size also differs, with the average Zimbabwean family having four children, while China's one-child policy (recently abolished) limited families to one child. China, is second only to South Korea [43], as far as the cost of child rearing is concerned.

Divorce cases have become a global phenomena. The high rate of single mothers in Zimbabwe and China has risen over the years. In Zimbabwe many single mothers usually prefers remarrying while in China it is the opposite. According to [44] when a man dies and leaves a wife behind Zimbabwean culture allows the widowed woman to choose from one of her husband's brothers someone who will ceremonially take her as a wife in order to provide family necessities for the remaining family. This is called in Shona as (kugara nhaka) (the inheriting of the wife of a late brother) This does not happen in modern China. [45] are of the view that diseases as HIV and AIDS become very prevalent in single mothers than in married women therefore many Zimbabwean support the culture of (kugarwa nhaka). Cultural differences surrounding marriage and childcare can sometimes lead to difficulties in relationships between Zimbabweans and Chinese, potentially contributing to higher rates of separation or divorce in intermarriages between these two groups.

Communication Complexities and Conflicts

While Shona and Ndebele are also Zimbabwe's official languages, English is the instruction in education and employment. [46] highlight the challenge - passing English O-Levels is crucial for both jobs and university enrollment. This disconnect can lead to students struggling with English proficiency. As a result, many Zimbabweans think in their native language but express themselves in English. China, in contrast, uses Mandarin as the primary language of instruction, with English as a separate subject. The significant grammatical differences between Shona and Chinese, especially the use of auxiliary words like "de" in Chinese, can create difficulties for Zimbabweans learning Chinese

My mother 我的妈妈 (wǒ de mā mā)
我 (wǒ) means (Me/I)
的 (de) Auxiliary for (of)
妈妈 (mā mā) mother

In Shona this sentence is written as follows;

(Amai vangu) My mother.

Amai (mother)

Vangu (My)

However in Chinese this sentence is written by Shona people as; 妈妈的 (mā mā de) which in English and Chinese means (mother's), however this becomes a different meaning from the way the Shona speaking people may want to say (my mother) in Chinese. This sentence is not wrong but that the sentence is wrongly used in Chinese. The wrong usage of Chinese Auxiliary 的 (de) by Zimbabweans learning Chinese is high. [47] describes for example the usage of Chinese degree adverb as commonly used or placed before an adjective or verb while in Shona a degree adverbs is commonly used or placed after an adjective or verb.

Japanese, Korean and Chinese their labeling of numbers have similar logic as is also shown in their sign language of numbers. The Chinese can count all numbers using only ten fingers.

Since English is one of the official language and mostly used in all institutions in Zimbabwe Shona language has been highly diluted resulting in the use of many English borrowed words in Shona.

Zimbabwean language culture has been highly influenced by English language. When Shona speaking people are outside of work or school they speak mixed Shona with English.

1. Shona: Handei ku (town).

English: Let's go to (town)

Meanings: (Handei) plural for (let us go). (Ku) means (to).

Shona: Isa mu (fridge).

English: Put in the (fridge)

Meanings: (Isa) means (put). (Mu) means (inside).

It is from this context that shows that communicating with Zimbabweans one needs to either speak pure English or mix Shona language with English.

[48] asserts that the term "slang" 俚语 (lǐ yǔ) is defined in different and various ways by different ethnic groups. [49] defines slang as the language of the internet mainly used by the younger generation. [50] also agrees with [49]'s definition view that slang is a creation of some vocabulary on the internet. In Zimbabwe there are English slang words and Shona slang words used on a daily basis mainly by the younger generation.

Food and drink Cultural differences

Zimbabweans have lots of types of food and drink. The cultures of Zimbabwe and China people invite others to eat when they meet. In China they say, "你吃饭了吗? (nǐ chī fàn le ma?)" meaning "did you eat?". Zimbabwe's staple food is "sadza" which is made from sorghum or maize. In China those in the North mainly eat rice while those in the South mainly eat noodles. There are many ways of cooking rice and noodles in China such as fried rice 炒饭 (chǎo fàn) and fried noodles 炒面 (chǎo miàn).

In Zimbabwe most people eat with spoons, knives, forks or hands when eating (sadza). In China people use chopsticks to eat most of the food except a few types of food which may require using hands. This sounds very difficult for Zimbabwean

students in China to use chopsticks when eating and also difficult for many Chinese people in Zimbabwe to use hands or forks and knives.

Zimbabwean culture regards some types of food as medicine. [51] asserts that the cost of treatment of diseases in Zimbabwe's health care system is very high therefore many people take preventive measures by eating food that contain medical components. [52] alludes to [51] (ibid) research finding in the rampant usage of wild fruits and vegetables as a prevention against malnutrition.

The love of Western food is very high in Zimbabwe so as in China. Many Chinese students have studied in many Western countries but, because of the love of their country most of them prefer to come back to China and impart their skills back home. The American fast food McDonald's and (KFC) are very famous in China. According to [53] as alluded by [54] the rise in demand of Western food in China is as a result of the modernization of food consumption style. [55] assert that Zimbabwean cultures are very diverse. Drinking taboos are not as many in Zimbabwean culture. Zimbabwean believe in witchcraft and superstition so sharing a glass of beer or alcohol with a stranger is a taboo. A drinking woman is regarded as weak and infidel however Chinese women and men can both drink alcohol freely.

4. Cultural Taboos and Conflicts

Taboos are social and cultural restrictions that can be related to language, behavior, or objects. Researchers [56] & [57] offer various definitions, highlighting how taboos promote social harmony and address community needs. [58] emphasizes the potential consequences of violating taboos. Both China and Zimbabwe have taboos, but the focus differs. China has specific language taboos. For example, terms directly mentioning death might be avoided in favor of euphemisms like "he has gone" [59]. Food taboos are prominent in Zimbabwe. Donkeys, dogs, cats, bats, and snakes are generally not consumed due to cultural beliefs [60]. In contrast, Chinese food taboos focus more on manners while eating [61]. While some argue they are merely superstitions [62], others see them as a way to preserve the environment [63]. [64] believe Zimbabwean taboos are ancient traditions with value, but acknowledge the difficulty of reviving them in a modern context.

Dressing Taboos

Both Zimbabwe and China have traditional dress codes reflecting societal values. Similar to [65], who discuss cultural taboos learned through experience, Zimbabwean culture dictates certain clothing norms. For instance, short skirts or dresses might be seen as inappropriate for women. China's approach is more relaxed. While gift-giving etiquette exists (avoiding green hats), there are no strictures on everyday clothing choices. However, funerals call for somber attire in both cultures: black in Zimbabwe and muted colors in China.

Addressing Taboos

Shona language like Chinese language has very respectful terms for addressing individuals such as;

你 (nǐ) English (You) singular

您 (nín) English (You) respect (elders)

你们 (nǐ mén) English (You) plural

As far as English is concerned the pronoun "you" is used to address every kind of person This sounds very disrespectful according to Chinese taboos of addressing people. In Shona like Chinese it is as follows;

Iwe English (You) singular

Imi English (You) respect (elders)

Imi English (You) plural

This type of address shows respect of individuals according to Shona taboos of address.

Marriages Taboos

Zimbabwean social structures are founded on family totems (mitupo) "图腾 (tú téng)". A totem in Zimbabwe is usually derived from names of animals or places. One can only know that he/she is related to another by having a similar totem. Similar family names or surnames do not represent relationship. According to [63] (ibid) (ibid) the issue of totems was brought about long time ago in Zimbabwe as a methodology of conservation of animals, places and other environmental natural resources from extinction. t In Zimbabwe 's totem are for example;

Mbizi English (Zebra) 斑马 (bān mǎ)

Mhofu English (Buffalo) 水牛 (shuǐ niú)

Hove English (Fish) 鱼 (yú)

Nzou English (Elephant) 大象 (dà xiàng)

Ngurue English (Warthog) 疣猪 (yóu zhū)

The people who have animal totem means they should not eat those animals or certain parts of them. This helps in preservation of animals. Marrying a person with a similar totem is regarded as a taboo in Zimbabwe.

Color Taboos

Types of colors for different events matters in Zimbabwe and in China. Zimbabwean national colors are green, yellow, red, black and white. These colors dominate most of the cultural beliefs and values of the people of Zimbabwe. Most national events are decorated in the flag colors as shown in the Zimbabwean flag.

The 4 small stars surrounding the big star in a Chinese flag stands for the unity of the Chinese people behind the big star which represents the Communist party of China.

The West's dominance in world politics and economics has also spread to cultural dominance such as Western, food, dressing and language.

Colors have been known in Zimbabwe long time ago when the people used to paint their mud houses using clay mixed with certain colors. [60] (ibid) describes the Korekore people of Hurungwe in Zimbabwe who used to decorate their traditional houses in symbolism of their traditional cultural

color values. Chinese people like Zimbabweans are also color sensitive. In China white color 白色 (bái sè) acts as a symbol of political reaction, clear, pure, plain, blank. In China people wear white at funerals. Chinese highly respect red color for rapping gifts and during the spring festival. In Chinese, Black color 黑色 (hēi sè) symbolizes dark, sinister, secret, shady, illegal, to hide something away, to vilify and as a (loanword) for hacking (computing). Different cultures have different ideas about beauty. For example, in Zimbabwe, dark skin is often considered beautiful, while in China, it's not typically seen that way. It's also interesting to note how people talk about skin color. In Zimbabwe, you rarely hear someone call a Chinese person "yellow," but in China, it's common to hear Black people referred to as "black." This difference in terminology can be seen as disrespectful by some Black people. Sources on cultural perceptions of skin color indicate that beauty standards vary across different cultures and regions. Some cultural stereotype, like the black color of Zimbabwean people may emphasize the beauty of darker skin tones, while others may favor lighter skin. It's important to note that these are generalizations, and individual preferences can differ within any group. Regarding the use of terms like "yellow man" or "black person," these terms can be perceived differently depending on cultural context and historical background. Some may consider them descriptive, while others may find them offensive due to past associations with discrimination therefore It's crucial to be mindful of these sensitivities and strive for respectful communication.

Gifts Taboos

Regarding gifts In Shona an idiom goes like “Kandiro kanoenda kunobva kamwe” meaning he who gives receives / a good turn deserves another 以德报德 (yǐ dé bào dé), 善有善报 (shàn yǒu shàn bào) entails how important giving is. People give gifts at weddings, Christmas day, Birthdays, graduations and at various occasions. Zimbabweans give gifts either as in money or kind. At weddings relatives give livestock, money or in kind. It is a taboo to give a crippled livestock as a gift in Zimbabwean culture. As far as Chinese culture is concerned one must not give a “clock” 钟表 (zhōng biǎo) for it may mean wishing a short lived life. When giving gifts in China they must be in pairs. A green hat should not be given to a wife or girlfriend as a gift for this may mean separation. In China it is a taboo to give someone a scissors 剪刀 (jiǎn dāo) as a gift because it is viewed as wishing a separation. Another forbidden gift in China is an umbrella 雨伞 (yǔ sǎn). A gift of an umbrella in China is viewed as wishing someone a bad luck.

Funerals and deaths Taboos

Death is a menace to all humanity. There are so many words, and phrase that are used by Zimbabweans and Chinese so as to avoid a clear mentioning of the term “death”. [66] argues in his article suggests that Zimbabweans use certain words which avoids the usage of the term “death” but at the same time using words and terms that equally reflect death as example;

(Azorora) English is (He /she has rested) while in Chinese they say 他/她休息了 (tā / tā xiū xiē le)

(Arara) English is (He/she is asleep) while the Chinese will say 他/她睡了 (tā / tā shuì le)

(Atungamira nzira) English is (He/she has taken the lead. The Chinese will also say 他/她先走了 (tā / tā xiān zǒu le)

(Arova pasi) English is (He/she has gone). In Chinese they will say 他/她走了 (tā / tā zǒu le)

All these phrases mentioned above are a sign that no one wants to say (Afa), he/she dead. [67] asserts Zimbabwe has some ritual death taboos which are very critical. Cremation of dead bodies is still a taboo in Zimbabwe. [68] asserts that the increase of deaths in the early 2000 caused a lot of shortages of burial places in urban areas resulting in cremation methodology partially used. Most Zimbabweans prefer burying the dead to cremation. In China cremation is not a taboo. Many Chinese people prefer cremation to burial.

Cooking Taboos

In Chinese culture its a taboo to leave chopsticks standing in the bowl while in Zimbabwean culture it is a taboo leaving a cooking stick standing in the pot. These differences has made a lot of problems and conflicts among both Chinese nationals in Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean nationals in China.

Religion, Work and Conflicts

The dominant religious groups in Zimbabwe are Christian groups such as the apostolic sect Pentecostal churches, Protestant churches, Catholic and many other small religious groups such as Islamic groups and African Traditional Religious groups. In China the dominating religious groups are the Islamic groups in west China and a few Christian groups. [69] criticize the theories that categorize people based solely on race or culture. Research by [70] supports this view, finding no inherent intellectual differences between races [71]. Colonialism introduced foreign religions to Zimbabwe, including Christianity. However, traditional beliefs remain strong, with "Nyatene" or "Musikavanhu" referring to the creator god in Shona (the local language). China also has a strong ancestral belief system. People often perform rituals to honor their ancestors, seeking protection and prosperity. While open to foreign religions, China doesn't see widespread adoption like in Zimbabwe. Public religious preaching is less common in China compared to Zimbabwe [72].

Beyond communication styles, differences in business etiquette, cultural values, and social norms can also create friction. For instance, the emphasis on hierarchy and seniority in Chinese business culture may clash with more egalitarian approaches. Similarly, differing perceptions of time, work ethic, and the importance of personal relationships versus professional obligations can lead to misunderstandings and frustration. The concept of 关系(guanxi), the cultivation of relationships, plays a crucial role in Chinese business dealings, and its importance may not be fully appreciated by those unfamiliar with this cultural nuance. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach involving businesses, educational institutions, individuals, and governments. Businesses operating in both countries should

prioritize comprehensive cross-cultural training for all employees involved in intercultural interactions. These programs should not only cover communication styles and business etiquette but also delve into the underlying cultural values and social norms of both societies. Training should be interactive, using real-life case studies, role-playing scenarios, and discussions to foster empathy and understanding. Furthermore, organizations should establish clear communication protocols, potentially including the use of translators, simplified language, and designated cultural liaisons, to mitigate language barriers and cultural sensitivities.

Labor Conflicts and Court Cases by Chinese investors in Zimbabwe

The burgeoning economic relationship between Chinese investors and Zimbabwe has unfortunately been marred by persistent labor disputes and cultural clashes, fostering a climate of mistrust and antagonism. A significant contributor to this discord is the documented prevalence of labor rights violations within Chinese-owned enterprises. Reports consistently highlight concerns regarding inadequate remuneration, substandard working conditions, and a conspicuous disregard for occupational safety protocols. Furthermore, allegations of worker mistreatment, encompassing both physical and verbal abuse, have surfaced, painting a deeply troubling picture. Contractual ambiguities and perceived inequities in compensation further exacerbate the prevailing sense of grievance among Zimbabwean workers.

Compounding these labor-related grievances are the substantial cultural and linguistic barriers that impede effective communication and mutual understanding. Divergent communication styles and cultural norms, coupled with the formidable challenge of language differences, create fertile ground for misunderstandings and misinterpretations. These disparities in work ethics and management philosophies further contribute to friction, hindering the development of harmonious working relationships. Beyond the immediate realm of labor relations, environmental concerns have emerged as a significant point of contention. The environmental impact of certain Chinese-run operations, particularly within the extractive industries, has drawn criticism and fueled local resentment. The cumulative effect of these labor, cultural, and environmental issues has precipitated a surge in legal disputes, as aggrieved Zimbabwean workers seek redress through the courts.

In essence, the complex interplay of labor rights violations, cultural and linguistic differences, and environmental concerns has created a challenging environment for Chinese investment in Zimbabwe. To mitigate these tensions and foster a more sustainable and equitable relationship, improved communication, stricter regulatory oversight, and a greater commitment to mutual respect and understanding are essential. Furthermore, it is important to note that the Zimbabwean government is currently facing increasing pressure to intensify its monitoring of these work environments, signaling a growing recognition of the need for reform.

5. Western Cultural Influence in Zimbabwe and China and Conflicts

[73] asserts that since the time of the former President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe, homosexual identities is not tolerated in Zimbabwe [74]. China unlike Zimbabwe is a developed and powerful country which the Western powers can't easily bully. Since 20 years ago [75] asserts that Chinese government decriminalized the act of homosexuality but the non interaction between LGBT rights groups and the government still leaves a lot to be desired. [76] acknowledges the lack of explicit public policies in China relating to LGBT including the rights of gays, lesbians and homosexuals. [77] asserts that since 1954 The People's Republic of China 's law of equality for all citizens there still remains a contest in issues dealing with gender and sexual orientation. [78] shows how the students in the United Arab Emirates resisted Western imposed liberal values against their Islamic values. Zimbabweans like many other global non Western cultural countries continue to resist certain Western cultural values which seem to run contrary to their culture.

6. Discussion and Results

In China, a rich tapestry of superstitions governs many aspects of social interaction and gift-giving. Simple acts, like the placement of chopsticks, can carry profound symbolic meaning. Leaving chopsticks upright in a bowl is considered a grave faux pas, as it resembles the incense sticks used in funeral rituals, effectively symbolizing death and misfortune. The act is therefore seen as wishing death upon those present. Similarly, the act of giving gifts is fraught with potential pitfalls. An umbrella, seemingly a practical present, carries the connotation of separation and parting, as the Chinese word for "umbrella" shares a similar sound with the word for "separation." Gifting a clock or watch is equally problematic, as the phrase for "giving a clock" sounds ominously like "sending off to a funeral," thus associating the gift with death. Scissors, with their inherent cutting action, are believed to symbolize the severing of ties and relationships, making them an unsuitable present. Even the seemingly innocuous act of sharing fruit can be laden with meaning. Cutting a pear, for instance, is thought to foreshadow a separation in a relationship, again due to the similar pronunciation of "pear" and "separation" in Chinese. The green hat, a seemingly fashionable accessory in many cultures, carries a heavy stigma in China, symbolizing infidelity and cuckoldry. Across the globe in Zimbabwe, a different set of superstitions reflects the unique cultural landscape. Food and animals often play a central role in these beliefs. The consumption of certain meats, such as dog and donkey, is strictly taboo, not only due to ethical concerns but also because they are associated with cruelty, witchcraft, and general misfortune. Eating snakes is believed to invite a curse of witchcraft. Even the act of giving livestock as a gift can be fraught with social implications.

Presenting a crippled animal is considered a sign of disrespect and an ill wish, potentially bringing misfortune upon both the giver and the receiver. Marriage customs are also governed by superstition: marrying within one's totem is thought to cause miscarriages, and younger sisters should not marry before their older sisters, lest misfortune befall the elder sibling. Mocking someone with a disability is strongly condemned, with the proverb "Do not laugh at others' shortcomings while you are still alive" emphasizing the potential for the mocker to experience similar misfortune. Finally, even everyday actions like leaving a cooking stick upright in a pot are considered unlucky. These beliefs highlight the importance of respect, social harmony, and the interconnection of actions and consequences in Shona culture and therefore the need for their careful recognition.

Results

Q 1: (A) 86% of the participants agreed to the idiom that says "when in Rome do as the Romans do", while (C) 8% strongly agreed. (B) 5% disagreed and (D) 1% strongly disagreed. This shows that the majority of the participants accept the importance of this idiom that promotes intercultural coexistence in this fast changing world that has witnessed and seen the greatest migration of people from one place to another. A clear example is the way how migrants are treated wherever they plan to go and live.

Q 2: Intermarriages have been agreed by (A) 58% participants while (B) 34% disagreed. (C) 3% of the participants strongly agreed but (D) 5% strongly disagreed to intermarriages. The world has seen the rise of intermarriages which has been highly attributed to globalization.

Q 3: Working under the supervision of a foreign boss has been hugely accepted by (A) 75% of the participants while (B) 17% disagreed. However (C) 7% strongly agreed and (D) 1% strongly disagreed.

Q 4: 20% participants agreed that in their culture calling people by their skin color is right while 48% disagreed. 32% strongly disagreed and 1% however strongly agreed.

Q 5: The survey showed that learning a foreign language is not separated from learning a foreign culture. (A) 67% participants agreed. (B) 19% disagreed. (C) 12% of the participants strongly agreed and (D) 2% strongly disagreed.

Q 6: (B) 61% of the participants disagreed to the view that Western culture was forcibly forced on people by Western powers. (A) 30% however agree to this view while (C) 5% strongly agree. Only (D) 4% strongly disagreed.

Q 7: (B) 61% of the participants disagreed to the view that other cultures are more important than others. (D) 25% also strongly disagree while (A) 8% agreed. Only (C) 1% of participants strongly agreed to this view. It is clear that all cultures are equally important. Those who disagreed plus those who strongly disagreed totals to 86%.

Q 8: The survey shows that (B) 64% disagree to the view that cultural taboos can be disregarded when one is angry. (D) 29% also strongly disagrees. However there were (A) 10% of the participants who agreed while (C) 2% strongly agreed. The majority view shows that emotions do not go beyond the

values of cultural taboos.

Q 9: (B) 50% of the participants disagreed with the view that even though human beings are friends with animals therefore it is appropriate to call someone with an animal description. (A) 28% of the participants agreed. (D) 19% strongly disagreed while (C) 3% strongly agreed. Combined together disagreed and strongly disagreed figures the total for disagreement becomes 69% against those who agreed and strongly agreed.

Q 10: (B) 68% disagreed to the fact that cultural taboos are a thing of the past and surely has no place in this modern age. (A) 11% agreed but (D) 21% strongly disagreed while (C) 3% strongly agreed.

The study compared Zimbabwean and Chinese cultures, revealing significant differences. Many participants recognized a lack of awareness among Chinese people regarding color-based descriptions for people of different color. Understanding these taboos can help avoid misunderstandings. The lack of exposure to different races can contribute to these misunderstandings. Many Chinese children are surprised to see black people for the first time, leading to questions like "Why is he so dark?" (为什么他这么黑? wèi shén me tā zhè me hēi?). The survey suggests that more exposure and education about cultural sensitivities would be beneficial to both Zimbabweans and Chinese nationals.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Increased economic interaction has linked Zimbabwe and China, marked by Chinese investment having flowed into Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean students having been drawn to study in China. Significant cultural differences, language barriers, and differing taboos have created communication challenges and potential conflict. This research has investigated these misunderstandings, having focused on Zimbabwean and Chinese interactions. The study has explored the complexities of defining culture, having highlighted specific aspects of both Zimbabwean such as peacefulness, debated origins and Chinese for example, ancestral worship, tea culture cultures. The research aimed to pinpoint causes of communication breakdowns and has examined the influence of Western culture on both societies. Significant cultural and social differences have been shown between Zimbabwe and China, leading to communication and business challenges. Chinese investors have frequently encountered disagreements with local Zimbabweans due to a lack of understanding of Zimbabwean culture and customs. Similarly, Zimbabwean employees in Chinese companies have often experienced communication difficulties stemming from language barriers. Zimbabwean students studying in Chinese universities, particularly those in non-language-focused programs, have typically struggled with language and cultural adjustment for several years. However, students enrolled in Chinese language programs have tended to adapt more easily. One of the most pressing issues arises from differing communication styles. Direct communication, common in some Westernized

contexts, can be perceived as blunt or even rude in cultures that prioritize indirectness and saving face, such as China. Conversely, the indirect communication style favored by some Zimbabweans might be misinterpreted by Chinese individuals accustomed to more explicit messaging. This difference can lead to misunderstandings in business negotiations, workplace interactions, and even casual conversations. Furthermore, variations in nonverbal communication, such as eye contact, body language, and the use of silence, can further complicate intercultural exchanges. Educational institutions also have a vital role to play. Expanding cultural exchange programs, integrating cross-cultural awareness into curricula, and offering language instruction in Mandarin and relevant Zimbabwean languages are essential steps. Prepared orientation programs for Zimbabwean students going to China should be comprehensive, covering not only language and culture but also practical aspects of living abroad. At the individual level, open communication, active listening, and a willingness to learn are crucial. Individuals should strive to cultivate empathy and respect for different cultural perspectives, avoiding generalizations and stereotypes. Engaging in cultural immersion activities, such as attending cultural events, trying local cuisine, and interacting with people from different backgrounds, can deepen understanding and break down cultural barriers. Self-awareness, reflecting on one's own cultural biases and assumptions, is equally important. Beyond these specific recommendations, fostering ongoing dialogue and exchange between Zimbabweans and Chinese at all levels is essential. Continued research and scholarship on Zimbabwe-China relations can provide valuable insights and inform policy recommendations. Balanced and nuanced media coverage can also play a crucial role in promoting mutual understanding and avoiding the perpetuation of stereotypes. Ultimately, building strong and productive relationships between Zimbabwe and China requires a long-term commitment to cross-cultural understanding. It is an ongoing process that demands patience, adaptability, and a genuine willingness to learn from each other. By embracing these recommendations and fostering a spirit of mutual respect, both nations can unlock the full potential of their growing interconnections and build a future of collaboration and shared prosperity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author acknowledges the critical role played by the participants in their contributions to share their data to this survey.

Funding

This work did not receive any funding support.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declare no conflicts of interest.

Ethical Statement

The author prioritized the privacy and confidentiality of participant data. Participants were assured that all data collected would be used solely for academic purposes within this research project and would not be shared or used elsewhere. Specifically, Participants were also informed of their rights, such as the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, the right to access and correct their data, the right to have their data destroyed after the study.

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