

# MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

*The goal of this article is discuss the connection between marketing communication and the discipline of international relations. Basically International Relations is learning about global issues, social science and global policy. Marketing communication is adapting our message so that it fits the desired market. For marketers, having a solid understanding of global issues, policies and cultures is a necessity for marketing communication. Marketing communication, ' international trade, globalization, the liberal-capitalist world order — however we want to refer to international economic relations — clearly ties states together*

## INTRODUCTION

Marketing communication as a general study is known as one of the specialties, subjects, or sub-disciplines of communication. As a practice, marketing communication is a fundamental and complex part of the company's marketing efforts. Loosely defined, marketing communications (often abbreviated as Mar-Com only) can be described as all messages and media that we use to communicate with markets. Communication marketing uses different channels and marketing tools in a combination. The marketing communication channel focuses on what ways the business communicates messages to the desired market, or the market in general. Marketing communication refers to means that are adopted by companies to convey messages about the products and brands that we sell, either directly or indirectly to customers with the intention to persuade them to buy.

Meanwhile International Relations as an academic discipline studies a complex whole concerning the cultural, economic, legal, military, political and social relations of all countries, as well as the elements of their population and entities.<sup>128</sup> Joseph Grieco, John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno said that the study of

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<sup>128</sup> Keith L. Shimko, *International Relations: Perspectives, Controversies, and Readings* (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2013), p. xviii.

International Relations is part of a social science that pays attention to the political, economic, social and cultural relations between the two countries and among many countries. HI studies also cover the relations of countries with other important actors, such as global companies (MNCs) and international organizations.<sup>129</sup> Other International Relations (IR) experts such as Stephanie Lawson, Peu Ghost, Robert H. Jackson and Georg Sørensen also expressly state that the study of International Relations gives enormous attention to multinational or transnational companies (MNCs/TNCs). So this study not only discusses the activities of state actors but also non-state actors such as global scale companies.

Thus between marketing communication and international relations actually has a very close relationship. So far, very few experts have given attention or made a study of the links between marketing communications and international relations. Marketing communication studies (especially in Indonesia) are more oriented to the study of marketing communication in the domestic market. Rarely do studies discuss the importance of the application of marketing communication in the global scope (global market) or the stage of international relations (international market). This paper seeks to explain how marketing communication is very relevant to be applied in the context of international relations.

## **MARKETING COMMUNICATION**

Communication is a word that is not entirely without controversy. Most dictionary definitions suggest that communication can mean giving or exchanging information, while the marketing point of view is that marketers create and deliver messages while consumers receive and consume them.<sup>130</sup> There is no universal definition of marketing communications, and there are many interpretations of the subject. Frank William Jefkins defines marketing communication in a broad sense, not only includes advertising, but also extends to public relations, which involves

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<sup>129</sup> Joseph Grieco, John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, *Introduction to International Relations: Enduring Questions and Contemporary Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 2.

<sup>130</sup> John Egan, *Marketing Communication* (New York: Thompson Publishing Co., 2007), p. 29.

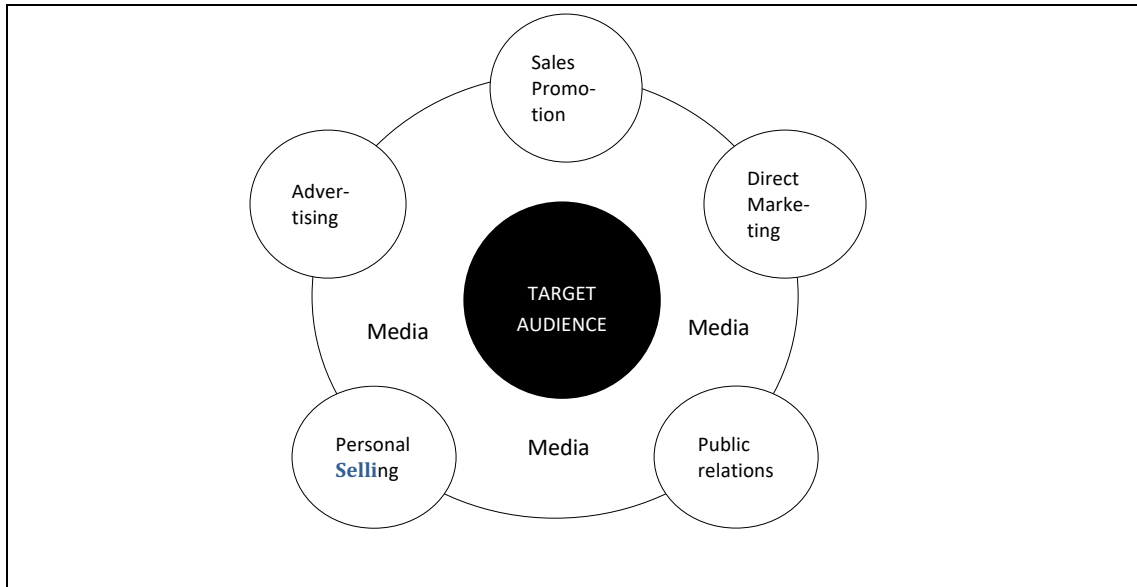
many organizations that are not directly involved in marketing and which have nothing to do with advertising. According to Chris Fill and Barbara Jamieson, traditionally at least in the concept of marketing communication there are five disciplines or instruments, namely advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing<sup>131</sup>. In addition, there are media where time and space can be purchased or used to send messages to the target audience. The right mix of tools or instructors and the choice of media for a long time has been largely predictable.

The above has been said that marketing communication refers to the means adopted by companies to convey messages about the products and brands that we sell, either directly or indirectly to customers with the intention to persuade them to buy. In other words, different media used by companies to exchange information about their goods and services to customers is referred to as marketing communication. Marketers use marketing communication tools to create brand awareness among potential customers, which means that some brand images will be created in their minds that help them to make purchasing decisions.

Figure 1: The Tools and Position of Marketing Communication Mix

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<sup>131</sup> Chris Fill and Barbara Jamieson, *Marketing Communication* (Edinburg, UK: Heriot-Watt University Press, 2014), p. xiii.



Marketing communication is basically part of the marketing mix. The marketing mix defines 4Ps marketing (Product, Price, Promotion, and Place)<sup>132</sup>. The 4Ps make up a typical marketing mix, but this days, marketing mix increasingly includes several other Ps suggested by different experts, like Packaging, Positioning, People, Pace, Passion, Publics, and even Politics as well. Each element of the 4 Ps requires that decisions be taken after assigning a value to each variable under it. Some such variables could be:

1. Price (price level, credit terms, price changes and discounts);
2. Product (features, packaging, quality and range);
3. Promotion (advertising, publicity, sales promotion and personal selling);
4. Place (inventory, distribution channels and number of intermediaries).<sup>133</sup>

This is the message that our organization will deliver to the market we want. We must be very particular about the various messages that we will convey through different media. Traditional printed marketing is the only method of delivering messages to consumers. However, lately, email, SMS, blogs, television, and company websites have become trendy ways to convey organizational messages to consumers.

<sup>132</sup> Balram Dogra and Karminder Ghuman, *Rural Marketing: Concepts and Practices* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. Ltd., 2008), p. 80.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

However, it is important that the message we provide in one media must match the message provided in other media. For example, we must use the same logo on our website with what we use in our e-mail messages. Likewise, our television messages must convey the same message as our blog and website.

For the reasons above, the person who controls the marketing communication process is very important for the company. These executives make it an integrated marketing communication process. We will now understand why it must be 'integrated'. The reason is that the message to be conveyed through different media must be the same. Integrated marketing communication is a data-based approach that identifies consumer insights and develops strategies with the right combination of offline and online channels that must produce stronger brand-consumer relationships. This has multiplied in recent years due to a number of changes in the advertising and media industry. This is the reason why it has developed into a main strategy for developers. Some examples of shifts come from media advertising to various forms of communication, from general focus advertising to data-based marketing and so on.

For many people who have not studied marketing as a specialty, marketing is promotion or 'marketing communication': advertising, brochures, sales promotions, exhibitions, and sales of people. Expectations about marketers are often people who have something to sell - expression of what is great, good, and cannot be denied about a product. People with positions and roles as 'marketers' are often involved in firing 'messages' at 'targets' with the aim of hitting them to pursue and encourage purchases. We will take a broader, stronger perspective - that all activity marketing is intercultural social communication: Communication is a social act among people who are different in their values, beliefs and motivations. It would be naive to imagine that marketing is just a business tool. Marketing communication is a cultural company that has a cultural impact.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Richard J. Varey, *Marketing Communication: Principles and Practices* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. xxiii.

In the view of Chris Fill and Barbara Jamieson, marketing communication is a management process in which organizations engage with various audiences. Through understanding an audience's communication environment, the organization seeks to develop and present messages to identified groups of stakeholders, before evaluating and acting on those responses. By conveying messages that have significant value, they encourage audiences to offer attitude and behavioral responses.<sup>135</sup>

So the key word of marketing communication is engagement. Effective marketing communication allows the audience to engage with products, services, brands and organizations. Through engagement, relationships can develop, and this enables customers, stakeholders and organizations to achieve their various goals. The extent to which involvement occurs reflects the perceptions, interpretations, and meanings of hearings from the messages delivered. Through involvement, brand value and equity can be developed or reduced. Engagement therefore includes various marketing communication activities, and is referred to throughout the text.

Marketing communication is also related to the concept of exchange. As is known, the exchange process is developed and managed by examining the needs of consumers or stakeholders, identifying, selecting and targeting groups of consumers or stakeholders who share the same discriminatory characteristics, including needs and desires, and develop offers that meet identified needs at prices that are can be accepted, and is available through a set of certain distribution channels. The next task is to make the target audience aware of the existence of the offer. When competition or other barriers to positive consumer actions exist, such as lack of motivation or confidence, promotional programs are developed and used to communicate with the target group.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Narrowly, international relations are defined as inter-states relations, or relations between nations. As said Chris Brown and Kirsten Ainley, International

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<sup>135</sup> Chris Fill and Barbara Jamieson, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

Relations is the study of relations of states.<sup>136</sup> In a narrow sense, international relations can also be interpreted as actions and reactions among those represented by their governing elites.<sup>137</sup> Joshua Goldstein said international relations as relationships among the world governments.<sup>138</sup>

The definition of international relations is narrowly mainly introduced by international relations scholars before the end of the Cold War, which we can generally trace in the books of international published before the 1990s. Most of them view the core of international relations as 'international politics'. For example Norman Padelford and George Lincoln, argue that when people talk about 'international relations', they usually think about relations between countries, and the nature of relations between countries is 'international politics'. While international politics itself is the interaction of state policies in changing patterns of power relations.<sup>139</sup> According to Hans Morgenthau, international relations are a struggle for power among nations.

In addition to emphasizing international politics, the definition of international relations that can be classified as 'narrow definition' is too state-oriented. In the view of international relations scholars who adhere to this approach, even though international relations also take place in non-political issues (such as economics, security, law, culture, technology transfer, etc.), international actors remain state actors. In this context, international relations remain relations between countries. As Joyce P. Kaufman said, International Relations is a field of study that deals with decisions made in a country that have implications for relations outside the country's borders.<sup>140</sup> Stanley Hoffman added, international relations can include many different activities, such as social, economic, religious and so on, insofar as these activities

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<sup>136</sup> Chris Brown and Kirsten Ainley, *Understanding International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 3.

<sup>137</sup> Seymour Brown, *International Relations in a Changing Global System: Toward a Theory of the World Polity* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996).

<sup>138</sup> Joshua S. Goldstein, *International Relations* (London: Pearson Longman, 2013), p. 29.

<sup>139</sup> Norman J. Padelford and George A. Lincoln, *International Politics: Foundations of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1957), p. 4.

<sup>140</sup> Joyce P. Kaufman, *Introduction to International Relations: Theory and Practices* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015), p. 2.

have implications for international political relations. For Hoffman, international relations themselves are related to all exchanges, transactions, relationships, information flows, and behavioral responses that are produced between and between separate organized (state) societies.<sup>141</sup>

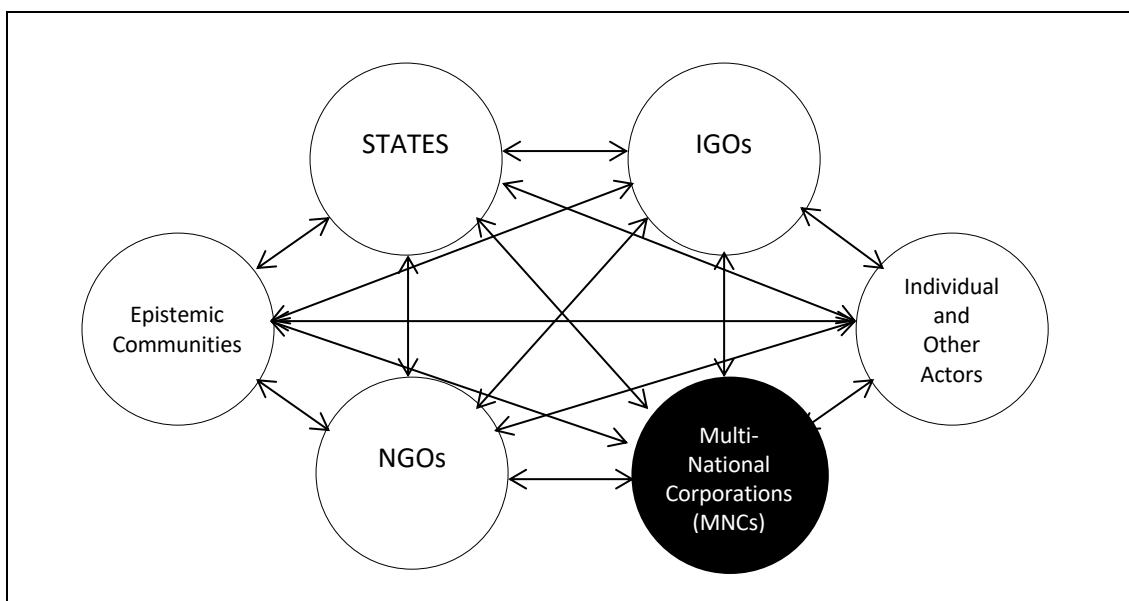
As an implication of the changes taking place in the world community, especially as a result of revolutionary changes in the field of communication and transportation technology, it has made the world like a 'global village' (*kampung global*).<sup>142</sup> In this 'village' it is not only countries that interact with each other, but also non-state actors, or commonly referred to as transnational actors. The intensity of interaction and various forms of transactions between transnational actors from time to time are higher than official relations between countries. This all forced the definition of international relations to undergo transformation. The majority of current International Relations scholars seem to have agreed that international relations are not synonymous with international politics and are no longer too state-oriented. They increasingly believe that international relations are complex and multidimensional.

Figure 2: Interaction Patterns of International Relations Actors

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<sup>141</sup> Stanley Hoffmann, *World Disorders: Troubled Peace in the Post-Cold War Era* (Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000).

<sup>142</sup> The concept of "Global Village" can be seen further in the book Thomas R. McFaul, *The Future of Peace and Justice in the Global Village* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006).



Keith Shimko said, in a broad sense, the study of International Relations covers a complex whole concerning the cultural, economic, legal, military, political and social relations of all countries, as well as the elements of their population and entities.<sup>143</sup> Stephanie Lawson also states that defining International Relations as a study of relations between countries is too narrow and simple. In a broad sense, according to Lawson, international relations are interactions between state-based actors that cross national boundaries. This means that in addition to his deep concern for the country system as a whole, there is equal attention to the activities of various non-state actors.<sup>144</sup>

Peu Ghost said that International Relations is the study of foreign problems and global issues among countries, including the role of non-state actors such as intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and multinational companies (MNC).<sup>145</sup> Robert H. Jackson and Georg Sørensen added, the study of international relations are the study of relations and interactions between countries, including activities and policies of the national government,

<sup>143</sup> Keith L. Shimko, *International Relations: Perspectives, Controversies, and Readings* (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2013), p. xviii.

<sup>144</sup> Stephanie Lawson, *International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012), p. 4.

<sup>145</sup> Peu Ghost, *International Relations* (New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Ltd., 2015), p. 1.

international organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and multinational companies (MNC).<sup>146</sup> Thus the study of International Relations also includes the relations of countries with other important actors, such as global companies and international organizations. Ola Joseph Toyin argued that International Relations is the study of all forms of interaction that occur between members of countries or separate entities in the international system.<sup>147</sup>

From some expert statements above it can be concluded that International Relations is not only a study of politics and is state-centric, but international relations also involve various forms of interaction between non-state actors and these interactions are not solely taking place in the political sphere. In this globalization era, the interaction between non-state actors, especially in the economic sector, which is carried out by multinational companies is actually more dominant than the intensity of interaction between countries in the political field. Many studies of scholars and students of International Relations are now oriented towards the actions of transnational companies. How the strategies of transnational corporations win competition in the global market are now gaining much attention from international relations researchers.

## **MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET**

What is the relation and connection between marketing communication and international relations? Basically International Relations is learning about global issues, social science and global policy. Marketing communication is adapting our message so that it fits the desired market. We believe that having a solid understanding of global issues, policies and cultures is a necessity for marketing communication. When we understand a different country and what makes it tick, we can then adapt our marketing to fit that culture so that our product sells. Advertising, promotion and sales can go very wrong if we don't understand the market we are

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<sup>146</sup> Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 4.

<sup>147</sup> Ola Joseph Toyin, *The Concept and Practice of International Relations* (Nigeria: Joecryss Ventures, 1999).

targeting.<sup>148</sup> Examples include using a name of a product that can have a totally different meaning in another country or the translation comes out completely wrong. We would have to have some understanding and knowledge of that country to avoid those mistakes.

The connection between marketing communication and international relations also depends on how you interpret international relations. For some, economic relationships are meaningless in comparison to raw power. For others, economic relationships reflect world-wide inequalities in which the privileged expand at the expense of the marginalized. For others still, international markets are a means of encouraging connections between states and peoples. ‘Marketing communication,’ international trade, globalization, the liberal-capitalist world order — however we want to refer to international economic relations — clearly ties states together. It's a matter of our political perspective how deep or beneficial those ties are within international relations.

According to Michel de Wilde, international communication is part of international relations. Media is basically the “stage” of international relations where the actors communicate their message (think about public diplomacy, policy announcement, or state press releases, etc.). Communication marketing is actually another discipline, but it can be applied to international relations and diplomacy too, especially when we are talking about “nation branding” and “soft power”. Each nation will craft their nation branding to achieve certain interests such as attracting tourism, or making perception. Of course the challenge is to make everything consistent.<sup>149</sup>

Communications has reached the peak where people are able to communicate with people around the world and international relations is the subject of the world. Marketing requires we to market an entity to as many individuals as possible in order

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<sup>148</sup> Nancy Sirois, “The Connection between Marketing Communication and International Relations”, in <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-relation-and-connection-between-marketing-communication-and-international-relations> [Accessed February 25, 2019].

<sup>149</sup> C. Michel de Wilde, *loc. cit.*

to educate them about the entity. So the whole world can be the furthest goal of marketing something. International relations enables we to understand the world in a more magnified way. To have more knowledge and clear understandings of different cultures and ways of evolution in order to undertake the world. International relations will not only make it easier to create and choose the target audience around the world and also within a state due to its sociological and psychological features in subjects. International relations will also make the communication process easy.

Every year thousands of products and services are introduced to foreign markets. Countless marketing actions with an international reach are taken. Up to 85% of these actions fail, in most cases due to misunderstandings with an intercultural background. The illusion of a world without boundaries made many companies and organizations disregard the role of intercultural differences in course of their international actions. As a result, the achieved results are in many cases far from expectations. These experiences have shown that taking all sorts of commercial actions (and not only) with an international reach, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the existing cultural differences in order to achieve success in the implementation of the planned strategy.<sup>150</sup> So, the combination of the subject of intercultural competence and marketing is exceptionally important. Intercultural competence is regarded as one of the essential skills of persons, teams and organizations functioning in an international environment (especially in a global market).

International marketing communication includes all methods companies use to provide information to and communicate with existing and potential customers and other stakeholders. The international communication process is affected by many factors that complicate communication in an international (cross-country or cross-cultural) setting. In this context, aspects such as language differences, economic differences, socio-cultural differences, legal and regulatory differences or competitive

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<sup>150</sup> Dominika Hirsch, "Cultural Context in Marketing Communication on International Market", in *Marketing of Science and Research Organizations*, Vol. 12 No.02 (2014), p. 4.

differences are crucial. The international communication mix consists of a diverse set of communication tools such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotions, public relations or direct marketing. The most viable form of communication is advertising, which often constitutes the most important part of the communication mix in the consumer goods industry. However, in business-to-business markets, advertising is often less important than personal selling. The main decisions for international communication strategy relate to the choice of communication modes for each country market and to the choice of communication themes in the international context. Both aspects can be standardized or differentiated internationally.<sup>151</sup>

For multinational companies (as an actor of international relations), marketing communication is also very much needed in winning competitions in international markets or global markets. Marketing communications in international markets needs to be conducted with care. This lesson will consider some of the key issues that they need to take into account when promoting products or services in overseas markets. There will be influences upon their media choice, cultural issues to be considered, as well as the media choices themselves – personal selling, advertising, and others.<sup>152</sup> Other factors that need to be considered in relation to international marketing communications include: (a) the work ethic of employees and customers to be targeted by media; (b) levels of literacy and the availability of education for the national population; (c) the similarity or diversity of beliefs, religion, morality and values in the target nation; (d) the similarity or diversity of beliefs, religion, morality and values in the target nation; (e) the family and the roles of those within it are factors to take into account. All of these factors are part of the study of international relations.

## **CONCLUSION**

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<sup>151</sup> “International Marketing Communication”, in <https://ebrary.net/21432/management/> [Accessed February 28, 2019].

<sup>152</sup> “International Marketing Communications”, in <https://www.marketingteacher.com/inter-national-marketing-communications-promotion/> [Accessed February 28, 2019].

Basically International Relations is learning about global issues, social science and global policy. Marketing communication is adapting our message so that it fits the desired market. Thus marketing communication and international relations have very close relationships and connections. Marketing requires we to market an entity to as many individuals as possible in order to educate them about the entity. So the whole world can be the furthest goal of marketing something. International relations enables we to understand the world in a more magnified way. To have more knowledge and clear understandings of different cultures and ways of evolution in order to undertake the world. International relations will not only make it easier to create and choose the target audience around the world and also within a state due to its sociological and psychological features in subjects. International relations will also make the communication process easy.

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