

A Comparative Study of National Culture in the Republic of Moldova

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The present paper represents a diagnosis of the national culture in the Republic of Moldova, which led to a pertinent analysis of interculturality based on the values of intercultural dimensions according to the Hofstede and Trompenaars-Hampden-Turner models. The contemporary business environment, characterized by a high degree of globalization and multicultural diversity, emphasizes the importance of developing a better understanding of intercultural interaction, but starting with the very essence, their own nation cultural features. Also, we have identified and described intercultural management strategies as being a component part of efficient management, which can be used to increase the performance of enterprises in the Republic of Moldova within the country and abroad

Keywords: National Culture, National Profile, Republic Of Moldova, Hofstede, Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner, Cultural Dimensions, Intercultural Management

INTRODUCTION

Our study is based on the scientific-practical format developed by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, and Hofstede's famous theoretical model. The Hofstede model was studied in the Republic of Moldova by the team of researchers from the Center for Scientific Research in Psychology who performed the cultural and psychological analysis (according to the theoretical model of Geert Hofstede), of the society in the Republic of Moldova while the model of Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner is a novelty in the field of intercultural management research in our country.

The data collected and analyzed in the paper highlight the characteristics that were identified for establishing the "cultural profile" in the Republic of Moldova. Each cultural dimension identified represents a set of features that correspond to the general profile of the respondents in our research, citizens of

Moldova. By combining the dimensions of Hofstede with those of Trompenaars-Hampden-Turner model we obtained a much broader profile.

The delimited cultural dimensions analysis for the Republic of Moldova can be used to compare with those of other countries in order to offer practical advice to the management of enterprises in the Republic of Moldova. At the same time, business models can be developed for new markets, in order to avoid physical, moral and financial losses by mitigating conflicts and their effects through a better understanding of cultural differences. Thus providing a complete picture of the possibilities and risks of specific intercultural interaction.

CULTURAL MODEL OF GEERT HOFSTEDE

Geert Hofstede delimits six paired dimensions of managerial culture:

1. Power Distance is determined by the distribution of resources and power in society. It reflects the size and distribution of authority and motivations within the social system and the degree of centralization of managerial systems.
2. Uncertainty accepting and avoiding level: high level of uncertainty avoidance cultures focus on well-defined organizational systems with strong hierarchies, promoting planning as means of anticipating the future, while low- level avoidance cultures focus on creativity and seek to create a sense of security and continuity within the organization.
3. Individualism versus Collectivism is another dimension detected by Hofstede. There are individualistic cultures, in which the connections between people are weak, manifesting a high degree of decision freedom and individual action. At the same time, we are talking about collectivist cultures, in which interpersonal relationships are strong, becoming both individual and group objectives.
4. Masculinity versus Femininity dichotomy is based on the natural division of roles in the organization. In masculine cultures, the division of roles is pronounced, there is a marked difference between men and women, the material and financial elements and performances are appreciated. In feminine cultures, the division of roles is significantly lower, there is no difference between the status of men and women, and the concern for the emotional side of human relationships is important.
5. Long-term versus Short-term orientation is the dimension that characterizes the time attitude of members in a society. Members of a long-term oriented society, identify time as a vector-oriented line, where people consider the future more than are concerned in the present or the past that counts little. People and business in such societies are result-focused and goal-oriented. Members in short-term cultures cherish traditional

methods, are concerned to build relationships, and consider time a ring that means that the events in the past, present and future affect each other. There is no trouble with the things that cannot be done in a certain day, they can be done the next day.

6. Indulgence versus Restraint dimension determines the extent that members of a specific society tend to control their sudden wishes and pleasures, using other words, this is the characteristic of a culture to satisfy the immediate demands and personal urgencies of its members. This characteristic is based on the people's way of educating in the society. Indulgence means relatively weak extension of control but restriction shows strong control of it. Thus, cultures that are considered restrained, retention is a value, people and business follow strict regulations and social norms. Satisfaction of people's wishes and desires are constrained and intimidated. In a indulgent society this features are opposite.

CULTURAL MODEL OF FONS TROMPENAARS AND CH. HAMPDEN-TURNER

Fons Trompenaars considers that "Culture is the specific way that a human group (family, business entity etc.), solves its problems". The scientific-practical model developed by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner comprises seven dimensions, described below.

1. Universalism versus Particularism is the dimension determining the liaison between rules, norms and regulations versus relationships. It is about the variation of consideration that that specific (stated) beliefs, methods, and techniques can be used in any circumstances with no alteration and that in which it is a norm that the specific cases guide the way of applying concepts and techniques.
2. Communitarianism versus individualism shows the importance/pre-eminence of the group or of the individual. Cultures with communitarist features people are seen and treated as members of a group, while those with individualist inclination people believe about themselves and behave as independent members of the society.
3. Neutral versus Emotional defines the level of showing emotions. A neutral culture is characterized by people hiding their feelings and controlling emotions. An affective culture is that where its members show their emotions openly and naturally.
4. Diffuse versus Specific dimension represents the level of people involvement within the society or business. A society with specific inclination is characterized by very impersonal relationships, relying on contracts and agreements. They are considered logical relationships. A diffuse society, in

the sense of this dimension, is one set up on human relationships. This culture is based more on interpersonal relationships and values over impersonal (that is a feature of a specific culture).

5. Achievement versus Ascription is the dimension describing the way of status attribution. In cultures of achievement the status is a matter to be acquired by what individuals have done. Members of the society are considered equal, so that they have the same chances and are evaluated in accordance with their fulfillments. The cultures with assigned status are cultures in which the high level members in the society and business are exclusive or at least main decision-makers. Usually their status in the society and business is attributed in accordance with such criteria like age, studies, political association, membership to a powerful family or organization.
6. Sequential versus Synchronous time perception is the dimension that describes the way of identifying time by the members within a culture. People of a sequential culture make efforts to do a single task and to have it done in a specific period of time. They are characterized by punctuality and responsibility in strictly following the work or business plans. The representatives of synchronous cultures try to perform several tasks in a specific period of time. Usually they are not punctual, they can change the date and/or the time of a meeting at the last moment. Generally, planning, in this type of cultures, is matter of interpersonal relationship.
7. Internal direction versus External direction is the dimension indicating the attitude of people towards their environment, social or organizational. Members within external-oriented cultures consider that they are the dominant factor by controlling their environment, while individuals within internal-oriented cultures consider that the environment is the most important and influential factor.

National cultural profile in the Republic of Moldova according to the cultural models Hofstede and Trompenaars-Hampden-Turner

Table 1

Cultural Profile in the Republic of Moldova according Hofstede model		Cultural Profile in the Republic of Moldova according Trompenaars-Hampden-Turner model	
Individualism: Low level	Collectivism: High level	Individualism: Medium level	Communitarism: Medium level
		Universalism: Low level	Particularism: High level
		Specific: Decreasing average Level	Diffuse: Growing average Level

High Power distance: Growing average level	Low Power Distance: Decreasing average level	Achievement: Medium level	Ascription: Medium level
Masculinity: Low level	Feminity: High level		
High uncertainty avoidance: Extremely high level	Low uncertainty avoidance: Extremely low level		
Long term orientation: Decreasing average level	Short term orientation: Growing average level		
Indulgence: Extremely low level	Restraint: Extremely high level	Affective: Decreasing average level	Neutral: Growing average level
		Sequential time: Decreasing average level	Synchronous time Growing average level
		Internal Direction: Growing average level	External Direction Decreasing average level

INTERCULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND CULTURAL PROFILE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Intercultural management is defined as "the construction of" junctions between carriers of different cultures in order to minimize the negative consequences of differences for individuals and firms and to benefit from the potential resources that each culture offers" (Chevrier, 2000).

We consider that, instead of trying to find ways to change/adapt management practices, the emphasis has been on changing individuals so that they "match" the practices. This creates the illusion that "good cultures would produce good management and bad ones would produce bad management" (Dupriez, 2005).

However, there is no "good" culture that produces "good" management, but only a "good" management is efficient, adapted to the culture in which it operates.

In order to replicate success, the management system that produced the success must not be replicated, but culturally adapted management systems must be produced because, as Dupriez (2005: 26) argues, "any management is cultural".

To have a "good" and efficient management, adapted to the culture of the Republic of Moldova should take into consideration the national profile described in the present paper.

According this analysis, the management of enterprises in the Republic of Moldova should focus on identifying and taking advantage of environmental opportunities and making decisions that respect the wishes of the group they lead, and/or interact with (from within and outside the country).

Because the uncertainty avoidance index is high, the benefits of safety and security are preferred in the Republic of Moldova.

A feminine culture and a high level of power distance staff promotions are not always based on results and performance or skills.

In case of high hierarchical distances, a manager will not accept a reward less than that offered to his subordinate.

The Moldovan society and business are medium-term oriented where saving and education are seen as positive values due to the fact that the society in the Republic of Moldova is extremely restrained. It means that few people feel happy and freedom of expression is not a major concern. General perception in the society is that of helplessness.

The circulation of information and documents is included in the job specifications and described in detail, although, in most cases, it is not focused on increasing efficiency.

With a high level of power distance, an extremely high control of uncertainty and a predominantly feminine and collectivist orientation, Moldovan organizations will prefer an employee who respects the hierarchical levels and fulfills orders and tasks, even if he/she does not agree with them.

Particularistic orientation in the Republic of Moldovan society, according Trompenaars-Hamden-Turner model, shows a tendency prevailing relationships over rules. Also, there are more viewpoints on reality relating to different participating parties.

The Moldovan society consists of competitive individuals recognizing the importance of the group, where freedom and personal fulfillment are important, own decisions and self-care can be achieved through group cooperation.

In synchronous-time culture, as in the Republic of Moldova, people perceive past, present, and future as interconnected segments. They can work on several projects in the same period of time, view plans and commitments as flexible, contracts and agreements may be easily altered.

Older people in the Republic of Moldova believe that individuals should be appreciated for who they are. It means that power, title, and position are more important in our country, and these characteristics define people behavior. Younger people tend to consider value of the „work done”, and high performance properly, and to use titles only when it is relevant.

Republic of Moldova is a diffuse country. Positive relationships are very important for business in reaching objectives and building relationships, in both environments, at work or outside it. Usually, Moldovans tend to spend time with colleagues, partners and clients out of office space. People in the Republic of Moldova try to manage and keep under control their feelings and emotions rigorously. There is a tendency in the society that reason influences people activity more than their emotions. People try not to show what are their thoughts or feelings.

The tendency of external control, as is established in the Republic of Moldova for older generation, is the tendency of strictly achieving the objectives. Business with members of the culture of external orientation needs to persistent and polite attitude, to maintain good relations with them as colleagues, clients and partners that lead to "win together but to lose separately". Younger generation in the Republic of Moldova tend to show internal control. It means they consider that they could influence their environment and happening phenomena and changes.

Management in the Republic of Moldova is characterized by dynamism, flexibility and tolerance. These factors involve frequent face-to-face meetings, flexibility, frequent schedule changes, acceptances and waivers. We can witness the resumption of the first approaches to negotiation, as well as the use of unstructured information. Managers need to be aware of regional cultural values regarding space, so as not to alienate partners through gestures that are considered inappropriate. According to the results of our study, in the Republic of Moldova there is a diffuse situation of space perception. People see the overlap between their work and personal life.

CONCLUSIONS

Of course, Hofstede and Trompenaars, and Hampden-Turner cultural dimensions models are not the only formulated by the researchers in this field, but we consider they are the most relevant to make the cultural profile of the Republic of Moldova nation.

Taking into account the results obtained in the study of cultural dimensions according both models and establishing the national profile in the Republic of Moldova we can identify specific managerial strategies for each dimension.

Of course, within any society there could be exceptions, respectively people who do not understand the culture of the society they belong to and as a result do not even respect its values and norms of behavior.

The models of cultural analysis at the level of organizations represent a valuable tool for modern management that ensures interpretation and prediction of the behavior of employees involved in the company's activity. Nowadays a successful manager should focus on identifying and taking advantage of

environmental opportunities, also on making decisions that respect the wishes of the group they lead, or/and the one he interacts with.

The generalization resulting from this analysis is correct only for the routine situations. Of course we will use this as a general guide. However, people must be treated as individuals and we have to avoid stereotyping.

We hope that by applying the knowledge from this paper, the international interactions of managers from the Republic of Moldova and those from other cultures will be fruitful and will lead to a mutual success.

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