

JUST WHO DOES THIS CHILD TAKE AFTER? – A CULTURAL METAPHOR OF ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract

Cultural differences play an important role in business life, and this role is becoming increasingly strong. However, we cannot find a methodology which is both precise and exhaustive in all respects. Due to the mixture of national and corporate cultures, it is hard to analyse the influence of culture in business interactions, which is why it is important to understand the difference between cultural comparison models and corporate culture models. We can, therefore, identify the origin of behaviour in various business situations and draw conclusions in order to temper reactions. We can distinguish the Universalist model and the dynamic cultural model. The latter seems to be able to handle more precisely the duality of culture (its variability and permanency). It can help in examining culture (which is the mixture of national and cultures) Culture is like a mule: if we identify the origins of our behaviour in different business situations, we can draw conclusions more easily, and we can predict our partners' future behaviour. So the basic question is: What is the secret of a successful marriage?

Keywords: cross-cultural management, cultural comparison models, organisational culture, Kulturstandard, cultural metaphor

Introduction

Managers often question the effect of national and corporate culture. An examination of cultural differences and similarities has a strong role to play in business, as the impacts of globalisation and multinational companies are increasingly showing signs of conflict from cultural misunderstanding, which not only affects the working environment negatively, but also the performance of the company concerned. This wide-ranging examination of cultural differences is developed in the literature.

Culture is a mixture of national and organisational culture. We can regard them as heart and brain. The heart is the national culture which has its origin in emotional activity and is much more stable than the other. The brain is the organisational culture which is a “made-culture” since it was created by the founder of the organisation. Perhaps we can, therefore, understand it more easily than national culture. The brain is more flexible than the heart; we need only think about changing jobs when we have to learn a new culture. A person can change job many times during his/her life and accommodate to the new organisation’s culture, but national culture and its values are very stable during the life and remain unchanged. We can, therefore, experience the duality of culture: its permanence and variability.

What is culture? – Our origins

Culture has been defined in several different ways, and some of the most commonly used are presented in this section. Hoecklin (1993) defines culture as a set of values that an individual grows up with. She adds that it is a combination of personal values and morals as well as society’s influence on the individual in his/her growing years. Hence, it is the shared way in which groups of people understand and interpret the world. She concludes that culture influences the ways in which a person perceives and reacts to certain situations.

The anthropological term designates those aspects of the total human environment, tangible and intangible, which have been created by men. A “culture” refers to the distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complete “design for a living”. Culture seems to be the master concept of American anthropologists. Most anthropologists would basically agree with Herskovits’s propositions on the theory of culture:

1. Culture is learned.
2. Culture derives from the biological, environmental, psychological, and historical components of human existence.
3. Culture is structured.
4. Culture is divided into aspects.
5. Culture is dynamic.
6. Culture is variable.
7. Culture exhibits regularities that permit its analysis by the method of science.
8. Culture is the instrument whereby the individual adjust to his total setting, and gains the means for the creative expression.¹

¹ Herskovits, M.J. 1940. *Man and His Works*

Kroeber and Kluckhohn suggest another definition:

“Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditioning elements in a future action.”²

Hofstede’s definition is:

“The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.”

There is no universally agreed-upon definition of culture among social scientists. Social scientists generally use the term to refer to a set of parameters of collectivities that differentiate the collectivities from each other in meaningful ways. The focus is on the “sharedness” of cultural indicators among members of the collectivity. The specific criteria used to differentiate cultures usually depend on the preferences of the investigator and the issues under investigation, and tend to reflect the discipline of the investigator. It was also decided to develop a GLOBE definition of culture.

“Culture is often manifested in two distinct ways. The first is as values, beliefs, schemas, and implicit theories commonly held among members of a collectivity (society or organisation), and these are variously called the *attributes* of culture. Culture is also commonly observed and reported as *practices* of entities such as families, schools, work organisations, economic and legal systems, political institutions, and the like.”³

Hence, if we want to define culture briefly, we should mention the following attributes:

- something that is shared by all or almost all members of some social group,
- something that the older members of the group try to pass on to the younger members, and
- something that shapes behaviour, or ... structures one’s perception of the world.⁴

After these definitions, I would like to emphasise the duality of culture. It is its permanence and variability, and due to these two attributions, it is very hard to create an exhaustive (comparison) model.

² Kroeber, A.L. and Kluckhohn, F. 1952. *Culture: A Critical View of Concepts and Definitions*. Cambridge: Peabody Museum Papers, Vol. 47., no. 1, Mass.: Harvard University

³ Chhokar, J.S. – Brodbeck, F.C. – House R.J. ed. 2007. *Culture and Leadership Across the World – The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of 25 Societies*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers

⁴ Carrol, M.P. in Freeman, J. ed., 1982. *Introduction to Sociology: A Canadian Focus*. Prentice-Hall, Scarborough, Ont.

Origins of parents

If we would like to examine organisational and national culture and their influence in a given business situation or their effect on each other, we are in a similar situation as when we want to understand how a long-life marriage can work and how the children grow up.

According to this example, we can categorise the man and the woman in a marital relationship. What is their role? The man is more rational than the woman; it is hard to influence him with emotional things. The woman, however, is a highly emotional individual. Thus, we can call the man as representative of organisational culture and the woman the representative of national culture in the “family-company”. Here again, we can recognise the duality of culture.

Let us see the types of both, men and women.

Types of men – comparison models of organisational culture

Organisational culture is defined as ‘the system of shared values and beliefs that develops within an organisation and guides the behaviour of its members.’ Just as a person’s individual personality is unique, so no two organisational cultures are identical. Most significantly, management scholars and consultants increasingly believe that cultural differences can have a major impact on the performance of organisations and the quality of work-life experienced by their members. However it is necessary to separate out layers or levels of organisational culture. A recognition of the multilayered nature of culture can go a long way towards bringing the topic into focus, as it highlights the fact that, while some manifestations of culture are easily observed, others, specifically the deepest aspects of common assumptions, may be difficult to uncover, not least because they are ‘taken for granted’ by members of that culture.

A number of factors influence the culture of organisations, from the environmental conditions and industry characteristics to the national cultures. The main difference for the consumers between producer- and service-provider companies is the product offered. The tangible product of corporate activity is clearly recognisable in the case of the producer. In contrast, a service organisation’s products are often difficult to recognise or identify for the consumer (certainly not universal; for example, consider the McDonald’s fast-food network). It is often seen that service companies try to develop a corporate culture based on interactions with consumers. These are the “Moment of Truth” experiences which multiply and the employees in the front office should be able to handle conflicts.⁵ The most well-known organisational culture

⁵ Heidrich, B. 2001. *Szervezeti kultúra és interkulturális menedzsment*. Budapest: Human Telex Consulting

typologies are: Handy's culture typology, Cameron/Quinn's types of culture and Schein's profession cultures.

It is difficult to find a culture typology, which is able to categorize companies clearly, taking into account their activities. Slevin and Clovin's mechanical and organic method of discrimination cannot give a clear answer to this question. If we examine the characteristics of the two types of culture, it is organic culture which we can feel closer to the provider organisations, but it is important to note that these categories are not necessarily suitable for distinguish production- and service-companies, since the environment and business characteristics have great influence during the evolution of the organisation's culture. We can find examples of organic and the mechanical culture in the case of service companies.^{6, 7}

The best and most useful type of model used in organisational cultures is Handy's culture typology. His four categories (power, role, task, person) is well understood for the business leaders, even if some parts of the company have different cultures.

It is not only organisational culture which affects the leading style, but national culture also colours it significantly, because culture developed within the company, even if it has elements of industry-specific features, is able to feel the influence of the national culture in the behaviour of the leader. It is therefore important to consider the impact of national cultures in management styles also. The works of Schein, Trick, and Beyer show that the leader has a determinant role in forming culture. The leader lays down the foundations of the company's culture, and successful cultures will be the basis of the legends and beliefs of the company. However, this process is not independent from the national culture or subcultures.

Types of women – comparison models of national culture

The cultural comparison model makers are usually classified into two camps: the first contain the universalist models (Trompenaars, Hofstede, GLOBE) and the other is the group of dynamic models. According to the research method used, we can distinguish these models: by quantitative or qualitative methods. The quantitative study focused on the quantitative relationships (statistical procedures, numerical relationships), in contrast to the qualitative test. The model-makers often use the quantitative analytical methods, because it is generally easier to interpret and analyse. When comparing cultures, we examine "soft" factors and it is very complicated to give a full description of their effect with quantitative methods.

⁶ Ua.

⁷ Heidrich, B. 2006. *Szolgáltatásmenedzsment*. Budapest: Human Telex Consulting

The categories, established by universalist scientists, allow us to compare different national cultures. These models are well-known in the corporate sector, and it has been found that these models often use quantitative research methods. Hofstede's model is the most widely used model in corporate life and so attracts the most critical appraisal.

Table 1. Universalist Cultural Comparison Models

Researchers	Dependent variable	Independent variables	Method	Sample – context
Kluckhohn/ Strodtbeck (1961)	Human problem solutions	5 dimensions: Human Nature Orientation Man Nature Orientation Time Orientation Activity Orientation Relational Orientation	Quantitative questionnaire, qualitative report	106 persons: Navaho Indians, Pueblo Indians, Spanish American village, Texan and Oklahoman farming village and Mormon village
Hall/Hall (1990)	Communication at work	4 dimensions: Fast and Slow Messages High and Low Context Space Time	Qualitative open interviews	180 employees and managers in the field of economy
Hofstede (1980)	National cultural difference within one organisation	4 dimensions: Power Distance Individualism/Collectivism Masculinity/Femininity Uncertainty Avoidance	Quantitative questionnaire	approx. 116 000 IBM employees
Trompenaars (1993)	Management relevant problem solutions	7 dimensions: Time Universalism/Particularism Collectivism/Individualism Neutral/Emotional Specific/Diffuse Status Achievement/Status Ascription Man Nature Relationship	Quantitative questionnaire with scales	15 000 employees in companies
Schwartz (1992)	Present and future in society	11 dimensions: Self-Direction Stimulation Hedonism Achievement Power Security Conformity Tradition Spirituality Benevolence Universalism	Quantitative questionnaire with 9 point Likert scales	approx. 200 teachers and 200 students per country, in 20 countries
GLOBE (2002)	Business leadership present and future	9 dimensions: Performance Orientation Future Orientation Uncertainty Avoidance Gender Egalitarianism Assertiveness Humane Orientation Power Distance Institutional Collectivism In-group Collectivism	Quantitative questionnaire with 7 point scales and analysis of qualitative data with content analysis	17 000 middle managers in 61 countries

Source: Fink, Kölling and Neyer, 2004

Criticism of universalist models

One of the biggest criticisms of universalist models from the point of view of comparing and understanding the different models in corporate life is that they cannot be clearly made. These models do not give a complete answer to the questions raised, in part because there is no common, agreed basis and partly because the typologies outlined are not exhaustive. Also, they do not give a precise description of the forms of social relations, how we form our behaviour patterns in a given situation; which preferences and interests are important for us. The various models' number of dimensions are also criticised in both directions: Hofstede's model has four dimensions which are not able to respond to all question, while other 9 or 10-dimensional models becomes difficult to manage precisely. Finally, it is often mentioned that they can not treat duality of culture.^{8,9,10}

Dynamic cultural comparison models

Most of these models hail from cultural anthropology, and the theories are termed dynamic because these models do not handle cultural characteristics as a constant, but deal with their volatility. These models were born from the transactional approach.. The limited rationality and self-enforcement are the duality of these models. (We should mention Mary Douglas's rid/group model.)

The Kulturstandard method

We can also mention a number of reviews against both the universalist and the dynamic models. The pre-established categories of the classification are not enough, as 4, 6, 9, 10, 11 dimensions; we cannot cover the full spectrum of behaviour conducted in business interactions. If we limit this spectrum, conceptual problems arise due to differences. The method of the model comes from the specific circumstances of the corporate life under the conditions set out in the research situation, the partner's understanding of the behavioural and even projections. It is for interviewing techniques to fine-tune, since, if you are likely to know the answer to a question which will be given in negotiations, then a consciously structured schedule can be created for the negotiation. In this section we learn how to use this method.

The name of Alexander Thomas is a hallmark of the kulturstandard research method, which is not a completely new method but where we can talk about a change of perspective. It examines one culture set against another from the perspective of

⁸ McSweeney, B. 2002. *Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith – A failure of analysis*. Human Relations, Vol. 55., No. 1., p. 89-118.

⁹ Patel, T. 2007. *Stereotypes of Intercultural Management. A Dynamic Appreciation of Viability of French-Indian Strategic Alliances*. Delft, Ebouron.

¹⁰ Primecz, H. 1993. *Hofstede – más szemmel*. Budapest: Marketing & Management, 1999/3-4

its representatives through bilateral contacts and cooperation. This thinking reflects the fact that an individual always interprets a foreign culture compared to his own. Under these circumstance we use Summer's: terminology: ethnocentrism.

The kulturstandard method belongs to qualitative methods and is a specific research tool for collecting data through narrative interviews. In contrast to the quantitative, standardised interview, informal qualitative interviews are more unstructured, the respondents are in focus. This why the researcher has a major responsibility not to distort the response (the model depends on the culture and the researcher). In other words, the kulturstandard method leaves room for the researcher's subjectivity and intuition—and so there is a real risk of distortion.¹¹

This method of analysis always compares two cultures to each other, but often depends on the researcher to use the meaning of interpretative or positivist methods. In the former case, the subject of research is the foreign culture, but it is not analysed by the culture's representatives but by a different cultural perspective. In the latter interpretation, the relativity of cultural conceptions, explanations are emphasised and these cultural conceptions are the subject of research.

The method reveals intercultural differences with the help of critical events. At least two individuals with different cultural backgrounds participate in the latter, the interaction is a situation where one party finds it difficult to interpret the behaviour of another individual from a foreign culture. In addition, critical information is separated by a concrete experience, time can not be associated with the respondent, but the vision is significantly affected.

The great advantage of the kulturstandard method—despite the reviews—is a strong retrospective nature, and the process of narrative interviews. It is important to note that the examination of same cultures in reversed relation, the same kulturstandards can not be used, because other factors may be important to one or the other culture from the point of view. (In this case, the mirror study is useful.)

The kulturstandard method in interpretative-qualitative meaning has the following characteristics:¹²

- Relative terms
- Intercultural contexts changing concepts
- Dynamic research method, which is part of their customer interactions commonly formed during the kulturstandards
- Empirical basis of the research

¹¹ Topcu, K. 2005. *A kulturstandard módszer, mint az interkulturális kooperációk elemzésének egyedi eszköze*. Budapest: Vezetéstudomány, Vol. 36., No. 10., p. 2-16.

¹² Topcu, K. 2005. *A kulturstandard-kutatás elmélete és gyakorlata magyar-osztrák menedzser-interakciókban: egy magyar szempontú jellemzés*. PhD dissertation, Budapest.

The method basically consists of four steps:¹³

1. The narrative interview itself and feedback loops within the interview.
2. The stage of transcription and interpretation of interviews.
3. Feedback with culture experts from home and counterpart culture.
4. Mirror studies and triangulation studies.

(A further scheme is also known involving 8 steps.)

Relationship between men and women^{14, 15}

The concept of organisational culture is as important to the management of an organisation as are strategy and structure. As the system of shared beliefs and values that guide and direct the behaviour of members links to macro-level national culture, this level of culture can have a strong influence on day-to-day organisational behaviour and performance. There are connections between organisational culture and national culture but each organisational culture is unique despite being embedded in a national culture.

There is very considerable scope for macro-social factors to affect organisational culture. In this respect national culture is itself a major influence on any organisation operating within its boundaries. Societal-level culture can impact on jobs in the following ways:

- Attitudes towards such things as individual responsibility, group harmony, ambiguity, displaying emotion openly and status will be embodied in a job by organisational actors, including those in positions of influence. These attitudes are culturally derived so that an organisation will have its organisational culture influenced by wider society through its members' values.
- Institutional factors, for example the relative importance of trade unions in a particular society—itsself deriving from a country's economic/political context—will set limits on how an organisation operates in important ways, including aspects of its culture. For example a litigious cultures that stress the protection of individual rights and formalised health and safety policies.

The links between national and organisational culture are made more complex when you consider the multicultural makeup of workforces within any one society. We are here looking at issues of imported cultures and cultural diversity.

¹³ Fink, G. – Kölling, M. – Neyer, A.-K. 2005. *The Culture Method*. Wien, EU Working Paper Nr. 62.

¹⁴ French, R. – Rayner, Ch. – Rees, G. – Rumbles, S. 2008. *Organisational Behaviour*. Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

¹⁵ Heidrich, B. 2001. *Szervezeti kultúra és interkulturális menedzsment*. Budapest: Human Telex Consulting

Every large organisation imports potentially important sub-cultural groupings when it recruits employees from society at large. There is a range of strategies for dealing with this phenomenon. At one extreme, senior managers can merely accept these divisions and work within the confines of the larger culture—in other words informing staff that they will have to fit in to the overriding national culture and do things ‘our way’. However, there are three primary difficulties with this approach. First, subordinated groups, such as members of a specific religion or ethnic group, may find it difficult to wholly assimilate in the new culture with a number of potentially deleterious consequences. Academics studying national culture note that individual’s core values are formed at an early age, that is within their ‘home’ culture, and will therefore be deeply rooted and potentially difficult to change. Second, the organisation may lose valuable knowhow if it discourages diversity amongst its workforce. Third, organisations that accept and build on cultural diversity may find it easier to develop sound international operations. Conversely, for example, many Japanese organisations have had substantial difficulty in adjusting to equal treatment of women in their US and European operations. We can also recall the phenomenon of near-shoring where not only different time zones but also different cultures are involved. After outsourcing this phenomenon is evident in various sectors (especially in the service sector).

We have to understand that people from different ethnic and gender groups filter and process information about organisational culture differently. This means that they may interpret the same cultural messages differently. Hence, attempts by management to manipulate cultural elements may need to take account of the fact that they will not always be universally and consistently understood. Management efforts to homogenise culture will almost inevitably result in subunit variations in interpretation and this is likely to contribute to the development of subcultures. So, managers have to be able to deal with these subcultures; and one of the most known methods to examine these is kulturstandard method (see above).

In Europe we find that multicultural populations and their handling are major issues. Today, we cannot talk about the “cultural crucible” only in relation to the USA, but in relation to Europe also. In 2004 statistics showed that over 10 % of the populations of Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden were foreign-born. The figure was highest in Switzerland with 23.5 % of its population originating from outside that country. In some research, we could also see that some 40 % of the population of France has foreign origins. The clear indication is that cultural change within these societies has occurred within a short period of time, even if we know that some of these countries had a colonial empire relatively recently. Therefore, it has become important for organisations to manage multiculturalism effectively. Robin Ely and David Thomas discuss three paradigms for assessing an organisation’s level of openness to multiculturalism. First,

the ‘discrimination and fairness’ paradigm looks at multiculturalism with respect to equal opportunity, fair treatment, recruitment, and compliance with legislation by ensuring certain numbers of staff from ethnically diverse backgrounds are employed. Second, the ‘access and legitimacy’ paradigm for an organisation’s level of openness to multiculturalism emphasises gaining access to new and diverse markets by using cultural diversity within the organisation. Third, the ‘learning and effectiveness’ paradigm for an organisation’s level of openness to multiculturalism incorporates elements of the other two paradigms. Additionally, this paradigm firmly connects diverse ethnicity to diverse approaches to work. According to Ely and Thomas, by creating openness, organisations will find that individuals from different national cultures do not feel devalued by assimilation into the existing organisational culture, nor will subcultures along ethnic lines be created.¹⁶

Cultural metaphor – a new concept?

A cultural metaphor is any activity, phenomenon or institution with which members of a given culture emotionally and/or cognitively identify. As such, the metaphor represents the underlying values expressive of the culture itself. Frequently, outsiders have difficulty relating to and/or understanding the underlying values of a culture.¹⁷ With this tool, we can interpret easier the relationship between organisational and national culture. It may be a simplification, but it is necessary for introducing and understanding the complexity of its nature.

Of course, it is not only the culture which has changed in the past, but cultural metaphors also. For example, for years researchers and trainers used the metaphor of French wine in order to understand the French culture. The French wine represented the values of French culture: tradition, honour, elitism. However, post-WWII, French culture changed, since France had to reposition itself and redefine its own identity. One of the key dates was 1998, the year of the World Cup in France, since it was a story of success. It was not only the football team who won the tournament but the French people also rejoiced over their frustrations. The French national football team’s achievement in 1998 was commonly and intimately linked to the general question of national identity, and particularly, in connection with questions emerging from immigration in post-war France.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ely, R. & Thomas, D. 2001. *Cultural diversity at work: the effects of diversity perspectives on group processes and outcomes*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46 (2), p 229-274.

¹⁷ Gannon, M.J. and Rajandini, P. 2009. *Understanding Global Cultures – Metaphorical Journeys Through 29 Nations, Clusters of Nations, Continents and Diversity*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc

¹⁸ Dauncey, H. and Hare, G. 2000. *World Cup '98: Metaphors, Meanings and Values*. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol. 35., Nr. 3, p 331-347

Phases of marriage life

Now, let us examine the lifecycle of a marriage in 7 steps comparing with the relationship of organisational culture and national culture. This means that we follow the stages of creating a “family-company”. In order to illustrate this, I use the metaphor of culture. To describe the connection between organisational and national culture, I use a well-known metaphor from another point of view. Entrepreneurs often describe their business as their “baby”, expressing personal connection and even identification with their business. A group of American researchers developed the parenthood metaphor for additional insight into entrepreneurship.¹⁹ My metaphor is similar, but I would like to explore another connection.

1st Year: The man speaks and the woman listens.

In the first period, we establish the “family-company”, so we can identify the culture-making process. It means that the man (the leader) creates organisational culture. This stage is about living, and so you have to implement highly rational behaviour, a rationalised culture. That is why organisational culture has a stronger role than national. Naturally we cannot predict from his national culture (see the 4th year), but here it is the attribution of organisational culture which is emphasised.

2nd Year: The woman speaks and the man listens.

After the unstable situation, the role of national culture increases. This is a calmer period. As the “family” members come to know each other and the size and power of the company thrive, we can recognise the need for empathy, since emotional factors begin to play a greater role in leadership and control. The increased size means that there are more employees in the organisation (family), and especially in a multinational company, the leaders have to take this into consideration since these people have different origins. Hence, we have to find the way to join forces in order the success of the company (family).

3rd Year: They both speak and the neighbours listen.

Here, we find an organisation which has a relatively typical culture. Since McKinsey’s 7S model, we know that the organisations’ core competences lie in “soft factors”. The culture of the organisation consists of two components:

- Organisational Culture: the dominant values and beliefs, and norms, which develop over time and become relatively enduring features of organisational life.

¹⁹ Cardon, M.S. – Zietsma, Ch. – Saporito, P. – Matherne, B.P. – Davies, C. 2005. “*A tale of passion: New insights into entrepreneurship from a parenthood metaphor.*” *Journal of Business Venturing* (2005), Vol. 20., p 23-45.

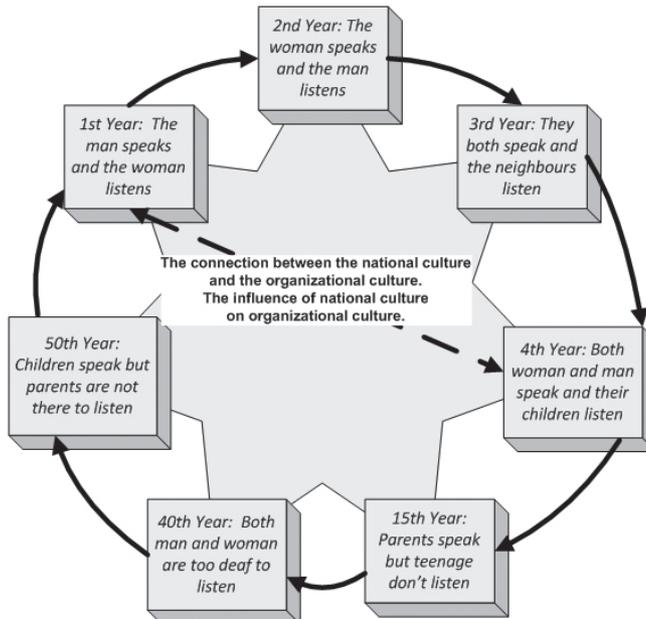
- Management Style: more a matter of what managers do than what they say; How do a company’s managers spend their time? What are they focusing attention on? Symbolism—the creation and maintenance (or sometimes deconstruction) of meaning is a fundamental responsibility of managers.

So, we can say that the “neighbours” (competitors) want to know our culture. The organisational culture is one of our elements which ensures our “family-company’s” competitive advantage. (The neighbours prick up their ears.)

4th Year: Both woman and man speak and their children listen

In the next stage, the company follows up enlargement and, if it enters international competition, it establishes a subsidiary. We can call this the child. It has both the attributes of the father’s organisational culture and the mother’s national culture. If we suppose that the child is a boy, he will probably a company founder also in the future as his father. When the subsidiary expands beyond the parent company’s frame, it can begin to build its own company group independently from its parent company. Here we can recognise that national culture influences organisational culture—organisational culture depends on national culture also, since national culture is a permanent element. That is why we can term this situation a vicious circle (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Phases of marriage life



15th Year: Parents speak but teenagers do not listen

Years after entering the international market, the subsidiary becomes more and more powerful and independent from its parent company, and so, the original organisational culture and national culture have less effect on it. We can often recognise the opposition between the culture of the subsidiary and of the parent company.

40th Year: Man and woman are both too deaf to hear

In the future the time might well come when the former subsidiary will become stronger than its parent company and can take over the parent. In this situation the parent company has to adopt the former subsidiary's organisational culture, but this can be the source of grave problems. It is a great challenge for the acquired company to change its culture, especially if it was a successful company in the past. Naturally it is a big challenge for the acquiring company's management to overcome resistance (blindness and deafness).

50th Year: Children speak but parents are not there to listen

Finally, in extreme cases it may be that the former parent company disappears and only the former subsidiary remains on the market.

Methodology

The methodology used is a variation of the kulturstandard method, and I would like to examine the influences of national and organisational culture from French and Hungarian perspectives. I will seek French multinational service-companies carry out my research. I choose service companies since, in this type of company, the role of culture has primary importance. In these companies, it is essential to know the significance of cultural effects.

For this type of study, quantitative methodology is probably not the best suited. The quantitative methods use standardised measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned. Hence it is qualitative methods which will be used. Fundamentally, the steps for constructing cultural metaphor by Martin J. Gannon will be followed - with some changes, although the essential concept is same, taking into consideration as many aspects as possible.²⁰ I will adopt the kulturstandard method for this research. The retrospective nature of this method and the common meaning-creation process are very useful to examine the connection between the

²⁰ Gannon, M.J. and Rajnandini, P. 2009. *Understanding Global Cultures – Metaphorical Journeys Through 29 Nations, Clusters of Nations, Continents and Diversity*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc

organisational and national culture. One of the attributions of the kulturstandard method is the importance of the creation of participants' own dimensions. It means that the participant has more important role than in any quantitative methods. It provides for the creation of unique cultural comparison standards.

For primary data collection, the names of French multinational companies will be provided by the Alliance Française based in Miskolc and Budapest and by the French Consulate based in Budapest. The main principle is to find companies which entered the Hungarian market recently and established subsidiaries. The cultural problems which the parent company faced at that time will be examined. I would like to discover the main factors which influence the culture-making process in a subsidiary. I will interview at least 3 senior and middle-level managers and then transcribe the interviews and analyse the answers with software tools.

I would mainly like to study service-provider companies since, within these companies, culture has an obvious effect on establishing contact with customers inside and outside the company. The attributes of service companies allow me to use narrative interview techniques which produce more informative responses.

Empirical research will be started on the 7th of February 2010, and the interviews will take 7-8 months. In parallel, we will transcribe the text of these interviews and start to analyse them.

Conclusion

A better understanding of differences between cultures plays an increasingly important role in a company's' life, especially in the life of a multinational company. That is why, in this article, I have presented the organisational culture and national culture comparison models (for which most use quantitative research methods); and the influence of national and organisational culture on each other.

Therefore, I think it important to know the models using qualitative research methods and that the attitudes they represent are more easily understood. Most of these analyse behaviour with the "active involvement" of interviewees, and, as a result, relevant information is obtained. Of course, these methods require a high degree of caution since it is easy to draw false conclusions. However, with due care, or by the judicious use of other relevant research results, we can also obtain valuable information. It is not an easy task to know corporate culture or national culture, but, if we know the origin of behavioural samples in the various transactions or actions, we can easily draw conclusions, or even feature the cultural roots of the situations, and so be able to "predict" a partner's behaviour.

This article shows that organisational culture and national culture in different models are incomplete, but that a complementary, perspective illustration of certain other situations is helpful in obtaining information – which is the reason for my intention to use in my research both national and organisational culture. My chosen models and methods are Hofstede’s model (or GLOBE model) and the kulturstandard method, since I think that, by using these together, we can draw more valid conclusions than otherwise. We have to handle the impacts of national and organisational culture at same time and the “Phases of married life” help us to understand the birth of organisational culture and to examine the effects of both cultures at different stages.

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