

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE IN MANAGERIAL PROCESSES BASED ON THE HOFSTEDE MODEL

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Abstract: *We communicate and decide every day, but the complexity of the context in which we do these things is increasing. Today, the cultural structure of the organization's members, due to the need to have competent employees in correlation with the established objectives, is somewhat puzzled and dynamical. Thus, the decision-makers must take into account (mandatory) the cultural basis of the subordinates when choosing the best alternative for solving an organizational problem. From this perspective, Hofstede's model can be one of the explanatory modalities of the organization's cultural characteristics as a basis to identify the action's solutions in that organization for the future.*

Keywords: Hofstede's dimensions, decision, interculturality, management

1. Introduction

The global society changes transform or adapts, regardless of the sense in which we investigate this fact: from the whole to the part or from the particular to the general. The company's evolution is (and must be) one of the main elements in the attention of managers/management teams of any company or organization, be they national or international, to identify solutions to ensure the expected organizational performance.

2. Culture and management

The fundamental argument underlying the statements in the introduction is built on the fact that these organizations operate through human resources, which are characterized, among others, by the total number of able-bodied population, professional population dynamics, social/cultural structure of the population, rate population migration. These indicators are manifested under the influence of

people's perceptions, desires, visions, attitudes (at individual or group level). They are the basis of managerial decisions, both in terms of attracting and framing human resources within the organization and in terms of choosing the modalities for carrying out the specific activities of that organization. We can notice the importance and role of culture, as a structural/procedural explication of human resources - own or potential - in the organizational mechanism of achieving the objectives set, on the one hand, and in the related decision-making mechanism, on the other hand. The influence of culture in the managerial area can be extracted from G. Hofstede's definition, "*culture is a mental programming of thought that distinguishes the members of one group (or category of people) from another*" [1] or in more detail, through the organizational culture defined by M. Năstase, as "*the totality of values, symbols, rituals, ceremonies, myths, attitudes, and behaviors, that are dominant*

in an organization, are transmitted to the next generations as the healthy way of thinking, feeling and acting and which have a decisive influence on its results and evolution" [2].

Looking in-depth at the management process, we will find that each subsystem or component contains cultural elements that

support or affect its functionality in a given time horizon. To observe this fact, let us look carefully at the location of culture within the managerial system designed by J.A. Edosomwan, through the model of the same name, as a tool available to a manager to design the future of an organization.

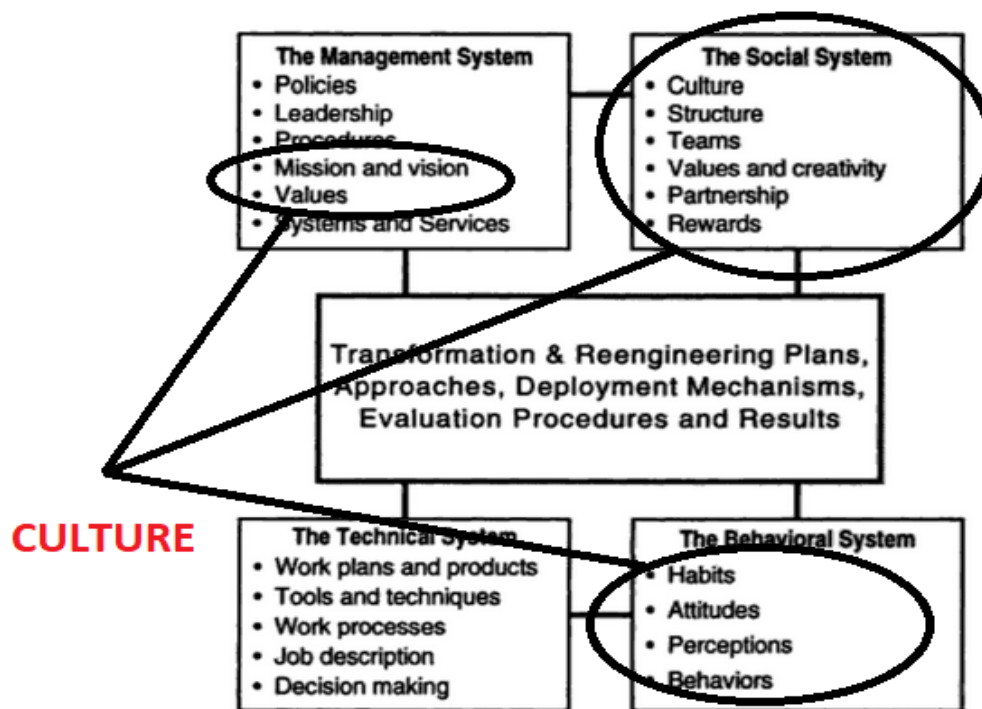


Figure 1: Edosomwan's Model of organizational transformation" [3]

It is evident that the inter-conditionality between the managerial subsystems is secure and is permanently under the influence of the cultural aspects, both external and internal, of the organization. The managerial system (organization policies, leadership) will operate in close dependence on the values declared and assumed by the organization and its members: to put into practice a vision, each employee must support it through actions that are affected of values like: *I must to be the best specialist* or *The word given is a respected word*. Another culture-management connection refers to the manifestation of the organizational subsystem, consisting of attitudes, perceptions, as the latter is overwhelmingly the result of the internalization and

externalization of elements of national or organizational culture: how the processes will take place. (rhythmicity, rigor) will depend substantially, inter alia, on the individual or collective attitude towards work and its.

3. Interculturality or multiculturalism?

Currently, the social and cultural structure of an organization is in a continuous dynamic and with an accentuated diversity, generating the multiplication of phenomena or characteristics in this field that managers must analyze, interpret, forecast, and manage in the direction of streamlining the activities of the organization that leads it. In this context, management will be operationalized in an intercultural context. We affirm this, as multiculturalism refers to

a social context in which we find the existence of socio-cultural structures, in a delimited physical space, but which do not explicitly establish relations of cultural interdependence. At the same time, interculturality presupposes social interaction between other socio-cultural structures, with a mutual exchange of traditions or values.

We consider, from a managerial perspective, that the functionality of the organization is supported by how the elements of organizational culture are redefined and accepted by their members, even if they are part of different cultures, but are more concerned with meeting the overall interests of the organization, less than the single ones. This will not be done by itself, but by involving managers, who must be the "balance point" in the interaction between their employees' different cultures.

4. The content of Hofstede's model

The Dutch psychologist Geert Hofstede (b. 1928 - d. 2020) conducted extensive and detailed research in the 60s and 70s of the last century on the cultural characteristics of IBM employees, from more than 50 countries, after which he developed the model that bears his name regarding the cultural dimensions that characterize the citizens of a country, as follows:

a. **"POWER DISTANCE INDEX (PDI)** - *Power Distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.*

b. **INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS COLLECTIVISM (IDV)** - *Individualism is the extent to which people feel independent, as opposed to being interdependent as members of larger wholes.*

c. **MASCULINITY VERSUS FEMININITY (MAS)** - *Masculinity is the extent to which the use of force is endorsed socially.*

d. **UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE INDEX (UAI)** - *Uncertainty avoidance*

deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. Uncertainty avoidance has nothing to do with risk avoidance, nor with following rules.

e. **LONG TERM ORIENTATION VERSUS SHORT TERM NORMATIVE ORIENTATION (LTO)** - *Long-term orientation deals with change. In a long-time-oriented culture, the basic notion about the world is that it is in flux, and preparing for the future is always needed. In a short-time-oriented culture, the world is essential as it was created, so that the past provides a moral compass, and adhering to it is morally right.*

INDULGENCE VERSUS RESTRAINT (IVR) - *In an indulgent culture, it is good to be free. Doing what your impulses want you to do is right. Friends are essential, and life makes sense. In a restrained culture, the feeling is that life is hard, and duty, not freedom, is the normal state of being" [4].*

Generally, managers would like an organizational culture totally adapted to the particularities of the production processes, the technical and technological level used, the internal norms and rules, or even independent of the national or regional culture. However, Hofstede's model explains, in large part, why the activities of a firm operating in a Western European branch have different ways or purposes than those in a South American branch, even though the tasks or rules set out are identical. Employees bring to organizations that "cultural programming", specific to the area they come from or where they have lived for a long time, and through which they adjust - voluntarily or involuntarily - the elements of internal culture established at the organizational level. Thus, as stated above, managers must identify the best solutions for balancing these cultural elements in support of achieving the best possible organizational goals.

5. Perspectives of the decision-making process based on Hofstede's cultural model

Perhaps the most relevant area of intercultural manifestation is the missions or actions carried out within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The field in which we chose to exemplify interculturality's implications is that of the military decision-making process - MDMP. The algorithm specific to this process has the next content:

- "receipt of mission
- mission analysis
- course of action (COA) development
- COA analysis
- COA comparison
- COA approval
- orders production
- rehearsal
- execution & assessment" [5]

At first sight, as it is in general management, the structuring/regulation of this process should lead to a maximum uniformity in terms of its development or the time related to it. However, in practice, things are not as simple as they seem, as each participant's cultural foundation will make its presence felt (more or less), and military managers must actively participate in managing cultural interdependencies. In the following figures (figures no. 2-4), the values - according to Hofstede's model - specific to a (randomly chosen) part of the NATO member countries are presented. The diversity of values (not to mention them) for each cultural dimension within the model used is obvious. It fully highlights the cultural complexity of military structures operating in a multinational context.

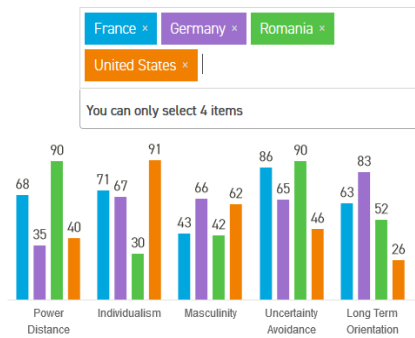


Figure 2: National values of cultural dimensions (NATO countries) according to the Hofstede Model (section 1) [6]

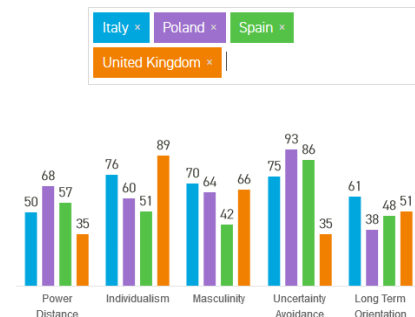


Figure 3: National values of cultural dimensions (NATO countries) according to the Hofstede Model (section 2) [6]

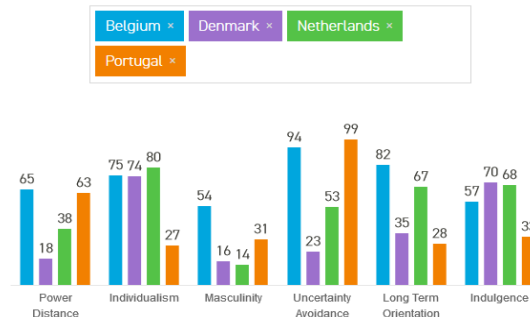


Figure 4: National values of cultural dimensions (NATO countries) according to the Hofstede Model (section 3) [6]

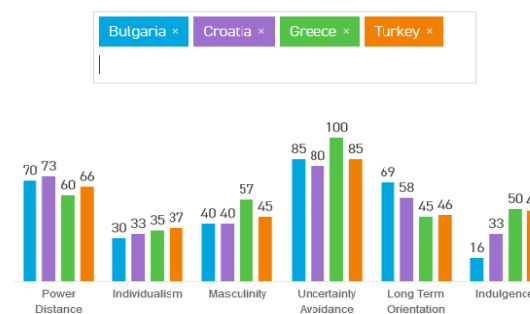


Figure 5: National values of cultural dimensions (NATO countries) according to the Hofstede Model (section 4) [6]

In the following, we will nuance how a cultural dimension can influence the MDMP if military managers do not coordinate this process or minimize the influence of the cultural component. We have focused only on the first dimension, POWER DISTANCE, and we notice that the values of this cultural dimension - on the countries found in the figures above - are located almost on the entire range established by the model (0-100) more precisely, from 18 to 90: to the lower limit Denmark (18), Germany (35), USA (40) and to the upper limit Bulgaria (70), Croatia (73) and Romania (90). As Hofstede pointed out, the values resulting from research on the culture of nations do not highlight positive or negative things/aspects depending on which extreme of the 0-100 range they are located. However, only cultural predispositions of the citizens of those countries will lead to specific actions or inactions.

In terms of the chosen size, from a cultural point of view," *people in societies exhibiting a significant degree of Power Distance accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place that needs no further justification. In societies with low Power Distance, people strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power*" [7].

For example, in the Mission Analysis phase, the main elements that will be the basis for further mission planning are established. A military man from a country with a value of half to 100 unreservedly accepts the commander's ideas of the structure or his nomination. For a specific activity, from a cultural point of view, the hierarchy is accepted as natural, and it implicitly accepts the solutions issued by

this authority. On the other hand, a military man - from a country with a value halfway to 0 - should not accept, without prior and detailed justification, the ideas of the commander of that structure or his nomination for a particular activity, because culturally this subordinate concerns the hierarchy only an instrument of the application of the previously discussed decisions.

Thus, in order to use interculturality in favor of mission planning - according to the context created - the commander of the structure should establish from the beginning the limits and moments when each subordinate can or must propose/support his / her own idea/solution concerning the problem to be solved within the specified time interval.

According to the analysis model, even if we reduced the exemplification to only one cultural dimension within a single stage of the MDMP, the cultural characteristics are manifested individually and in each stage of the mentioned process.

The use of Hofstede's model by military managers in managing interculturality at the level of multinational military structures can be an effective solution in building an effective management style in such contexts.

6. Conclusion

The issue of interculturality and its use in solving organizational requirements can be the "ace up" of any manager today, because the path to success is traversed by competent subordinates, working in strong teams and not from the same cultural area, given the trend of human resources migration.

References

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