KURSBUCH



## Interkulturelles Management

DLMINTIM01\_E



Übergeordnete Lernziele

##### Einführung 9



Die Globalisierung hat die Geschäftswelt nachhaltig verändert und Unternehmen dazu veranlasst, neue Märkte auf der ganzen Welt zu erschließen. Um in diesem interkulturellen Umfeld erfolgreich agieren zu können, müssen Unternehmen ihre Geschäftsmodelle anpassen. Der Kurs „Interkulturelles Management“ wird sich mit den wichtigsten Entwicklungen und Konzepten befassen, die Organisationen berücksichtigen müssen, wenn sie in einem internationalen Umfeld tätig sind. Es werden außerdem diejenigen Kernkompetenzen erörtert, die ein Unternehmen benötigt, das auf dem internationalen Parkett erfolgreich sein will. In diesem Zusammenhang wird auch den verschiedenen Ebenen der Organisations- und Landeskultur Rechnung getragen. Nach Abschluss dieses Kurses werden Sie verstehen, wie sich das interkulturelle Management als Teildisziplin innerhalb der Betriebswirtschaftslehre etabliert hat und wie sich diese im Laufe der Zeit verändert hat.

Anschließend werden verschiedene Aspekte des Managements betrachtet. Dem Diversity Management, das aus einem regionalen und internationalen Blickwinkel betrachtet wird, kommt hier besondere Bedeutung zu. Zudem werden verschiedene Management- und Führungsstile in unterschiedlichen Kulturen beleuchtet. Auch Lösungsansätze für schwierige Situationen und Konflikte, die sich im Zuge interkultureller Unterschiede ergeben und eine Herausforderung für das Management darstellen, werden thematisiert. Danach wird der Schwerpunkt auf die konkreten betrieblichen Funktionen Unternehmensplanung, Marketing und Personalwesen verlagert. Dabei werden für jeden Bereich die größten Herausforderungen vermittelt, die Entscheidungsfindungsprozesse in einem interkulturellen Geschäftsumfeld mit sich bringen können. Anschließend werden Sie weitere Kernkompetenzen kennenlernen, die für die Arbeit in einem internationalen Umfeld von Bedeutung sind. Anhand der Beispiele Deutschland, USA und China werden Sie lernen, wie die im Kurs behandelten kulturellen Unterschiede im Geschäftsverkehr mit diesen wichtigen Handelsnationen zu Tage treten.

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# Lektion 1

## Interkulturelles Management: Grundlagen und Klassifizierung

#### LERNZIELE

Nach der Bearbeitung dieser Lektion werden Sie in der Lage sein, ...

... das interkulturelle Management als Teildisziplin innerhalb der Betriebswirtschaftslehre einzuordnen.

... die Zielsetzungen und Hauptthemen des interkulturellen Managements zu erklären.

… Kulturkonzepte und -dimensionen als Wegweiser für ein interkulturelles Verständnis anzuwenden.

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1. Interkulturelles Management: Grundlagen und Klassifizierung

### Aus der Praxis

Mit der Übernahme von *Wertkauf* (für ungefähr 715 Mio. €) und *Interspar* (für ungefähr 690 Mio. €) erschloss der US-Konzern Walmart im Jahr 1997 den deutschen Markt (Dawson, 2009). Man vertraute darauf, dass das in den USA so erfolgreiche Einzelhandelsmodell, das sich durch niedrige Preise und einen hohen Servicegrad auszeichnete, übernommen werden konnte. Von den Angestellten in Deutschland wurde erwartet, dass sie ihre Aufgaben auf die gleiche Art und Weise ausführten wie ihre amerikanischen Kollegen. Sie sollten die Unternehmenssprache Englisch für die Kommunikation verwenden und an täglichen Motivationsritualen teilnehmen, bei denen vor Öffnen des Geschäfts der Firmenname im Sprechchor gerufen wurde. Außerdem sollten die Kunden im Geschäft alle drei Meter mit einem Lächeln begrüßt werden (Pearson, 2018). Clark (2006) berichtete, dass „das weltgrößte Einzelhandelsunternehmen Walmart in einem seltenen Eingeständnis des Scheiterns erklärt hat, dass es seine Großmarktkette in Deutschland verkauft hat, nachdem diese einen Verlust von 1 Mrd. $ (530 Mio. £) hinnehmen musste, da es nicht gelungen war, die Kunden und Behörden des Landes von der Niedrigpreisstrategie nach amerikanischem Vorbild zu überzeugen“ (Abschnitt 1).

Walmart hatte sich nur zwei Monate zuvor aus dem südkoreanischen Markt zurückgezogen (Clark, 2006) und hat seither Probleme, sowohl im britischen als auch im chinesischen Einzelhandelsmarkt Fuß zu fassen (Jacobs, 2018). Michael Duke, damals stellvertretender Vorstandsvorsitzender von Walmart Stores, sagte, es „kristallisierte sich immer deutlicher heraus, dass es im deutschen Geschäftsumfeld schwierig werden würde, die Größenordnung und Ergebnisse zu erzielen, die wir uns wünschen“ (zitiert nach Clark, 2006, Abschnitt 4). Fragestellungen:

* + Woran könnte es liegen, dass das Einzelhandelsmodell in Deutschland trotz seines Erfolgs in den USA gescheitert ist?
  + Warum widerstrebte es den deutschen Angestellten, die Arbeitspraktiken ihrer amerikanischen Kollegen zu übernehmen?
  + Was hätte Walmart vor Erschließung des deutschen Marktes berücksichtigen sollen?

### Interkulturelles Management als Teildisziplin der Betriebswirtschaftslehre

Die Globalisierung – das zunehmende Zusammenwachsen der verschiedenen Länder, das aus dem weltweiten Verkehr von Waren, Personen und Kapital resultiert – hat die Geschäftswelt nachhaltig verändert und in den letzten 30 Jahren einen grundlegenden Wandel in der Weltwirtschaft herbeigeführt. Die Abschaffung von Handelsschranken, kürzere Lieferketten, bessere Vertriebsmöglichkeiten, optimierte Kommunikationsmittel und Technologien sowie gesättigte Binnenmärkte und aggressive Wachstumsstrategien der Konzerne haben Unternehmen dazu veranlasst, neue Absatzmärkte auf der ganzen Welt zu erschließen.

Im Jahr 1980 entfielen 21 Prozent aller Verkäufe aus der Nahrungsmittelindustrie auf **Schwellenländer**. In der Elektroindustrie waren es 14 Prozent und in der Fahrzeugindustrie 11 Prozent. Bis zum Jahr 2015 stiegen diese Verkäufe auf jeweils auf 53 Prozent, 56 Prozent und 42 Prozent (Dobbs et al. 2015). Laut einem Bericht von McKinsey stieg der Gesamtwert des weltweiten Waren-, Dienstleistungs- und Finanzverkehrs zwischen 1990 und 2014 von fünf auf 30 Billionen $. Das entspricht einer Zunahme von rund 24 Prozent auf 39 Prozent des weltweiten Bruttoinlandsprodukts

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(BIP) (Manyika et al. 2016). Im selben Zeitraum erhöhte sich die Zahl der internationalen Touristenankünfte von 435 Millionen auf 1,1 Milliarden. Auch wenn sich die aus der Globalisierung hervorgegangenen internationalen Handels- und Finanzströme in jüngster Zeit stabilisiert zu haben scheinen, etabliert sich nun das Internet als Plattform für eine neue Epoche des weltweiten Wirtschaftswachstums, in der sich Unternehmen und Privatpersonen problemlos rund um den Globus vernetzen können.

###### Die kulturfreie These

Unternehmen begegneten den neu aufkommenen Herausforderungen der Globalisierung und der zunehmend international ausgerichteten Geschäftstätigkeiten zunächst mit traditionellen betriebswirtschaftlichen Ansätzen.

In den 1970er und 1980er Jahren hielten Unternehmen an den bestehenden Geschäftsmodellen und -ansätzen fest und nahmen einen „verengten und oft überheblichen Blickwinkel“ ein, den Prahalad und Lieberthal (2003) als „Unternehmensimperialismus“ bezeichneten. Diesem Ansatz zufolge konnten sie neue Märkte im Ausland erschließen, indem sie sich weiterhin auf geschäftsspezifische Konzepte konzentrierten. Hierzu zählen etwa wirtschaftliche Faktoren, Leistung und Produktivität, Wachstumsstrategien, technische Innovationen, Unternehmensgröße, Absatzkanäle, Produktentwicklung und andere traditionelle Konzepte. Diese Faktoren waren ausschlaggebend, um eine passende Geschäftsstruktur im Inland aufzubauen. Man nahm an, dass ein Unternehmen, das auf der Suche nach Wachstumsmöglichkeiten ins Ausland expandierte, sein bestehendes Geschäftsmodell übertragen konnte, da dieses, so glaubte man, in jedem Umfeld funktionieren würde. Es wurde davon ausgegangen, dass in den neuen Absatzmärkten bereits begierig auf westliche Produkte und Dienstleistungen gewartet und die Beschäftigungs- und Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten willkommen geheißen würde.

Walmart, der in den frühen 2000er Jahren mit seinem Versuch, das bestehende Geschäftsmodell in den deutschen Markt zu integrieren, gescheitert war (Dawson, 2009), zeigt, wie ein großes Unternehmen versäumt hat, die kulturellen Eigenarten und Bräuche eines Ziellandes zu berücksichtigen. Es wurden nicht nur Fehler bei der Planung und Übernahme gemacht. Walmart hat es nicht geschafft, die Bedürfnisse der deutschen Kunden, den in Deutschland üblichen Führungsstil, die deutsche Belegschaft mit ihren kulturellen Besonderheiten und die Beziehung zwischen Arbeitgeber und Arbeitnehmer zu verstehen. Die Probleme, die Walmart außerhalb der USA, haben sich aber nicht nur auf Deutschland beschränkt. Der Konzern musste sich aus dem südkoreanischen und in jüngerer Vergangenheit auch aus dem britischen Markt zurückziehen. Die Anpassung an die kulturellen Besonderheiten des chinesischen Marktes stellt das Unternehmen ebenfalls laufend vor neue Herausforderungen. Dies lässt erkennen, wie schwierig es ist, ein funktionierendes amerikanisches Geschäftsmodell einzuführen, wenn auf die Kultur, Normen und Werte des Ziellandes keine Rücksicht genommen wird.

Starbucks, ein weiteres amerikanisches Einzelhandelsunternehmen, ist ebenfalls ein weitläufig bekanntes Beispiel für ein Unternehmen, das mit seiner Erschließung des australischen Marktes davon ausging, dass das im Inland funktionierende Geschäftsmodell auch problemlos in einem anderen Land umgesetzt werden könnte. Starbucks war nicht in der Lage, die besonderen Kaffeetrinkgewohnheiten und Erwartungen der australischen Gemeinschaften zu verstehen und auf sie einzugehen, obwohl angenommen werden könnte, dass sich die USA und Australien kulturell sehr nahestehen.. Trotz seines Erfolgs als erfolgreicher Kaffeehausbetreiber in den USA ist Starbucks daran gescheitert, die kulturelle Bedeutung des Kaffeehauses als Treffpunkt in den

australischen Gemeinden zu verstehen (Mourdoukoutas, 2018).

Schwellenländer

Als Schwellenland bezeichnet man einen Wirtschaftsraum, der sich auf dem Weg zur Industrienation befindet. Dazu zählen etwa China, Indien, Brasilien und Russland.

Es gibt eine Vielzahl von Beispielen, die belegen, wie man in der Produktentwicklung, im Marketing und in der Werbung gewünschte Erfolge wegen mangelndem Kulturbewusstsein ausblieben. So sind beispielsweise den amerikanischen Getränkeherstellern Coca-Cola und Pepsi in Bezug auf den chinesischen Markt peinliche Marketingfehler unterlaufen. Coca-Cola brachte sein Produkt auf den Markt und bediente sich dafür eines Werbespruchs, der wie „Coca-Cola“ klang, aber leider wörtlich übersetzt „Beiß die wächserne Kaulquappe“ bedeutet. Pepsi verwendete den neuen Werbeslogan „Brings you back to life“, der im Chinesischen wörtlich soviel wie „Erwecke deine Vorfahren zum Leben“ bedeutet. „Finger-lickin‘ good“, der Slogan des amerikanischen Fast-Food-Konzerns KFC, wurde ins Chinesische mit „Beiß deine Finger ab“ übersetzt (Morrison, 2004).

Die Globalisierung und die Zunahme des internationalen Handels haben aufgezeigt, dass die kulturfreien Managementansätze nicht zeitgemäß sind. Unternehmen, die neue Märkte und Standorte erfolgreich erschließen wollten, waren gezwungen eine größere Sensibilität für kulturelle Einflüsse und Unterschiede entwickeln. Traditionelle Theorien und Praktiken der Betriebswirtschaft mussten kultursensibel werden.

###### Die Entstehung des interkulturellen Managements

Seither hat sich das interkulturelle Management als Teildisziplin innerhalb der Betriebswirtschaftslehre etabliert. In Unternehmen wird man sich immer mehr bewusst, dass eine mangelnde Sensibilität gegenüber kulturellen Unterschieden und Einflüssen den Erfolg von international ausgerichteten Managementstrategien reduziert. Diese Erkenntnis hat zu einer steigenden Nachfrage nach global denkenden Managern und Führungskräften geführt, die in der Lage sind, interkulturelle Teams zu führen. Die kulturellen Faktoren der Managementtätigkeiten treten dabei immer mehr in den Vordergrund.

Das interkulturelle Management wird inzwischen von mehreren Fachzeitschriften als eigenständige Disziplin betrachtet. Bereits etablierte Wirtschaftsmagazine und -zeitschriften berichten regelmäßig über Probleme und Vorgehensweisen im interkulturellen Management. Wirtschaftshochschulen nehmen das interkulturelle Management als wichtigen Baustein für MBA-Programme und Wirtschaftstudiengänge in den Lehrplan auf. Damit tragen sie dem Umstand Rechnung, dass interkulturelle Kompetenz inzwischen mehr als nur ein kleiner Vorteil oder Extra ist, das Fachkräfte mitbringen sollen, wenn sie über Kultur- und Ländergrenzen hinweg erfolgreich tätig sein wollen (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). Es wurde erkannt, dass Kultur alle Bereiche einer Geschäftsbeziehung durchdringt und in allen Aspekten der Unternehmensorganisation von Bedeutung ist.

Das interkulturelle Management hat sich weiterentwickelt und bietet Unternehmen ein Rahmenwerk, auf das sie sich nun stützen können, um die Herausforderungen zu meistern, die die Arbeit mit verschiedenen Kulturen mit sich bringt. Es eröffnet Unternehmen außerdem neue Perspektiven – das Managen von kulturübergreifenden Geschäftsbeziehungen ist nicht zwangsläufig Problem oder Schwierigkeit, die es in Angriff zu nehmen gilt. Vielmehr können Unternehmen, die einen interkulturellen Ansatz verfolgen und kulturelle Vielfalt fördern, Wachstums- und Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten entdecken, die ansonsten unbemerkt geblieben wären.

Interkulturelles Management: Grundlagen und Klassifizierung

###### Herausforderungen im interkulturellen Management

Obwohl das interkulturelle Management zunehmend an Bedeutung gewinnt, besteht nach wie vor ein erheblicher Mangel an qualifizierten Fachkräften, die mit den Schwierigkeiten umgehen können, die sich aus der Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Ländern ergeben. Das interkulturelle Management nimmt sich aller Themen an, die darauf abzielen, die Kultur eines Landes oder einer Region als betriebswirtschaftlich relevante Größe zu verstehen. Dieses Fachgebiet steht vor einer gewaltigen Herausforderung, da es mehrere Definitionen, viele verschiedene Ebenen und keine einheitliche, einfache „Methodik“ für Kultur gibt, die auf alle Situationen angewendet werden kann. Managementansätze müssen auf der genauen Analyse eines Kulturraums oder kulturellen Kontexts basieren und dementsprechend flexibel und anpassungsfähig sein – dabei gilt zu berücksichtigen, dass eine Lösung, die in einer Kultur funktioniert, möglicherweise nicht auf eine andere übertragbar ist.

Das interkulturelle Management muss der Betriebswirtschaftlehre als weitere Kompetenz hinzugefügt werden und dabei bestehende Ansätze verbessern (nicht ersetzen). Die Kernkompetenzen des Managements (z. B. Planung, Organisation, Koordination, Kontrolle, Leitung und Führung) bleiben erhalten. Sie werden jedoch durch die interkulturelle Kompetenz ergänzt, die eine erfolgreiche Verständigung zwischen verschiedenen Kulturen erst möglich macht. Ein Manager, der in einem internationalen Umfeld erfolgreich sein will, verfügt über Fähigkeiten im integrierten Management und interkulturelle Kompetenz (Steers et al., 2016).

Es besteht die Gefahr, Kulturkompetenz als abgetrennte Einheit zu behandeln, anstatt sie in die bestehenden Managementkompetenzen zu integrieren – dies kann dazu führen, dass es dem Umgang mit Menschen aus anderen Kulturen an Authentizität mangelt und Sterotype entstehen. Das Stereotypisieren ist ein natürlicher, oft unbewusster Prozess, der in unserem kulturellen Umfeld begründet ist. In einem Geschäftsumfeld kann dies erhebliche negative Auswirkungen haben. Da Stereotype oft auf Vorurteilen, Halbwahrheiten und ein fehlendem Verständnis beruhen, sind sie einem erfolgreichen Austausch und funktionierenden Arbeitsverhältnis nicht förderlich. Sweeney und McFarlin (2015) haben eine Liste mit Eigenschaften zusammengestellt, die ein erfolgreicher globaler Manager besitzen muss. Globale Manager sollten

* Erfahrung im Umgang mit verschiedenen Kulturen haben sowie ethnische Unterschiede

und Diversität wertschätzen.

* Teamarbeit und Informationsaustausch fördern.
* wenn möglich global agieren und dabei gegebenenfalls Konzepte für regionale Märkte anpassen.
* Aufgaben an die Manager vor Ort delegieren und deren Handlungsempfehlungen

und Ideen berücksichtigen.

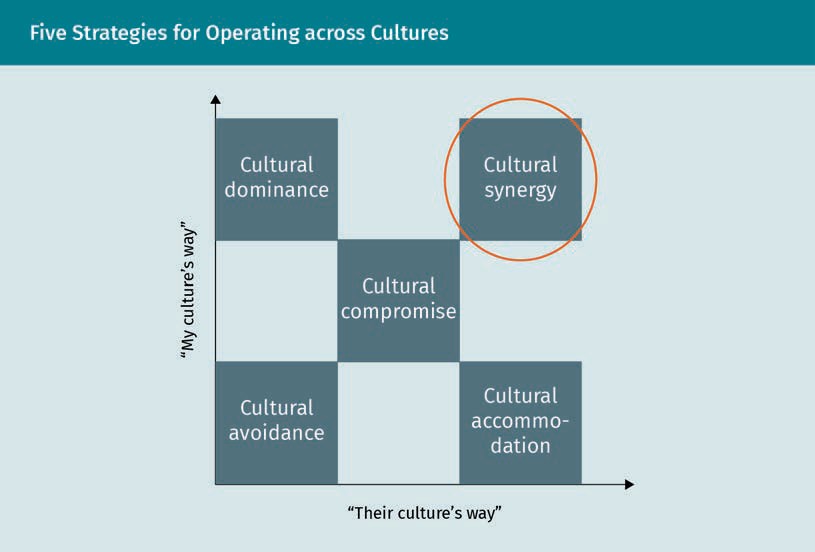
* verstehen, dass kulturelle Anpassung ein positiver Wert ist, durch dessen Förderung Unternehmen in einer ungewissen und sich ständig ändernden Welt erfolgreich sein können.
* den Mitarbeitern an allen Standorten angemessene Verträge, Belohnungen und Vergütungsmodelle anbieten und Anerkennung zuteilwerden lassen.

Die große Herausforderung des interkulturellen Managements besteht darin, Manager und Organisationen bei der Entwicklung dieser Eigenschaften zu fördern. Um dies zu erreichen, beschäftigt sich das interkulturelle Management mit Folgendem (Browaeys & Price, 2019):

* + Es untersucht das Verhalten von Menschen in Ländern und Organisationen auf der ganzen Welt.
  + Es umfasst die Schulung von Personen für die Arbeit in Organisationen, in denen Mitarbeiter und Akteure aus verschiedenen Kulturen beschäftigt bzw. beteiligt sind.
  + Es nimmt sich organisatorischer Probleme an, die sich ergeben, wenn Mitglieder einer Organisation mit Akteuren aus verschiedenen Kulturkreisen interagieren.

Synergie Dabei handelt es sich um die Zusammenarbeit von zwei oder mehreren Organisationen, um gemeinsam ein Ergebnis zu erzielen, das ohne die Zusammenarbeit nicht erreicht werden könnte.

Verfügt ein Manager schließlich über diese Eigenschaften, muss er seine Organisation dabei unterstützen, ein weiteres Ziel des interkulturellen Managements zu erreichen: die kulturelle **Synergie** bzw. Kultursynergie. Die erfolgreichsten global ausgerichteten Organisationen sind solche, in welchen Teamarbeit, Zusammenarbeit und Kooperation über Kulturgrenzen hinaus gefördert wird. Nach dem Ansatz der Kultursynergie wirken verschiedene Kulturen so zusammen, dass von Unterschieden profitiert, die Leistungsfähigkeit erhöht und Wettbewerbsvorteile geschaffen werden. Sie bringt „die eigene Kultur“ und „die andere Kultur“ in Einklang. Es gibt jedoch noch vier weitere Strategien, die international agierende Organisationen verfolgen (Adler, zitiert nach Harris, 2004).



Nachfolgend werden die fünf Strategien international agierender Organisationen ausgeführt:

1. Kulturdominanz. Eine Organisation nimmt eine dominantere Position ein als die andere. Sie dominiert daher die kulturelle Beziehung, indem sie in der Regel weiterhin in der eigenen Kultur verhaftet bleibt. Diesen Ansatz verfolgte man zu Beginn der Globalisierung, als man in den Unternehmen annahm, dass die eigene Vorgehensweise die einzig richtige ist (weil sie im eigenen Land Erfolg brachte).
2. Kulturannahme. Unternehmen erschließen einen Markt und imitieren die Zielkultur, um sich einzufügen. Kulturannahme ist das Gegenteil von Kulturdominanz.

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1. Kulturkompromiss. Dabei handelt es sich um eine Kombination der beiden ersten Ansätze, wobei beide Kulturen einige Aspekte ihres natürlichen Verhaltens außen vor lassen.
2. Kulturvermeidung. Bei diesem Ansatz werden kulturelle Elemente von den Beteiligten aus verschiedenen Kulturkreisen ignoriert. Manager, die nach dieser Strategie arbeiten, führen so, als ob es keine Kulturkonflikte gäbe. Dies geschieht üblicherweise, um Peinlichkeiten oder Spannungen zu vermeiden.
3. Kultursynergie. Dieser Ansatz birgt neue Lösungen, die auf dem Respekt für alle beteiligten Kulturen beruhen. Dies erhöht die Chancen, in einem interkulturellen Umfeld erfolgreich tätig zu sein und sich einen Wettbewerbsvorteil anstatt eines kulturellen Vorteils zu verschaffen.

Sowohl interkulturelles Management als auch Kulturkompetenz umfassen jedoch weit mehr als eine bestimmte Menge erlernter Fähigkeiten, Ansätze und Methoden: Beide Begriffe stützen sich auf eine Anhäufung von Wissen, Verständnis, Einsicht und gelebten Erfahrungen, die über einen längeren Zeitraum und in verschiedenen Kulturräumen erworben wurden.

### Wichtige Kulturbegriffe als Grundlage für das interkulturelle Management

Der Einflussfaktor Kultur ist für den Erfolg oder das Scheitern eines international agierenden Unternehmens von entscheidender Bedeutung. Unternehmen, die ihre Geschäftstätigkeit auf Gebiete außerhalb der regionalen **Komfortzone** erweitern möchten, müssen kultursensible Mitarbeiter beschäftigen, die in der Lage sind, sich an verschiedene fremde Kulturen anzupassen. Dies stellt eine besondere Herausforderung dar, weil das interkulturelle Management einer großen Bandbreite an Kulturbegriffen gerecht werden muss. Der Begriff Kultur wird auf verschiedenste Weise definiert und beschrieben. Es gibt unterschiedliche Kulturebenen und zahlreiche Dimensionen, an denen der Begriff untersucht bzw. gemessen wird. In den 1960er Jahren sammelten Kroeber und Kluckhohn ganze 160 unterschiedliche Definitionen, die den Kulturbegriff beschreiben (zitiert nach Engelen & Tholen, 2014).

In der Allgemeinen Erklärung zur kulturellen Vielfalt der Vereinten Nationen für Erziehung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (UNESCO) wird empfohlen, dass „Kultur als Gesamtheit der unverwechselbaren geistigen, materiellen, intellektuellen und emotionalen Eigenschaften anzusehen ist, die eine Gesellschaft oder soziale Gruppe kennzeichnen, und dass sie über Kunst und Literatur hinaus auch Lebensformen, Formen des Zusammenlebens, Wertesysteme, Traditionen und Überzeugungen umfasst (UNESCO, 2001, Abschnitt 1). Allerdings ist diese Definition so weit gefasst, dass sie nur schwer auf einen unternehmerischen Kontext angewandt werden kann.

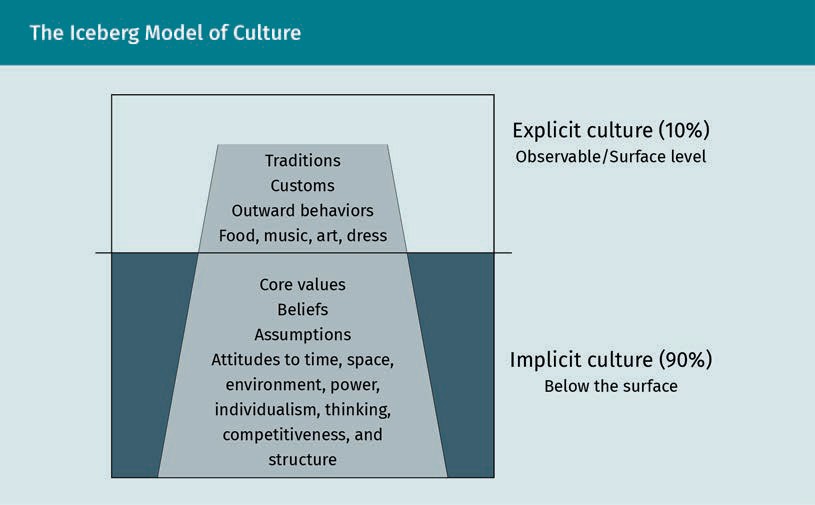
Bezogen auf das interkulturelle Management ist die Beschreibung von Kultur durch Engelen und Tholen (2014) von größerem Nutzen. Sie beschreiben Kultur als:

* die wesentlichen Voraussetzungen und Werte, die das Verhalten des Einzelnen steuern und in Artefakten und Produkten in Erscheinung treten
* ein Konzept auf Gruppenebene, das nicht auf alle Individuen der Kultur im gleichen Ausmaß zutrifft
* einen Mittelwert oder typischen Wert, von dem einzelne Individuen abweichen können
* etwas, das geographisch oder nach Staatsgrenzen eingeteilt werden kann

Komfortzone

Als die eigene Komfortzone wird eine Situation bezeichnet, in der man sich sicher oder wohl fühlt, in der jedoch oft kaum akzeptable Ergebnisse erzielt werden.

Es wird häufig fälschlicherweise davon ausgegangen, dass sich Kultur auf äußere oder stereotype Merkmale, die man in einem Kulturraum antrifft, beschränken lässt. Hierzu zählen etwa Gebäude, Mode, Essen, religiöse Praktiken, Staatszeremonien, Feiertage, Musik und Sport. Diese machen jedoch nur einen Bruchteil dessen aus, was der Begriff Kultur umfasst. Die weitaus größeren Teilbereiche sind deutlich schwieriger zu erkennen und zu verstehen. Das Eisbergmodell wird oft verwendet, um Kultur zu veranschaulichen. Die sichtbare Spitze des Eisbergs stellt den oberflächlichen, leicht erkennbaren Teil einer Kultur dar, der unmittelbar wahrgenommen und erlebt werden kann. Unter der Wasseroberfläche verborgen liegt der weitaus größere Teil des Eisbergs. Er repräsentiert den nicht sichtbaren Bereich, zu dem Normen, Werte und Überzeugungen gehören, die eine Kultur über einen langen Zeitraum geformt und geprägt haben. Da dieser Teil nicht direkt sichtbar ist, muss er erahnt werden und ist somit im interkulturellen Management der problematischste Aspekt.



###### Klassische kulturwissenschaftliche Ansätze

Traditionelle Ansätze der Kulturwissenschaft stammen aus dem Bereich der Gesellschaftsforschung in der Anthropologie und den Sozialwissenschaften. Allerdings gibt es aufgrund der verschiedenen Inhalte in der Soziologie, Psychologie und Volkswirtschaftslehre kaum eine Kulturtheorie, die den Kulturbegriff einheitlich definiert.

Kultur als Kommunikationsmittel

Der Anthropologe Edward T. Hall (1959) vertrat in seinem Buch *The Silent Language* erstmals die Auffassung, dass jede Kultur, im Gegensatz zu den allgemeingültigen Regeln und Grundsätzen der wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen, nach ihren eigenen, teils geschriebenen, teils ungeschriebenen Regeln und Grundsätzen funktioniert. Er geht davon aus, dass ein Großteil des menschlichen Verhaltens durch unbewusste Faktoren bestimmt wird. Diese „stille Sprache“ prägt das menschliche Verhalten. Hall verglich die Kultur mit einer Art Computerprogramm, das das Verhalten und die innere Einstellung der Menschen Tag für Tag steuert.

Interkulturelles Management: Grundlagen und Klassifizierung

In Folgestudien betrachtete Hall die Kommunikation als Schlüsselkonzept, in dem sich die Kultur widerspiegelt: „Kultur ist Kommunikation und Kommunikation ist Kultur“ (Hall, 1959, S. 186). In späteren Jahren prägte er die Begriffe Hochkontextkultur und Niedrigkontextkultur. Der Kontext stellt dabei ein Kontinuum dar, das zeigt, inwieweit Botschaften in einer Kultur explizit verbal oder nonverbal kommuniziert werden. Jede Kultur und Sprache kann demnach auf einer Skala zwischen Hochkontext- und Niedrigkontextkultur eingeordnet werden.

Bei Hochkontextkulturen handelt es sich in der Regel um eine Gruppe von Menschen (Nationen, regionale Gemeinschaften oder andere kulturelle Gruppierungen), die dazu neigt, weniger direkt zu kommunizieren, und die Inhalte eher durch indirekte Botschaften vermittelt. In diesen Gruppen sind die Menschen in der Regel eng miteinander verbunden. Sie legen Wert auf persönliche Beziehungen und schätzen eine Art der Kommunikation, die ohne explizite und direkte Botschaften auskommt. Beispiele hierfür sind etwa asiatische Kulturen, wie man sie in China, Korea und Japan antrifft.

Der Kontakt mit Niedrigkontextkulturen erfordert ein höheres Maß an direkter Kommunikation, damit eine Botschaft auch wirklich verstanden wird. Diese Gruppen sind in der Regel weniger eng miteinander verbunden und haben weniger gemeinsame Merkmale. Es ist daher eine explizitere und direktere Kommunikation erforderlich, um Inhalt und Bedeutung einer Botschaft richtig zu interpretieren. Beispiele hierfür sind etwa europäische Kulturen, wie man sie in Deutschland oder der Schweiz vorfindet.

Das Modell der Werteorientierung

Während sich Hall (1959) auf die Kommunikation als entscheidenden Orientierungsrahmen für Kultur konzentrierte, verfolgten Kluckhohn und Strodtbeck (1961) einen werteorientierten Ansatz. Dabei gehen sie davon aus, dass Kultur in den Normen und Werten eines Kollektivs eingebettet ist. Sie bedienten sich Daten, die über westeuropäische und amerikanische Kulturen gesammelt wurden und erstellten ein vergleichendes Modell, anhand dessen der Kulturbegriff mit den folgenden fünf Wertedimensionen bzw. Kategorien beschrieben wird:

1. Natur des Menschen. Wie ist das Wesen des Menschen von Natur aus beschaffen? Sind Menschen von Natur aus gut oder böse? Es gibt zum Beispiel Gesellschaften, deren Mitglieder davon ausgehen, dass alle Menschen von Natur aus gut sind. In anderen Gesellschaften herrscht wiederum die Annahme, dass die Menschen von Natur aus böse sind, und daher kontrolliert und bestraft werden müssen.
2. Beziehung zur Natur. Wie gestaltet sich die Beziehung der Menschen zur Umwelt? Beispielsweise wird die Natur in einigen Kulturen verehrt, und die Menschen akzeptieren, dass ihr Leben dem Schicksal und den unkontrollierbaren Kräften der Natur unterworfen ist. In anderen Kulturen glaubt man, dass es den Menschen obliegt, die Natur zu beherrschen, sie auszubeuten und zu manipulieren.
3. Beziehung zu anderen Menschen. Wie gestaltet sich die Beziehung der Menschen zu ihren Mitmenschen und der Gesellschaft? In einigen Kulturen herrscht etwa die Meinung vor, dass es eine Hierarchie gibt, in der manche Menschen eine angeborene führende Rolle einnehmen, während andere folgen müssen. Andere Kulturen werden demokratisch geführt. Die Menschen werden als gleichwertig betrachtet und verfügen über die gleichen Rechte.
4. Modalität der menschlichen Aktivität. Wie nehmen Menschen ihr Sein und Handeln im Wesentlichen wahr und was verstehen sie darunter? Beispielsweise reicht es in manchen Kulturen aus, einfach nur zu „sein“, und es gibt keinen kulturimmanenten Leistungsdruck, der das Leben erst lebenswert macht. In anderen Kulturen wiederum ist es üblich, dass Menschen hart arbeiten müssen, um in der Zukunft davon zu profitieren und das Leben lebenswert zu machen.
5. Zeit. Wie verstehen Menschen den Begriff der Zeit? So gibt es etwa Kulturen, die sich an der Vergangenheit orientieren. Man erachtet es als wichtig, aus der Vergangenheit zu lernen und Traditionen aufrechtzuerhalten. In anderen Kulturen liegt der Fokus auf Planung und Zielsetzung, um die Weichen für eine bessere Zukunft zu stellen.

Laut Kluckhohn und Strodtbeck (1961) können alle Gesellschaften anhand dieser Dimensionen untersucht und vermessen werden. Dadurch könnten kulturelle Unterschiede, die es zwischen Kulturkreisen gibt, erfasst, analysiert und verglichen werden. Mit dieser ersten Arbeit legten sie den Grundstein für die Value Orientation Method (VOM, in etwa „Werteorientierungsmethode), die seither von vielen Akademikern und Fachkräften aus der Praxis verwendet wird, um interkulturelle Differenzen zu untersuchen, zu überbrücken und beizulegen.

###### Moderne kulturwissenschaftliche Ansätze

Empirische Forschungsmethoden Untersuchungsmethoden, die sich auf Experimente und systematische Beobachtung stützen, nennt man empirische Forschungsmethoden.

In jüngster Zeit hat sich der Fokus auf die Entwicklung **empirischer Forschungsmethoden** verlagert. Diese zielen darauf ab, verschiedene Kulturen anhand mehrerer Kulturdimensionen zu vermessen und zu klassifizieren. Von besonderer Bedeutung sind hier die Arbeiten von Hofstede und Trompenaars sowie die GLOBE-Studie (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research), die gezielt die Auswirkungen kultureller Werte am Arbeitsplatz untersuchen. Jede dieser forschungsbasierten Arbeiten hat wichtige empirische Belege geliefert und Einordnung sowie Beschreibung kultureller Unterschiede anhand einer Reihe von Kulturdimensionen ermöglicht. Das interkulturelle Management als eigene Disziplin ist aus diesen bedeutenden Beiträgen hervorgegangen. Infolgedessen sind Unternehmen nun in der Lage, einen strukturierteren und empirischen Ansatz zu verfolgen, um kulturelle Unterschiede und Ausprägungen in der Organisationen zu identifizieren und zu überbrücken sowie das eigene Geschäftsumfeld besser zu verstehen.

Kulturmodell nach Hofstede

Hofstede (1980) bezeichnet Kultur als „die kollektive Programmierung des Geistes, die die Mitglieder einer Gruppe von Menschen von einer anderen unterscheidet" (S. 25). Diese „mentalen Programme“ dienen als Systeme, mit denen eine Kultur ihre Werte, Überzeugungen und Verhaltensweisen organisiert. Kultur ist eine der drei Ebenen, auf der ein mentales Programm für den Einzelnen existiert. Die beiden anderen Ebenen sind die menschliche Natur und die Persönlichkeit.

Nach Hofstede (1980) ist die menschliche Natur angeboren und bereits in jedem Menschen vorhanden, wenn er zur Welt kommt, unabhängig von seiner Herkunft. Die Ausprägungen der menschlichen Natur umfassen unsere angeborene Fähigkeit, Emotionen wie Glück, Trauer, Liebe und Hass zu empfinden sowie unser Grundbedürfnis nach Nahrung, Wärme, Kleidung und Unterkunft. Jeder Mensch, unabhängig von seinem Kulturkreis, wird mit diesen „mentalen Programmen“ geboren. Die Persönlichkeit ist die Ebene, die sich auf die mentale Programmierung des Einzelnen bezieht. Bei der Persönlichkeit handelt es sich um ein hybrides mentales Programm. Sie ist teilweise angeboren bzw. vererbt, teilweise wurde sie durch persönliche Erfahrungen, vor allem in den ersten Lebensjahren, entwickelt.

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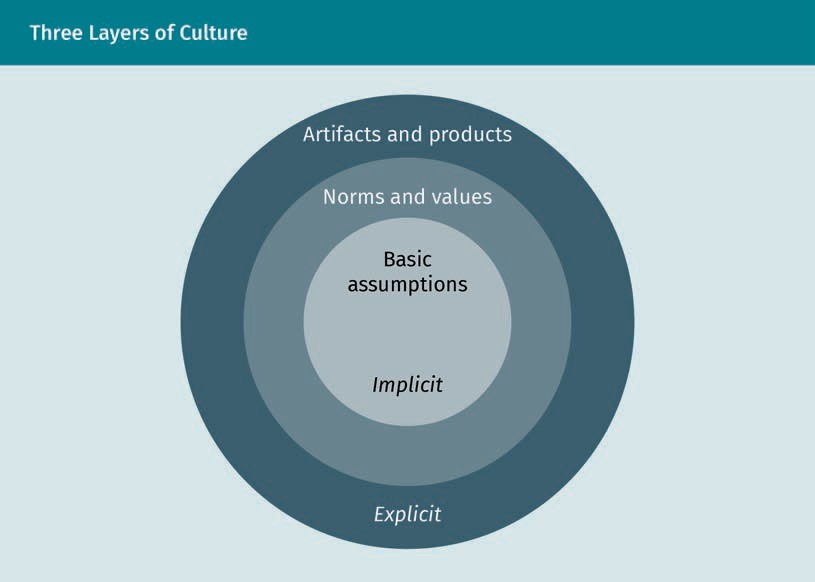
Die Kultur ist an einem unbestimmten Ort zwischen der Natur des Menschen und der Persönlichkeit angesiedelt. Sie ist der kollektiv programmierte Teil des Verstandes, der durch Zugehörigkeit zu und Beteiligung an einer bestimmten Gesellschaft entsteht. Die Kulturebene bezieht sich auf bestimmte Personengruppen und wird nur mit Personen geteilt, die zu dieser Gruppe gehören.

Die Vorstellung, dass Menschen programmiert sind, lässt darauf schließen, dass Kultur nicht angeboren ist. Es ist ein System aus Werten und Überzeugungen, das von den Mitgliedern eines Kulturkreises gelehrt und erlernt wird, um eine gemeinsame Grundlage zu schaffen. Hofstede (1980) zufolge wird Kultur ab der frühen Phase der Sozialisation von einer Generation an die nächste weitergegeben. Er ist davon überzeugt, dass es keine Kultur gibt, die einer anderen über- oder unterlegen ist und fasst Kultur vielmehr als etwas Relatives auf. Kulturkreise unterscheiden sich voneinander, unterliegen aber keiner Hierarchie und sind in Bezug auf ihren Wert oder Nutzen nicht messbar. Anders als bei Geschäftsmodellen, für die es optimale Vorgehensweisen und Strukturen gibt, gibt es für Kultur keine solchen Praktiken, die festlegen, dass bestimmte Normen, Werte und Vorstellungen denen einer anderen Kultur überlegen sind (Browaeys & Price, 2019).

Das Kulturmodell nach Trompenaars

Trompenaars und Hampden-Turner (2012) untersuchten die Auswirkungen von Kultur auf Unternehmen. Sie stellten die These auf, dass jede Gesellschaft ihre eigenen funktionalen und sozialen Ziele und Werte in eine Organisation einbringt. In den verschiedenen Ländern werden Konstrukte wie Unternehmen, die Arbeitswelt, der Markt sowie Produkte und Dienstleistungen nicht aus einem einzigen Blickwinkel betrachtet, sondern vielmehr auf der Grundlage der Bedeutung dieser Konstrukte in der jeweils eigenen Kultur. Dazu formulierten Trompenaars und Hampden-Turner die folgende Parabel: „Kultur ist wie die Schwerkraft: Man fühlt sie erst, wenn man [...] hoch in die Luft springt“ (S. 12).

Nach Trompenaars und Hampden-Turner (2012) ist Kultur in drei Schichten einzuteilen. Um eine Kultur in ihrer Gesamtheit zu verstehen, müssen alle Schichten betrachtet werden. Die Schichten existieren nicht unabhängig voneinander, sondern interagieren und ergänzen sich gegenseitig.



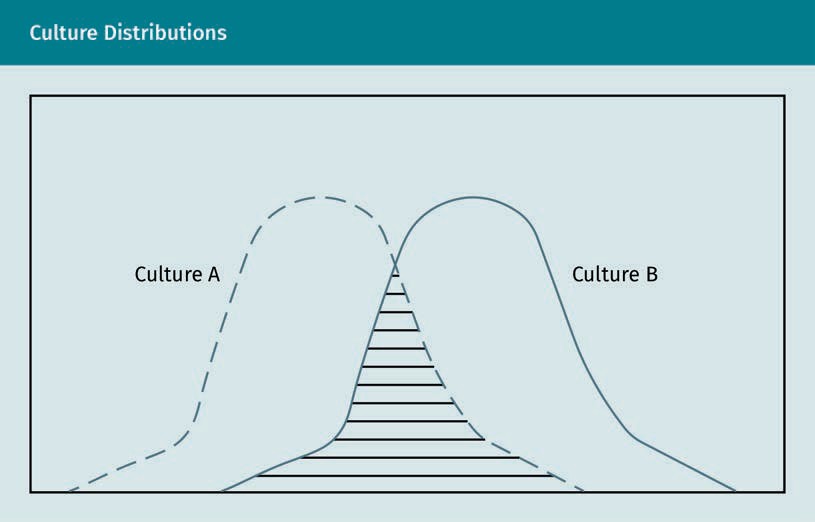
Die äußere Schicht „Artefakte und Produkte“ verkörpert die sichtbaren Erscheinungsformen einer Kultur. Dabei handelt es sich um konkrete Produkte und Merkmale einer Kultur. Denkmäler, Speisen, Sprache und Musik stehen hier symbolisch für die Kultur, die sich unter der Schicht verbirgt.

Die mittlere Schicht setzt sich aus den Normen (die kollektive Auffassung dessen, was richtig und falsch ist) und Werten (der kollektiven Vorstellung, was gut und böse ist) einer Kultur zusammen. Die Normen geben den Menschen vor, was normales Verhalten ist. Werte hingegen legen fest, welches Verhalten die Menschen anstreben sollen.

Der Kern des dreischichtigen Modells repräsentiert Erscheinungsformen von Kultur, die schwierig von außen zu erkennen sind. Hierzu gehören unreflektierte Überzeugungen und kulturelle Vorstellungen, derer sich der Einzelne nur teilweise oder gelegentlich bewusst wird. Diese Aspekte von Kultur haben sich über einen langen Zeitraum herausgebildet und wurden unbewusst und ohne sie zu hinterfragen in einem bestimmten Kulturkreis übernommen.

Natürlich teilen nicht alle Menschen innerhalb einer Kultur die gleichen Artefakte, Werte und Normen sowie Grundannahmen (Trompenaars und Hampden-Turner, 2012). Dies wird in der folgenden Grafik verdeutlicht:

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Vergleicht man Kultur A und Kultur B miteinander wird deutlich, inwieweit sich die Kulturen überschneiden (schraffierter Bereich). Das Diagramm veranschaulicht ebenfalls, dass die normalen bzw. durchschnittlichen Verhaltensweisen (der mittlere Teil der Abbildung) in beiden Kulturen unterschiedlich sind. Beim Vergleich zweier Kulturen konzentriert man sich häufig auf die außenliegenden Bereiche der Verteilung, in welchen Kulturen auffallende Unterschiede aufweisen. Dies führt zu Stereotypisierung, d. h. kulturelle Unterschiede werden betont und übertrieben.

Das Kulturmodell von Trompenaars (1980) erkennt an, dass Kultur auf verschiedenen Ebenen existiert: auf nationaler und regionaler Ebene, auf unternehmerischer sowie auf funktionaler Ebene innerhalb einer Organisation. Ein Unterschied zwischen Kulturen kann die Art und Weise sein, auf die mit Problemen und schwierigen Situationen umgegangen wird. Dies wird in drei Kategorien unterteilt: Beziehungen zu den Mitmenschen, Beziehung zur Zeit und Beziehung zur Umwelt. Trompenaars entwickelte auf dieser Grundlage sieben Kulturdimensionen, die an späterer Stelle in 1.3 ausgeführt werden. Er zeigte auf, dass Situationen die im selben Unternehmen, aber an verschiedenen Standorten stattfinden, von den jeweiligen vor Ort ansässigen Kulturen völlig unterschiedlich aufgefasst werden können.

Die GLOBE-Studie

In den frühen 1990er Jahren wurde das Projekt Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) ins Leben gerufen. Dabei handelt es sich um eine groß angelegte Studie, die sich mit Gesellschafts- und Unternehmenskultur sowie Führungsstilen befasst. Der im Zuge des Projekts festgelegte Kulturbegriff bezieht sich auf eine „Reihe an gemeinsamen Parametern, die jede kollektive Gruppe auf bedeutsame Weise unterscheiden, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf der ‚Gemeinsamkeit‘ der kulturellen Indikatoren liegt, die die Mitglieder des Kollektivs teilen“ (GLOBE Project, 2020, Abschnitt 2). In der GLOBE-Studie wird Kultur als „gemeinsame Beweggründe, Werte, Überzeugungen, Identitäten und Deutungen oder Bedeutungen wichtiger Ereignisse definiert, die sich aus den gemeinsamen Erfahrungen der Mitglieder einer Gruppeergeben und über Generationen hinweg weitergegeben werden“ (Abschnitt 3).

Quantitative Forschungsmethoden

Bei der quantitativen Forschung erfolgt die Datenerhebung durch objektive Messmethoden und

das Auswerten von Zahlen.

Ein Team aus 170 Wissenschaftlern aus 62 Ländern, die an der Studie teilnahmen, stützte sich auf diese Definition und frühere Forschungsergebnisse von Hofstede, um neun Kulturdimensionen zu bestimmen (diese werden in 1.3 näher ausgeführt). Im Rahmen der GLOBE-Studie wurden die Werte bestimmter Länder und Ländergruppen für jede dieser neun Kulturdimensionen bestimmt und validiert. Mithilfe **quantitativer Forschungsmethoden** identifizierten sie die folgenden zehn Ländercluster, wobei die einzelnen Cluster in Bezug auf diese Kulturdimensionen ähnliche Werte aufzuweisen schienen (Deresky, 2017):

1. Angelsächsischer Kulturraum, z. B. England, USA, Australien, Kanada und Irland
2. Arabischer Kulturraum, z. B. Saudi-Arabien, Algerien, Quatar, Marokko und Ägypten
3. Konfuzianischer Kulturraum Asiens, z. B. China, Japan, Südkorea, Hongkong und Singapur
4. Osteuropa, z. B. Russland, Ungarn, Polen, Rumänien und Griechenland
5. Europäischer Kulturraum der germanischen Sprachen, z. B. Deutschland, die Niederlande, Belgien, die Schweiz und Österreich
6. Lateinamerika, z. B. Brasilien, Argentinien, Mexiko, Costa Rica und Ecuador
7. Europäischer Kulturraum der romanischen Sprachen, z. B. Italien, Portugal, Spanien, Frankreich und die Schweiz (Französisch/Italienisch)
8. Nordeuropa, z. B. Schweden, Dänemark, Norwegen und Finnland
9. Südasien, z. B. Indien, Pakistan, Indonesien, die Philippinen und die Türkei
10. Subsaharisches Afrika z. B. Namibia, Sambia, Zimbabwe und Nigeria

Dabei wurden Beziehungsebenen zwischen verschiedenen Kulturdimensionen erkannt und es wurde festgestellt, wo bestimmte Dimensionen einen erheblichen Einfluss auf Faktoren wie den wirtschaftlichen Erfolg oder die Entwicklung einer Gesellschaft haben. So wie die Arbeiten von Hofstede und Trompenaars lieferte dieses Projekt einen wertvollen Beitrag zur empirischen Forschung. Die Studie widmet sich weiterhin der Aufgabe, solche kulturellen Unterschiede, die in einem internationalen Geschäftsumfeld auftreten können, nachzuweisen und zu verstehen.

### Wichtige Kulturdimensionen als Grundlage für interkulturelles Verständnis

Auf Grundlage der drei modernen Ansätze zum Kulturbegriff und den entsprechenden Kulturmodellen wurden mehrere wertorientierte Kulturdimensionen erarbeitet, die das Fundament für interkulturelles Verständnis legen. Für Unternehmen stellen diese miteinander verwobenen Dimensionen die Schlüsselkomponente für ein erfolgreiches interkulturelles Management in ihrem Geschäftsumfeld dar. Man kann sich ihrer bedienen, um kulturelle Unterschiede zu untersuchen, zu messen und zu überbrücken.

###### Die fünf Wertedimensionen nach Hofstede

Hofstede gründete Mitte der 1960er Jahre die Personalforschungsabteilung von IBM und führte eine umfassende Studie über kulturelle Unterschiede durch. Zu diesem Zweck wurden 117.000 Mitarbeiter an den zahlreichen Niederlassungen des Unternehmens auf der ganzen Welt befragt. Er verwendete denselben Fragebogen, um die kulturellen Einstellungen von Mitarbeitern aus über 50 Ländern und drei Regionen zu erfassen. Nach Auswertung der Umfrage erhielt er eine umfangreiche Sammlung kultureller Daten (Browaeys & Price, 2019).

Interkulturelles Management: Grundlagen und Klassifizierung

Hofstede nutzte die Faktorenanalyse, um die große Datenmenge auf Muster und Korrelationen zu untersuchen. Zunächst konnte er vier Dimensionen ermitteln, anhand derer eine Kultur gemessen und analysiert werden kann. Diese wurden anschließend weiterentwickelt und Hofstedes fünf kulturellen Wertedimensionen gingen daraus hervor. Die fünf kulturellen Wertedimensionen werden zur Analyse von Ländern genutzt. Dabei wurde festgestellt, dass in verschiedenen Ländern bzw. Gesellschaften auf die gleichen Probleme oder Herausforderungen unterschiedlich reagiert wird. Browaeys and Price (2019) benennen die Dimensionen wie folgt: Machtdistanzindex, Individualismus vs. Kollektivismus, Unsicherheitsvermeidung, Maskulinität vs. Femininität und Langfristorientierung (Konfuzianische Dynamik).

Der Machtdistanzindex (MDI) gibt an, inwieweit Menschen innerhalb einer Gesellschaft oder Gruppe die ungleiche Verteilung von Macht als angemessen erachten und bis zu welchem Ausmaß es als vorteilhaft angesehen wird, dass Macht von einer zentralen Stelle und weniger auf regionaler Ebene ausgeübt wird.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Machtdistanzindex | |
| Niedrige Machtdistanz | Hohe Machtdistanz |
| * Ungleichheit wird auf ein Minimum reduziert, da sich daraus Nachteile für andere ergeben. * Hierarchische Strukturen werden nur aufgebaut, wenn dies sinnvoll erscheint. * Über- und Untergeordnete ( z. B. in Firmenstrukturen) werden als gleich angesehen. * Es gibt keine Statussymbole, alle werden gleich behandelt. * Untergeordnete werden um Rat gebeten. * Individualität wird respektiert. * Die Verwaltung basiert auf einer funktionierenden Demokratie. * Beispiele: Österreich, Kanada, Dänemark, Israel und die Niederlande | * Ungleichheit ist unvermeidbar: Der Platz, den eine Person innerhalb einer Gesellschaft einnimmt, ist von ihrer Leistung abhängig. * Natürlich geltende Unterschiede kommen in den hierarchischen Strukturen zum Tragen. * Über- und Untergeordnete werden als unterschiedlich angesehen. * Machthaber haben ein Recht auf Statussymbole und Prestige. * Untergeordnete erhalten Anweisungen. * Autorität wird respektiert. * Die Verwaltung basiert auf einer wohlwollenden Autokratie. * Beispiele: China, Kolumbien, Indien, Malaysia und Mexiko |

Die zweite Dimension Individualismus vs. Kollektivismus (bei Browaeys and Price (2019) abgekürzt durch den Code „IDV“) beschreibt, ob Menschen eher auf sich selbst fokussiert sind (Individualismus) oder dazu neigen, sich einer Gruppe zugehörig zu fühlen (Kollektivismus).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Kollektivismus vs. Individualismus | |
| Kollektivismus | Individualismus |
| * Das „Wir“-Gefühl ist vorherrschend. * Die soziale Gruppe hat eine identitätsstiftende Funktion. * Bei der Entscheidungsfindung steht das Wohl der Gruppe im Vordergrund. * Beziehungen sind wichtiger als Aufgaben. * Gruppenzugehörigkeit und Erfolg sind von Bedeutung. * Die vorherrschenden Werte sind je nach Gruppe unterschiedlich (Partikularismus). * Beispiele: Brasilien, China, Griechenland, Indien, Mexiko, Skandinavien und Singapur | * Das „Ich“-Gefühl ist vorherrschend. * Das eigene Ich ist die Quelle der eigenen Identität. * Bei der Entscheidungsfindung steht das Wohl des Einzelnen im Vordergrund. * Aufgaben sind wichtiger als Beziehungen. * Initiativen durch den Einzelnen und das berufliche Fortkommen haben einen hohen Stellenwert. * Wertestandards gelten für alle (Universalismus). * Beispiele: Australien, Kanada, England, Frankreich, Deutschland, die Niederlande, Neuseeland und die USA |

Die Dimension Unsicherheitsvermeidung („UAS“ vom Englischen „Uncertainty avoidance“) beschreibt, inwieweit Menschen bereit sind, Ambiguität in ihrem Alltag und sozialem Umfeld zu vermeiden bzw. anzunehmen.

Interkulturelles Management: Grundlagen und Klassifizierung

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Unsicherheitsvermeidung | |
| Hohe Unsicherheitsvermeidung | Niedrige Unsicherheitsvermeidung |
| * Unsicherheit wird als Bedrohung wahrgenommen, die auf ein Minimum reduziert werden muss. * Außenseiter und abweichende Überzeugungen werden nicht toleriert. * Das Vorhersehbare und Eindeutige wird bevorzugt. * Sicherheit ist wichtig. * Man wehrt sich gegen Veränderung. * Klare Regeln und Vorschriften gelten als Vorteil. * Konsens wird Konflikten vorgezogen. * Experten wird Respekt gezollt und ihrem Wissen wird Folge geleistet. * Harte Arbeit wird als natürliche Tugend erachtet. * Beispiele: Argentinien, Belgien, Chile, Griechenland und Peru | * Unsicherheit wird als etwas Natürliches akzeptiert, das zum Leben gehört. * Außenseiter und abweichende Überzeugungen werden nicht als bedrohlich wahrgenommen. * Mehrdeutigkeit wird akzeptiert. * Man ist nicht abgeneigt, Risiken einzugehen. * Neuerungen werden toleriert. * Man bevorzugt weniger Regeln und Vorschriften. * Wettbewerb und Konflikte werden als etwas Positives erachtet. * Man vertraut auf den gesunden Menschenverstand. * Harte Arbeit allein wird nicht als Tugend erachtet. * Beispiele: Dänemark, Hongkong, Irland, Jamaika und Singapur |

Die Dimension Maskulinität vs. Femininität (MAS) beschreibt, inwieweit Erfolgsstreben (maskulin) oder andererseits Lebensqualität und Fürsorge (feminin) als wichtig erachtet werden.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Maskulinität vs. Femininität | |
| Maskulin | Feminin |
| * Klare Trennung der Geschlechterrollen. * Die Männerrolle ist durch ihr Durchsetzungsvermögen geprägt; die Frauenrolle ist fürsorglich. * Wettbewerbs- und leistungsorientiert. * Vermögensaufbau ist vorrangig. * Das Leben wird von Arbeit bestimmt und durch Ehrgeiz vorangetrieben. * Erfolgreiche Menschen erhalten Unterstützung. * Unabhängigkeit steht im Vordergrund. * Der Führungsstil ist von Entscheidungsfreude und Durchsetzungsstärke geprägt. * Beispiele: Kolumbien, Ungarn, Italien, Japan und Mexiko | * Keine klare Trennung der Geschlechterrollen. * Frauen- als auch Männerrollen sind von Fürsorge, Hilfsbereitschaft und Umweltbewusstsein geprägt. * Lebensqualität hat Vorrang und wird durch den Dienst am Nächsten inspiriert. * Arbeit wird einer guten Lebensqualität untergeordnet. * Bedürftige erhalten Unterstützung. * Die gegenseitige Abhängigkeit steht im Vordergrund. * Der Führungsstil ist konsensorientiert und von Einfühlungsvermögen geprägt. * Beispiele: Costa Rica, Dänemark, die Niederlande, Norwegen und Schweden |

Langzeitorientierung (Konfuzianische Dynamik) beschreibt, inwieweit Menschen in der Gegenwart leben oder mehr in der Zukunft verhaftet sind.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Langzeitorientierung (Konfuzianische Dynamik) | |
| Hohe Langfristorientierung | Niedrige Langfristorientierung |
| * Eigenverantwortung und Selbstdisziplin werden hoch geschätzt. * Persönliche Beziehungen halten ein Leben lang und werden hoch geschätzt. * Soziale und wirtschaftliche Ungleichheiten werden in der Regel nicht toleriert. * Die zukünftige Marktstellung eines Unternehmens ist wichtig. * Führungskräfte und Angestellte haben die gleichen Ziele. * Beispiele: China, Hongkong, Japan und Korea | * Das berufliche Fortkommen und Selbstbestimmung werden hoch geschätzt. * Beziehungen werden geknüpft, wenn es einem Geschäft dienlich ist. * Das Entlohnungssystem basiert auf Leistung und Fähigkeiten. * Kurzfristige Gewinne werden als wichtig erachtet. * Führungskräfte und Angestellte haben unterschiedliche Ansichten. * Beispiele: Belgien, Großbritannien, die Philippinen und Russland |

Interkulturelles Management: Grundlagen und Klassifizierung

###### Die Wertedimensionen nach Trompenaars

Auch Trompenaars und Hampden-Turner (2012) haben Daten über kulturelle Merkmale gesammelt. Sie stützten ihre Erkenntnisse auf Befragungen von mehr als 46.000 Führungskräften aus über 40 Ländern, die über einen Zeitraum von 10 Jahren durchgeführt wurden. Im Rahmen dieser Forschungsarbeit konnten sie die ursprünglich von Hofstede ermittelten Kulturbegriffe stützen und erweitern. Dabei werden die Kulturen anhand der folgenden sieben Dimensionen veranschaulicht:

* + 1. Die Dimension Universalismus vs. Partikularismus beschreibt, inwieweit eine Kultur Wert auf Vorschriften und Konventionen legt. Im Gegensatz dazu stehen Kulturen, die Wert auf persönliche Beziehungen legen und anderen Regeln folgen.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Universalismus vs. Partikularismus | |
| Universalismus | Partikularismus |
| * Alle sind gleich. Jedem stehen die gleichen Möglichkeiten offen und alle verfügen über denselben Status. * Es gibt eine Reihe von universellen Regeln, die für alle gelten. | * Jeder ist verschieden, einzigartig und etwas Besonderes. Unterschiede sind etwas Positives. * Jeder Moment und jede Erfahrung sind außergewöhnlich und einzigartig. |

* + 1. Die Dimension Individualismus vs. Kollektivismus beschreibt, inwieweit eigenständige Arbeit, die auf herausragende Leistungen und Eigenverantwortung ausgerichtet ist, wichtiger ist, als in der Gruppe auf ein gemeinsames Ziel hinzuarbeiten.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Individualismus vs. Kollektivismus | |
| Individualismus | Kollektivismus |
| * Wettbewerb, Eigenverantwortung, persönliches Fortkommen und Selbstverwirklichung werden geschätzt. | * Zusammenarbeit, soziales Engagement, der Dienst an der Öffentlichkeit und das gesellschaftliche Vermächtnis haben einen hohen Stellenwert. |

* + 1. Die Dimension Spezifität vs. Diffusität beschreibt, inwieweit Menschen ihr Privat- und Berufsleben voneinander trennen und wie unterschiedlich stark und intim Beziehungen in den Kulturen sind.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Spezifität vs. Diffusität | |
| Spezifität | Diffusität |
| * Das Privatleben wird vom Berufsleben strikt getrennt. * Am Arbeitsplatz haben Menschen eher wenige enge und intime Beziehungen. * Das Gesellschaftsleben des Einzelnen ist breit gefächert. * Es wird direkt kommuniziert. | * Das Privatleben wird vom Berufsleben nicht klar getrennt. * Das Privatleben wird oft durch viele Menschen geprägt. * Es wird indirekt kommuniziert. * Aussagen sind nicht immer wörtlich gemeint. |

* + 1. Die Dimension Neutralität vs. Affektivität beschreibt, inwieweit Menschen ihre Gefühle verbergen, anstatt sie offen zu zeigen und u. A. am Arbeitsplatz mit anderen zu teilen.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Neutralität vs. Affektivität | |
| Neutralität | Affektivität |
| * Die Individuen sind emotional gefasst und treten beherrscht auf. * Nonverbale Kommunikation findet statt. * Körperkontakt wird vermieden und große persönliche Distanz zu den Mitmenschen wird bevorzugt. | * Die Menschen tragen ihre Emotionen nach außen und treten mitunter humorvoll auf. * Es wird häufig verbal kommuniziert. * Körperkontakt wird akzeptiert und die persönliche Distanz zu den Mitmenschen ist geringer. |

Herkunft Dabei handelt es sich um die willkürliche Zuweisung eines Status, der auf persönlichen Faktoren und nicht auf Leistung beruht.

* + 1. Die Dimension Leistung vs. Herkunft beschreibt, inwieweit eine Person ihren Status durch Wissen, Fähigkeiten und Leistung erarbeitet hat oder ob dieser auf den sozialen Status ihrer **Herkunft** zurückzuführen ist.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Leistung vs. Herkunft | |
| Leistung | Herkunft |
| * Der Status wird durch Leistungen erlangt. | * Der Status beruht auf dem eigenen sozialen Status und dem Alter. |

Interkulturelles Management: Grundlagen und Klassifizierung

* + 1. Die Dimension Serialität vs. Parallelität beschreibt auf der einen Seite Kulturen, in denen Produktivität hohe Wertschätzung erfährt und Aufgaben nacheinander abgearbeitet werden („Zeit ist Geld“). Im Gegensatz dazu stehen Kulturen, die dazu neigen, Aufgaben gleichzeitig zu erledigen, und die in Bezug auf Planung, Pünktlichkeit und das Einhalten von Fristen flexibler sind.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Serialität vs. Parallelität | |
| Serialität | Parallelität |
| * Es ist wichtig, Ziele zu erreichen, pünktlich zu sein und die Dinge in der richtigen Reihenfolge zu erledigen. | * Zeitpläne und der Ablauf eines Ereignisses sind flexibel und anpassbar; Fristen sind nicht starr. |

* + 1. Die Dimension Interne Kontrolle vs. Externe Kontrolle beschreibt die Auffassung der Zusammenwirkung von Glück und Umwelt in den Kulturen. Es gibt Kulturen, in denen davon ausgegangen wird, dass die Umwelt kontrollierbar ist; hier ist es wichtig, zu gewinnen. Im Gegensatz dazu stehen Kulturen die ihre Ziele erreichen, indem sie den Fokus auf Zusammenarbeit und Beziehungen legen.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Interne Kontrolle vs. Externe Kontrolle | |
| Intern | Extern |
| * Jede Person ist für das eigene Glück verantwortlich; es ist wichtig, die eigene Umwelt zu kontrollieren. | * Die eigene Zukunft wird vom Schicksal und dem Platz bestimmt, den man in der Welt einnimmt. Daher ist es für den Einzelnen wichtig, mit seinem Umfeld zusammenzuarbeiten. |

###### Wertdimensionen nach GLOBE

Aus der GLOBE-Studie gingen die folgenden neun Kulturdimensionen hervor:

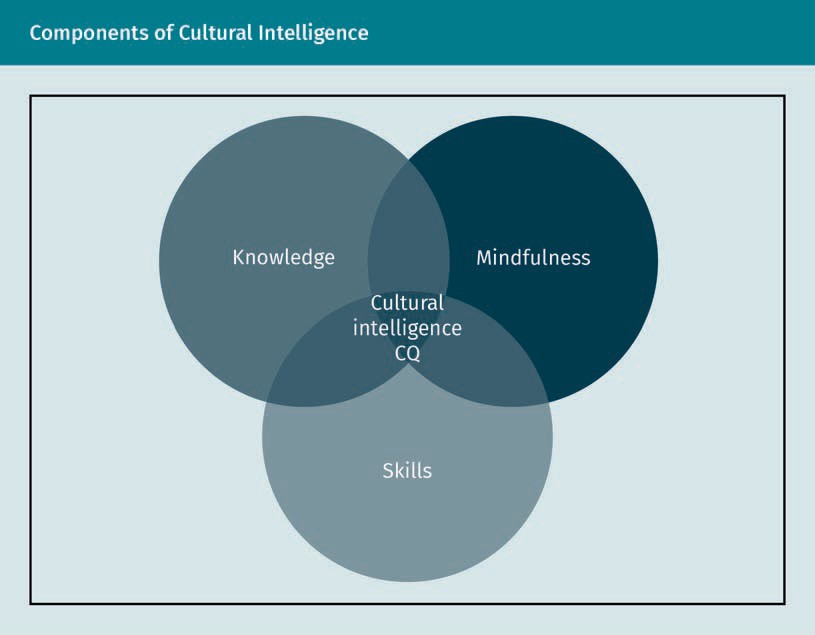
1. Unsicherheitsvermeidung legt dar, inwieweit Menschen soziale Normen, Vorschriften und Verfahren benötigen, um mit Unsicherheit zurechtzukommen
2. Bestimmtheit beschreibt, inwieweit Menschen selbstbewusst auftreten und bestrebt sind, ihre Meinung durchzusetzen
3. Geschlechtergleichheit legt fest, inwieweit Männer und Frauen in einer Gruppe gleich oder verschieden behandelt werden
4. Leistungsorientierung beschreibt, inwieweit Leistung und Weiterentwicklung in einer Gruppe gewürdigt und belohnt werden
5. Humanorientierung legt fest, welchen Stellenwert menschliche Eigenschaften wie Güte, Fairness und Großzügigkeit in einer Gruppe haben
6. Gruppenbasierter Kollektivismus beschreibt, inwieweit Menschen stolz auf ihre Gruppe oder Organisation sind, sich in ihr engagieren und sich ihr gegenüber loyal verhalten
7. Institutioneller Kollektivismus beschreibt, inwieweit die Angehörigen einer Gruppe Wert darauf legen, dass im Kollektiv gehandelt wird und die Ressourcen von den Mitgliedern gemeinsam genutzt und gerecht verteilt werden
8. Machtdistanz beschreibt, inwieweit Angehörige einer Gruppe akzeptieren, dass es Unterschiede in Bezug auf Status, Autorität und Macht gibt
9. Zukunftsorientierung beschreibt, inwieweit Menschen Pläne schmieden und davon ausgehen, dass ihr Verhalten mit einer zeitlichen Verzögerung belohnt wird (Belohnungsaufschub).

###### Kulturelle Intelligenz

Das interkulturelle Management als neue Disziplin und die genau festgelegten Kulturdimensionen helfen Führungskräften dabei, sich leichter anpassen und innerhalb der verschiedenen Kulturkreise, in denen sie agieren, kultursensibel zu arbeiten. Demnach wird heute von Geschäftsleuten erwartet, dass sie über einen gewissen Grad an kultureller Intelligenz (CQ) verfügen. Diese wird definiert als „scheinbar natürliche Fähigkeit eines Außenstehenden, die fremdartigen und unklaren Gesten einer Person so zu interpretieren, wie es ihre Landsleute tun würden“ (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004, Abschnitt 3). Thomas und Inkson (2017) sehen kulturelle Intelligenz als Konstrukt, das sich aus drei Komponenten zusammensetzt:

1. Kenntnis darüber zu haben, was Kultur ist, wie sich Kulturen unterscheiden und wie sich die Kultur auf das Verhalten auswirkt (Wissen)
2. In der Lage zu sein, Situationen auf reflektierte und kreative Weise zu interpretieren (Achtsamkeit)
3. In der Lage zu sein, mit Wissen und Achtsamkeit interkulturelle Fähigkeiten und Kompetenz zu entwickeln und sich so zu verhalten, wie es in einem bestimmten kulturellen Umfeld angemessen ist (Fähigkeiten).

Interkulturelles Management: Grundlagen und Klassifizierung



Kulturelle Intelligenz, wie sie im Venn-Diagramm obenstehend veranschaulicht wird, entsteht, wenn diese drei Bauteile ständig und ineinander integriert zusammenwirken. Jedes interkulturelle Problem kann mit zuvor erworbenem Wissen, Achtsamkeit und Fähigkeiten in Angriff genommen werden, und die Lösung des Problems kann herangezogen werden, um darauffolgenden Konfliktsituationen mit einem verbesserten interkulturellen Verständnis zu begegnen.

Zusammenfassung

Die Globalisierung hat die Geschäftswelt grundlegend verändert. Um die neuen Herausforderungen zu bewältigen, die das zunehmend internationale Geschäftsumfeld in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren mit sich brachte, orientierte man sich an den heimischen Geschäftsmodellen und -ansätzen. Man nahm an, dass diese überall auf der Welt erfolgreich eingesetzt werden könnten. Der ausbleibende Erfolg solcher Ansätze ließ sich auf mangelndes kulturelles Bewusstsein zurückführen. Infolgedessen etablierte sich das interkulturelles Management als Teildisziplin innerhalb der Betriebswirtschaftslehre.

Die Unternehmen haben erkannt, dass auf Kulturdominanz bzw. -annahme basierende Ansätze nicht zu Erfolg führen; es hat eine Umorientierung zur Kultursynergie stattgefunden. Neue Lösungen wurden entwickelt, die auf dem Respekt für alle beteiligten Kulturen beruhen. So können Unternehmen erfolgreich in unterschiedlichen Kulturkreisen tätig sein und anstatt eines kulturellen Vorteils einen Wettbewerbsvorteil erlangen. Um einer großen Bandbreite an Kulturbegriffen gerecht zu werden, wurden Ansätze entwickelt, die die Vorstellung von Kultur besser beschreiben. Erste Ansätze stammen aus dem Bereich der Anthropologie.

Kommunikation galt als Schlüsselkonzept, das Kultur widerspiegelt. Es folgten eine Reihe von Studien, in denen mehr empirische Forschungsmethoden und Klassifizierungen Anwendung fanden. Daraus gingen die Kulturschemata von Hofstede und Trompenaars sowie die Ergebnisse der GLOBE-Studie hervor.



# Lektion 2

## Funktion und Bedeutung des interkulturellen Managements für Unternehmen

#### LERNZIELE

Nach der Bearbeitung dieser Lektion werden Sie in der Lage sein, ...

... wichtige internationale Entwicklungen wahrzunehmen und das Umfeld,

in dem ein Unternehmen agiert, zu erkennen.

... den Zusammenhang zwischen nationaler Kultur und Unternehmenskultur zu erklären.

... die kulturellen Kernkompetenzen zu ermitteln, die eine global ausgerichtetes Unternehmen benötigt.

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1. Funktion und Bedeutung des interkulturellen Managements für Unternehmen

### Aus der Praxis

Im Jahr 2014 versuchte Russland die Krim, eine Provinz im Süden der Ukraine, zu annektieren (Lederer, 2021), was politisch und wirtschaftlich auf der ganzen Welt zu großen Unsicherheiten führte. Als Reaktion auf die Annexion verhängten die USA eine Reihe von Sanktionen gegen Russland (Masters, 2019). Russland erließ ebenfalls Sanktionen. Später ließen die USA verlauten, dass sie ihre Sanktionen aufrecht erhalten würden, solange die Besetzung andauerte (Lederer, 2021). Bis zum Jahr 2020 schien sich die Situation verschlimmert zu haben. Ein US-Vertreter im UN-Sicherheitsrat, Rodney Hunter, machte die Position der Regierung von US-Präsident Biden durch die folgende Äußerung deutlich: „die Vereinigten Staaten bekräftigen ihr unerschütterliches Engagement für die Souveränität und territoriale Integrität der Ukraine“ (zitiert nach Lederer, 2021, Abschnitt 7). Ferner behauptete er, dass Russland „jegliche Meinungsverschiedenheiten in Bezug auf die brutale Annexion der Krim noch weiter unterdrückt“ (Abschnitt 7).

Diese Ereignisse erschütterten die internationale Geschäftswelt. In der Folge haben sich europäische und US-amerikanische Unternehmen aus Russland zurückgezogen, eine Währungskrise hat den Rubel auf Talfahrt geschickt (Deresky, 2017) und gegenseitige Sanktionen wurden verhängt. Unternehmen die Geschäfte mit Russland oder der Ukraine machten bzw. Niederlassungen dort hatten, mussten Risiken und möglichen Konsequenzen dieses bedeutenden Ereignisses abwiegen und schnell darauf reagieren. Fragestellungen:

* + Welche Auswirkungen könnte die Annexion der Krim auf europäische und amerikanische Unternehmen, die in Russland und der Ukraine tätig sind, gehabt haben?
  + Welche Auswirkungen könnte die Annexion der Krim auf europäische und amerikanische Unternehmen gehabt haben, deren Lieferketten mit Russland und der Ukraine verknüpft waren?
  + Welche Auswirkungen könnte der Wertverlust des Rubels auf Unternehmen gehabt haben, die Geschäfte mit russischen oder ukrainischen Unternehmen machten?

### Internationale Entwicklungen und Rahmenbedingungen für Unternehmen

Unternehmen, die in einem globalen Geschäftsumfeld tätig sind, müssen eine Reihe sozialer Faktoren berücksichtigen. Diese sind nun durch das interkulturelle Management, das auf dem Verständnis für kulturelle Aspekte beruht, ergänzt worden. Manager müssen in ihrem Verantwortungsbereich eine globale Perspektive einnehmen, um den Herausforderungen eines sich ständig verändernden, zunehmend unabhängigen und multikulturellen Geschäftsumfelds gerecht zu werden. Deresky (2017) betonte, wie sehr Entwicklungen und Ereignisse von internationaler Tragweite die Arbeit von globalen Managern beeinflussen. Diese Ereignisse und Situationen können sich auf jeden Bereich im internationalen Geschäftsleben auswirken, von der Strategieentwicklung über die Umsetzung bis hin zum täglichen Geschäftsbetrieb.

Die Funktion und Bedeutung des interkulturellen Managements für Unternehmen

###### Schlüsselfaktoren für global ausgerichtete Unternehmen

Es gibt jedoch mehrere wichtige Faktoren, die diese „fortlaufenden Entwicklungen“ begleiten (Deresky, 2017). Auf makroökonomischer Ebene müssen Unternehmen mit einer Vielzahl globaler Entwicklungen vertraut sein, diese beobachten und sicherstellen, dass sie bei der Strategieentwicklung und Planung berücksichtigt werden.

Globalisierung und Entwicklungen weltweit

Die Globalisierung hat die Geschäftstätigkeit von Unternehmen in den letzten 50 Jahren tiefgreifend verändert. Die Welt an sich hat sich verändert und der Wandel vollzieht sich viel schneller. Unternehmen, Politik, Wirtschaft, Handel, Finanzen und Gesellschaft sind heute global miteinander verflochtene Phänomene, die den Großteil der Welt zu einer Weltwirtschaft bzw. einem globalen Marktplatz verschmelzen lassen.

Deresky (2017) bezieht sich auf die Arbeit von Bisson et al. und erkennt wichtige globale Entwicklungen, die Unternehmen berücksichtigen müssen, nun da die Globalisierung vollzogen wird und als integraler Baustein des Geschäftsumfeldes gilt.

1. Schwellenländer. Der Schwerpunkt des Wirtschaftswachstums hat sich verlagert. Die Schwellenländer (und mit ihnen die Konsumenten der Mittelschicht in diesen Gebieten) verzeichnen nun ein schnelleres Wachstum als die Industrieländer.
2. Produktivität und Konsum. Die Unternehmen in den Industrieländern stehen unter Druck. Sie müssen noch produktiver werden und den Konsum steigern, um die Wirtschaft anzukurbeln und am Laufen zu halten.
3. Vernetzung. Die zunehmende Vernetzung der Welt, die durch technologische Innovationen ermöglicht wird, schafft mehr Möglichkeiten und führt weltweit zu mehr Wettbewerb.
4. Rohstoffquellen. Bei den Rohstoffen dieser Erde besteht ein Nachfrageüberhang. Gleichzeitig wird Druck auf die Unternehmen ausgeübt, umweltfreundlich und nachhaltig zu agieren.
5. Herausforderungen für Regierungen. Staaten, die im Wettbewerb stehen, fällt es schwer, Strategien zu entwickeln, die Wirtschaftswachstum und Stabilität gewährleisten.

Während die Globalisierung Unternehmen aus westlichen Industrieländern bislang große Wachstumsmöglichkeiten geboten hat, sind es nun immer mehr die weniger entwickelten Länder, die zu bedeutenden Akteuren in der Weltwirtschaft avancieren. So wurde in den BRIC-Staaten (Brasilien, Russland, Indien und China) und in jüngerer Vergangenheit auch in den aufstrebenden MINT-Staaten (Mexiko, Indonesien, Nigeria und Türkei) ein kräftiges Wirtschaftswachstum verzeichnet. Fareed Zakaria beschreibt dies als „der Aufstieg der Übrigen – der übrigen Welt (zitiert nach Deresky, 2017, S. 28).

###### Politisches Umfeld

Politische Ereignisse auf der ganzen Welt, wie der Arabische Frühling im Jahr 2011 und die russische Intervention in der Ukraine 2014, können unmittelbar erhebliche Auswirkungen auf ein Geschäftsumfeld haben. Eine Umfrage, die Aon Risk Solutions (zitiert nach Deresky,

2017) in 211 Ländern bzw. Regionen durchführte, deutet darauf hin, dass das politische Risiko steigt und Unternehmen dieses Risiko proaktiv in Angriff nehmen müssen. Deresky (2017) ermittelte die folgenden sieben politischen Risiken, mit denen sich ein Unternehmen in der Regel auseinandersetzen muss:

* 1. Konfiskation. Betriebsvermögen wird von einer Regierung in Besitz genommen bzw. beschlagnahmt, ohne dass eine angemessene Entschädigung geleistet wird.
  2. Zwangsversteigerung. Vermögenswerte oder Eigenkapital muss an Staatsangehörige des Ziellandes zu einem Preis verkauft werden, der unter dem Marktwert liegt.
  3. Ungleichbehandlung. Es gibt Gesetze und Vorschriften die für ausländische Unternehmen nachteilig sind.
  4. Hürden für die Rückführung von Geldern. Unternehmen haben keine Möglichkeit, Gewinne oder Eigenkapital aus einem Land zu transferieren.
  5. Verlust von Technologie und geistigem Eigentum. Patente, Warenzeichen oder Handelsnamen gehen an die Regierung eines Landes über.
  6. Einmischung in die Unternehmensführung. Die Regierung oder andere staatliche Einrichtungen greifen in Entscheidungsprozesse von Privatunternehmen ein.
  7. Unredlichkeit. Regierungsvertreter handeln unredlich, z. B. bei Erpressung, Bestechung oder wenn vertragliche Vereinbarungen widerrufen oder verändert werden.

Unternehmen sollten unbedingt regelmäßig die politischen Risiken bewerten. So kann das Risikopotenzial verringert und ein möglicher finanzieller Verlust bei Auslandsgeschäften minimiert werden.

###### Wirtschaftsumfeld

Ob ein Land wirtschaftlich stabil und zukunftsfähig ist, hängt von seiner politischen Lage ab. Üblicherweise waren die Industrienationen wirtschaftlich stabiler als weniger entwickelte Länder. Letztere waren mit einem größeren finanziellen Risiko behaftet, das die Unternehmen abfedern mussten.

Deresky (2017) stellt fest, dass ein Unternehmen bzw. seine Tochtergesellschaft im Ausland auf zwei Probleme stoßen kann, die die Finanzen betreffen. Zum einen könnte eine Regierung plötzlich die heimische Geld- oder Finanzpolitik ändern. Zum anderen könnte eine solche Regierung beschließen, die Vorschriften für ausländische Investoren zu überarbeiten. Diese Umstände könnten es erschweren, Gelder in das Mutterland des Unternehmens rückzuführen, und das Unternehmen einem erheblichen Wechselkursrisiko aussetzen, abhängig davon, wie stark die betroffenen Währungen schwanken.

###### Rechtslage

Ein Unternehmen, dass im Ausland tätig ist, muss gewährleisten können, dass es mit den geltenden Gesetzen und Vorschriften in den entsprechenden Ländern im Einklang steht. Die Rechtslage umfasst die vielen Vorschriften und Gesetze, die in einem Land gelten, in dem ein Unternehmen tätig ist. Hierzu zählt aber auch, wie die Einheimischen die Gesetze interpretieren und welche Einstellung sie in Bezug auf die Einhaltung dieser Vorschriften haben. Schafft man es nicht, die Vorschriften zu befolgen und die feinen Nuancen eines rechtlichen Umfeldes zu verstehen, kann einem das teuer zu stehen kommen. Vertragsbrüche und unerwünschte Rechtsstreitigkeiten können die Folge sein.

Die Funktion und Bedeutung des interkulturellen Managements für Unternehmen

Deresky (2017) erklärt, dass die rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen weltweit auf drei zentrale Rechtssysteme zurückzuführen sind:

1. Gewohnheitsrecht (Common Law oder durch richterliche Entscheidungen weiter entwickeltes Recht). Dieses System kennt man aus den USA und den meisten Ländern, die einst britische Kolonien waren. Dort stützt sich die Rechtssprechung auf Präzedenzfälle, die auf früheren Rechtssprüchen beruhen.
2. Römisches Recht (Civil Law). Dieses System kennt man hauptsächlich aus Europa und Japan. Die Rechtsprechung beruht auf einem umfassenden Regelwerk, das bei Gerichtsverfahren interpretiert wird.
3. Islamisches Recht (Scharia). Dieses Recht, das auf religiösen Überzeugungen beruht, kennt man aus islamisch geprägten Ländern. Die Gesetze und Sitten, die auch durch das Gewohnheitsrecht und das Römische Recht geprägt sind, regeln alle Aspekte des Lebens.

Zusätzlich zu den Rechtssystemen verfügen Länder auf der ganzen Welt über unterschiedliche Ansätze, um den Handel zu reglementieren. Um Importe zu beschränken und die heimische Wirtschaft, Unternehmen und Branchen zu schützen, haben einige Länder drastische und komplexe Restriktionsmaßnahmen ergriffen. So wurden etwa Handelsschranken errichtet oder Zölle und Einfuhrkontingente beschlossen (z. B. in Japan). Ebenso kann das Steuersystem eines Landes einen erheblichen Einfluss darauf haben, ob ein Standort für ein ausländisches Unternehmen denkbar und profitabel ist. Regierungen haben darüber hinaus viele Möglichkeiten sowohl in das Regelwerk als auch das Geschäftsumfeld einzugreifen. Dies kann die Freiheit, die ein ausländisches Unternehmen in einem anderen Land genießt, einschränken. Beispielsweise kann es zu einer staatlichen Beteiligung kommen, die Regierung verschafft sich möglicherweise Zugriff auf Schlüsselindustrien, Gesetze werden geändert oder ausländische Unternehmen müssen gewisse Anforderungen erfüllen.

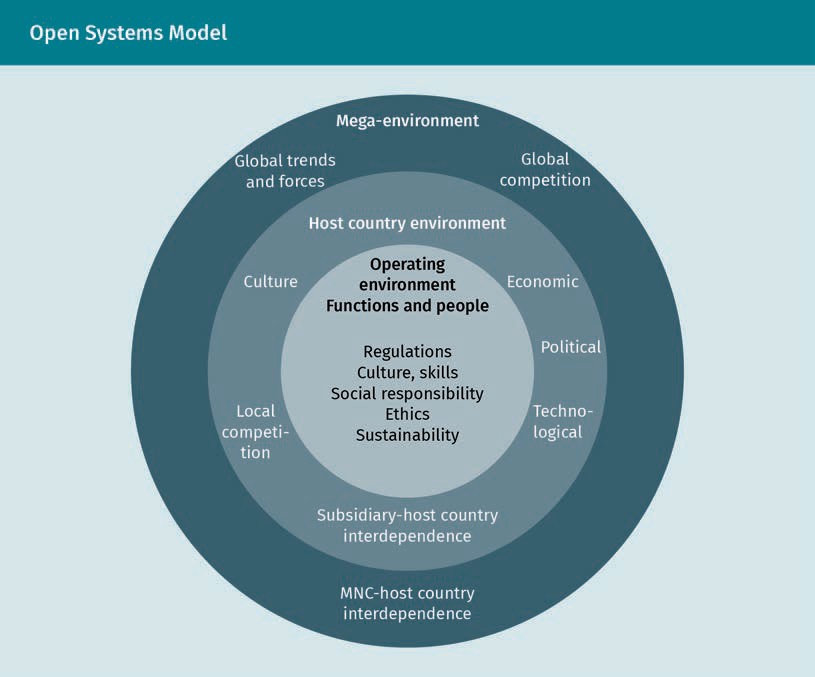
###### Technologische Rahmenbedingungen

Die rasanten Entwicklungen und ständig neuen Innovationen auf dem Gebiet der Technologie, Datenverarbeitung und Konnektivität haben das internationale Geschäftsumfeld nachhaltig verändert. Geografische Grenzen verlieren zunehmend an Bedeutung, da sowohl Verbraucher als auch Unternehmen mit nur wenigen Klicks länderübergreifend agieren können. Kulturelle Grenzen und Hürden sind verschwunden und vor allem jüngere Generationen denken global und verstehen sich als globale Kultur. Global ausgerichtete Unternehmen müssen sich mit Technologien und Datenverarbeitung beschäftigten, um anderen einen Schritt voraus zu sein und in diesen Bereichen nicht das Nachsehen zu haben.

Während sich die politischen, wirtschaftlichen und rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen trotz mancher Krisen und Zwischenfälle kaum verändern, unterliegt die Technologie einem ständigen Wandel und entwickelt sich unaufhörlich weiter. Globale Manager müssen die aktuelle Situation ständig neu bewerten und den Erfordernissen und Chancen, die technologische Neuerungen mit sich bringen, gerecht werden. Sie müssen wissen, wie Veränderungen in den verschiedenen Ländern erfolgreich umgesetzt werden, und dabei berücksichtigen, dass dort unterschiedliche Infrastrukturen und Kulturen vorherrschen und die Menschen zudem verschiedene Fähigkeiten, Kenntnisse und Erwartungen haben.

###### Kontextuelle Intelligenz

Ein globaler Manager muss eine Vielzahl an Einflussfaktoren berücksichtigen, wenn er Entscheidungen auf lokaler, nationaler und globaler Ebene trifft. Politische, wirtschaftliche, rechtliche, technologische und kulturelle Faktoren sowie die neuesten Trends und Innovationen bilden gemeinsam ein komplexes Geflecht, mit dem man sich befassen muss. Dieses wird im folgenden Modell des offenen Systems veranschaulicht.



Khanna (2014) erkannte, dass sich Führungskräfte, die sich an die unterschiedlichen wirtschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen auf der ganzen Welt anpassen wollen, mit diesen Faktoren und Ebenen auseinandersetzen müssen und prägte den Begriff der kontextuellen Intelligenz. Um sich an ein Umfeld anzupassen, in dem andere Werte und Beweggründe vorherrschend sind, müssen Führungskräfte zahlreiche Faktoren berücksichtigen, die sich nicht nur auf die Kulturdimensionen beschränken lassen. Hierzu zählen möglicherweise wirtschaftliche und politische Einflussfaktoren, Unternehmensmerkmale, physische Geographie, Bildungsstand, sprachliche Unterschiede sowie kulturelle Normen und Werte. Wichtig ist, dass der globale Manager den Kontext versteht.

Kontextuelle Intelligenz setzt „die Fähigkeit voraus, die Grenzen unseres Wissens zu verstehen und dieses Wissen an eine Umgebung anzupassen, die sich von der unterscheidet, in der es entwickelt wurde“ (Khanna, 2014, S. 60). Zu wissen und zu verstehen, wie ein Unternehmen funktioniert

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und in einem Land erfolgreich Geschäfte betreibt, ist keine Garantie dafür, dass derselbe Ansatz auch in einem anderen Land funktionieren wird. Für die Entwicklung kontextueller Intelligenz empfiehlt Khanna (2014) Folgendes:

* Ergründen Sie den institutionellen Kontext eines Landes und legen Sie dabei den Schwerpunkt auf unbekannte Phänomene.
* Gehen Sie nicht davon aus, dass Ihre mentalen Muster und Annahmen anwendbar sind. Akzeptieren Sie, dass es unterschiedliche Mentalitäten gibt.
* Seien Sie offen für neue Muster und Konzepte, und ändern sie diese, falls sie nicht zum gewünschten Erfolg führen.
* Auch wenn viele allgemeine Grundsätze überall gelten, müssen Sie akzeptieren, dass dies auf bestimmte Dimensionen nicht zutrifft.
* Das Tempo, in dem sich Veränderungen vollziehen, und die von einer Kultur angestrebte Zukunft sind von Land zu Land unterschiedlich.
* Unternehmen sollten sich nicht auf externe Marktforschungsinstitute verlassen, sondern selbst Daten erheben.
* Der institutionelle Wandel darf nicht überstürzt werden. Geduld ist gefragt.

### Der Zusammenhang zwischen Landes- und Unternehmenskultur

Um die Herausforderungen zu meistern, die sich durch die Arbeit in einem globalen Umfeld ergeben, müssen Unternehmen ein System von Regeln schaffen (Organisationsstruktur) sowie Werte, Normen und Einstellungen festlegen (Unternehmenskultur). Steers et al. (2016) stellten fest: „Wenn die Führungsstruktur einer Organisation ihr Fingerabdruck ist, dann ist die Unternehmenskultur ihre Persönlichkeit“ (S. 110–111). Sowohl die Organisationsstruktur als auch die Unternehmenskultur können an eine Landeskultur angepasst werden und man kann versuchen, diese zu imitieren. Die Landeskultur kann aber auch teilweise oder ganz abgelehnt werden. Die Globalisierung mit ihren großen Herausforderungen hat Organisationen veranlasst, ihre Unternehmenskultur und die verschiedenen Organisationsstrukturen grundlegend umzugestalten.

###### Unternehmenskultur

Es gibt zahlreiche Definitionen für den Begriff „Unternehmenskultur“ und viele Modelle anhand derer er analysiert und bewertet wird. Im weitesten Sinne bezieht sich Unternehmenskultur auf die Art und Weise, wie man in einer Organisation arbeitet. Sie spiegelt sich in den Werten, Normen, Überzeugungen und Einstellungen wider, die Menschen innerhalb der Organisation miteinander teilen und kommt in der Interaktion mit internen und externen Akteuren zum Ausdruck. Betriebswirte haben festgestellt, dass es verschiedene Arten von Unternehmenskultur gibt, und diese auf unterschiedliche Weise klassifiziert. Charles Handy (1976) hat in seiner bahnbrechenden Arbeit die folgenden vier breit gefassten Kategorien für den Begriff Unternehmenskultur festgelegt:

Autokratisch Einen Führungsstil, bei dem eine Führungskraft alleinige Entscheidungsmacht hat, bezeichnet man als autokratisch.

1. Machtkultur. Die Macht konzentriert sich im Kern der Organisation, was sich in einem **autokratischen** Führungsstil und einer hierarchischen Struktur widerspiegelt. Handy verglich diese Struktur mit einem Spinnennetz, wobei die machtvolle Spinne in der Mitte sitzt und das Netz ohne die Spinne kaum eine Funktion bzw. einen Zweck erfüllt.
2. Rollenkultur. Diese Kultur bezeichnet man oft als bürokratischen Stil und zeichnet sich dadurch aus, dass es viele Regeln gibt und wenig Anreize für Kreativität. Macht und Verantwortungsbereich hängen von der Position ab, die man in der sehr genau festgelegten, stark hierarchischen Struktur der Organisation einnimmt. Handy verglich diese Struktur mit einem großen Gebäude, das zwar stabil und zuverlässig ist, aber nicht flexibel reagieren oder sich bewegen kann.
3. Aufgabenkultur. Gruppen und Teams werden animiert, Aufgaben gemeinsam zu erledigen und an Projekten zusammenzuarbeiten. In solchen Organisationen ist oft eine Matrixstruktur vorherrschend, die Kreativität fördert. Zudem wird einzelnen Mitarbeitern mehr Verantwortung übertragen. Handy verglich diese Kultur mit einem Netz, dass durch seine vielen Fäden gestärkt wird.
4. Personenkultur. Dabei handelt es sich um eine weniger formelle Kultur. Die einzelnen Mitarbeiter konzentrieren sich auf ihre Aufgaben und Projekte. Team- bzw. Gruppenarbeit wird wenig Bedeutung beigemessen und der Einzelne kann in Konflikt mit den Unternehmenszielen geraten. Handy verglich diese Kultur mit einem Sternbild, in dem jeder Teilnehmer eine abgetrennte Einheit bildet, die eigenständig arbeitet.

Viele Wissenschaftler haben darüber hinaus noch eine weitere wichtige Kategorie festgelegt.

1. Unternehmerkultur. In dieser flexiblen Kultur werden Innovationen und Erfolg belohnt. Misserfolge werden toleriert, da sie als Folge von Risikobereitschaft und unternehmerischen Initiativen unvermeidbar sind.

Es ist weitgehend anerkannt, dass jedes Unternehmen über eine eigene Unternehmenskultur verfügt. Beeinflusst wird diese durch die jeweilige Branche und die Kultur des Landes, in dem das Unternehmen tätig ist. Beispielsweise wird sich die Unternehmenskultur eines Autoherstellers wahrscheinlich von der einer Werbeagentur unterscheiden. Man kann aber auch nahezu davon ausgehen, dass sich die Unternehmenskultur eines Autoherstellers von der eines ähnlichen Autoherstellers unterscheidet, wenn letzterer in einem anderen Land ansässig ist.

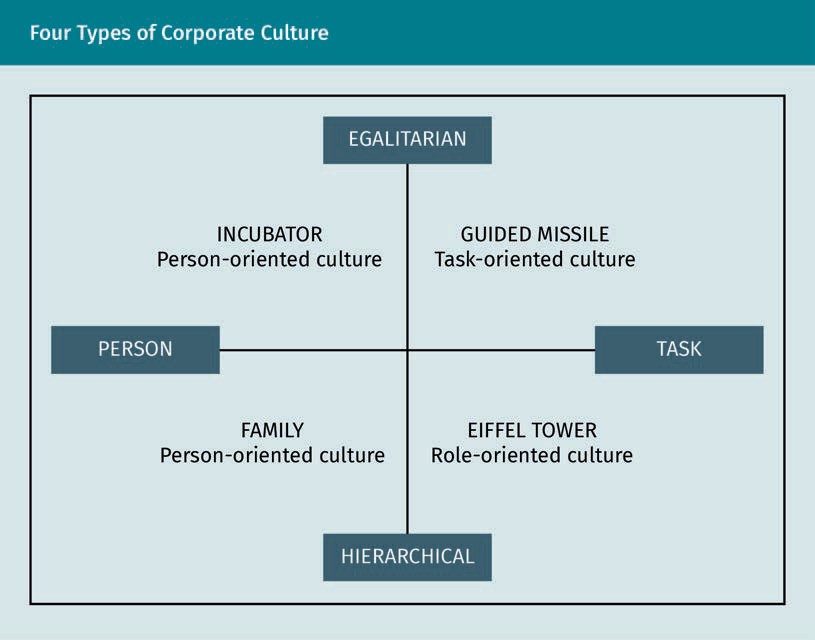
###### Unternehmens- und Landeskultur

Es überrascht nicht, dass in den meisten Ländern ein enger Zusammenhang zwischen Unternehmens- und Landeskultur besteht. Für eine große Studie, die sich auf die Kulturdimensionen von Hofstede und Trompenaars stützt, wurden 8.841 Führungskräfte und Angestellte in Organisationen aus 43 Ländern befragt. Die Ergebnisse zeigten eine große Übereinstimmung zwischen den Werten der Landeskulturen und den Werten von Organisationen, die in diesen Ländern ansässig sind. (Smith et al., 1996).

Wenn eine Organisation gegründet wird, werden die beteiligten Personen auf die Normen, Werte und Überzeugungen zurückgreifen, mit denen sie vertraut sind und die in ihrer Landeskultur und den entsprechenden Wertedimensionen verwurzelt sind. Trompenaars und Hampden-Turner (2012) untersuchten, inwieweit Unternehmenskultur vom Geschäftsumfeld und den kulturellen Merkmalen von Führungskräften und Mitarbeitern geprägt ist. Dabei konnten sie drei Bereiche identifizieren, anhand derer die Kultur einer Organisation beschrieben werden kann: 1) die Beziehung der Mitarbeiter zur Organisation, 2) das Autoritätssystem, das Hierarchie und Macht definiert, und 3) die Einstellung der Mitarbeiter zu den Aufgaben, Zielen

und zur Zukunft der Organisation und ihrem Platz, den sie innerhalb dieses Rahmenwerks einnehmen.

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Trompenaars und Hampden-Turner (2012) untersuchten Unternehmenskultur anhand der zwei Dimensionen Gleichheit vs. Hierarchie und Beziehungsorientierung vs. Aufgabenorientierung. Daraus gingen die folgenden vier Arten von Unternehmenskultur hervor:

* 1. Das Modell Familie steht sowohl für eine personenbezogene Kultur, die auf engen Beziehungen beruht, als auch für eine Hierarchie, in der dem Familienoberhaupt (Haushaltsvorstand) Respekt und Achtung entgegengebracht wird. Das Ergebnis ist eine machtorientierte Kultur, die dem häuslichen Umfeld weitgehend ähnlich ist.
  2. Das Modell Eiffelturm beschreibt eine hierarchische Kultur, die auf einer bürokratielastigen Arbeitsteilung beruht. Die Hierarchie ist „steil, symmetrisch, oben spitz und unten breit, stabil, unflexibel und robust“ (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012, S. 204) genauso wie der Eiffelturm. Die Hierarchie ist von Bedeutung, denn die Mitarbeiter einer jeden Ebene sind verantwortlich für das Funktionieren der darunter liegenden Ebenen. Jedes Mitglied der Hierarchie ist sich seiner Stellung bewusst und weiß, welcher Funktion es sich unterordnen muss (egal, wer diese Funktion ausübt).
  3. Beim Modell Lenkrakete handelt es sich um eine egalitäre Kultur, die jedoch unpersönlich und aufgabenorientiert ist. Trompenaars verglich dieses Modell mit einem fliegenden Eiffelturm (d. h. einer Lenkrakete). Hier steht das Erledigen von Aufgaben im Vordergrund. Damit werden üblicherweise Teams oder Projektgruppen betraut, innerhalb derer die Verantwortungsbereiche ineinander übergehen. Wichtig ist, dass die Arbeit verrichtet wird, was immer dazu nötig ist. Die Gruppenmitglieder werden anhand ihres Beitrags bewertet, den sie zur Erfüllung

der Aufgabe bzw. der Zielvorgabe für das Gruppenprojekt geleistet haben. Alles ist ständig im Wandel und Zielvorgaben ändern sich. Motivation und Belohnung ergeben sich für gewöhnlich aus dem Engagement, das man dem Endergebnis entgegenbringt.

* 1. Das Modell Brutkasten basiert auf der Annahme, dass die Selbstverwirklichung und der Selbstausdruck der Individuen wichtiger sind als die Organisation selbst. Der Zweck einer Organisation besteht darin, die Menschen ihrer Routinetätigkeiten zu entbinden, damit sie sich mit kreativen und innovativen Aufgaben selbst verwirklichen können. Die Kultur ist sowohl egalitär als auch personenbezogen. Es gibt nur sehr wenige Strukturen und kaum Hierarchien. Mitarbeiterbindung funktioniert selten. Die Angestellten „brüten“ oft, bevor sie die Organisation wieder verlassen und diese dadurch schwächen.

Obwohl es natürlich von Nutzen ist, Unternehmenskulturen zu klassifizieren, besteht das Risiko der Stereotypisierung. Zudem handelt es sich hierbei um ein vereinfachtes Konstrukt, dass auf einem äußerst komplexen Konzept beruht (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). In der Realität sieht es so aus, dass sich die verschiedenen Arten von Unternehmenskultur vermischen und überschneiden: ein Modell kann vorherrschend sein, es können aber auch mehrere Modelle nebeneinander bestehen. Unabhängig davon zeigt sich jedoch eindeutig, dass manche Unternehmenskulturmodelle in einem Umfeld gut funktionieren, während sie in anderen Umgebungen keine brauchbaren Ergebnisse liefern.

###### Organisationsstruktur und Landeskultur

Die Organisationsstruktur zeigt, wie sich ein Unternehmen gliedert, um möglichst effizient zu arbeiten. In der Organisationsstruktur spiegelt sich oft die Kultur des Landes wider, in dem das Unternehmen ansässig ist. Daher wird die gewählte Struktur tendenziell Normen, Werte und Annahmen dieser Kultur verkörpern. Im Laufe der Zeit wurden Organisationsstrukturmodelle entwickelt, die dem veränderten Geschäftsumfeld und den verschiedenen kulturellen Einflüssen gerecht werden. Es gibt eine Vielzahl an Faktoren, die die Entscheidung für eine Organisationssstruktur beeinflussen. Hierzu zählen etwa die Betriebsgröße, die Beschaffenheit des Geschäftsumfelds, interne und externe Vorschriften sowie die Branche, der das Unternehmen zuzuordnen ist. Global ausgerichtete Organisationen müssen die geographische Verteilung und Struktur des Unternehmen sowie die Rahmenbedingungen der Länder berücksichtigen, in denen sie geschäftlich tätig sind. Um einen Markt erfolgreich erschließen zu können, ist daher ein erhöhtes Maß an Koordination und Kommunikation erforderlich. In so einem Unternehmen muss auch sichergestellt werden, dass ein angemessenes Gleichgewicht zwischen Unternehmenskultur und Landeskultur gewahrt wird.

Fatehi (zitiert nach Browaeys & Price, 2019) hat die folgenden fünf verbreiteten Organisationsstrukturen bestimmt:

1. Die geographische Organisationsstruktur wird in geographische Regionen (Länder oder Kontinente) unterteilt. Dabei sind die dezentralen Niederlassungen in den Regionen einer Hauptverwaltung unterstellt, die für die strategische Planung und das Management der gesamten Betriebsabläufe zuständig ist.
2. Die funktionale Organisationsstruktur beschreibt die innerbetriebliche Gliederung gemäß den einzelnen Aufgabenbereichen (z. B. Marketing, Finanzen, Personal, Fertigung), wobei jeder Bereichsleiter der Unternehmensleitung unterstellt ist.

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1. Bei der Produktlinienstruktur werden Produktgruppen in eigene Abteilungen gegliedert. Jede Abteilung verfügt über eigene Aufgabenbereiche (z. B. Marketing, Finanzen, Personal, Fertigung).
2. Die organisatorische Mischstruktur ist eine Kombination aus geographischer, funktionaler und Produktlinienstruktur. Dabei kann die am besten geeignete Kombination (z. B. Produkte innerhalb von Regionen, Bereiche innerhalb eines Produkts, Regionen innerhalb von Bereichen) verwendet werden. Diese Modell findet üblicherweise in multinationalen Unternehmen Anwendung, da hier die geographische Komponente am zweckdienlichsten in die Organisation integriert werden kann.
3. Die Matrix-Struktur ist nicht traditionell hierarchisch aufgebaut, sondern kann durch ein Gitter veranschaulicht werden. Die Kommunikation verläuft anhand der vertikalen und horizontalen Linien. Dieses Modell ist besonders für Unternehmen mit funktionaler Organisationsstruktur geeignet, in denen Projektteams eingesetzt werden. Eine Matrix-Struktur zu managen, kann sich jedoch schwierig gestalten.

Die Organisationsstruktur spiegelt die Gesamtstrategie wider, mit der ein Unternehmen in einem internationalen Umfeld Geschäfte tätigen will. Hat es vor, neue Märkte zu erschließen und über Landesgrenzen und Kulturen hinweg zu expandieren, muss diese Struktur anpassungsfähig sein. Mit zunehmender Globalisierung muss man in den Unternehmen auch in der Lage sein, Größenvorteile zu erkennen. Das bedeutet, man muss die Organisationsstruktur im Laufe der Zeit verändern können. Hier ist zu berücksichtigen, dass im Zuge einer Expansion, Unzulänglichkeiten, Konflikte, Kommunikationsprobleme und unklare bzw. sich überschneidende Verantwortungsbereiche zu Tage treten können (Deresky, 2016).

### Unternehmerische Kernkompetenzen für ein erfolgreiches interkulturelles Management

Um sich auf dem Markt einen Wettbewerbsvorteil zu verschaffen, muss man entscheidendes Know-how in verschiedenen Bereichen, die miteinander verwoben sind, mitbringen. Hierzu zählen klare und umsetzbare Geschäftsstrategien, Produkte und Dienstleistungen, die den Kundenbedürfnissen entsprechen, wirksame Vertriebs- und Marketingkonzepte, sichere Lieferketten und Logistiknetzwerke, der Einsatz von Spitzentechnologie und solide Konzepte für das Finanzmanagement. Diese bilden gemeinsam mit dem Personalmanagement, den Führungsstilen und der Unternehmenskultur das Herzstück und die Kernkompetenzen eines Unternehmens.

Die Herausforderung für global ausgerichtete Unternehmen besteht darin, dass diese unverzichtbaren Bausteine nicht getrennt vom kulturellen Kontext betrachtet werden können. Die Weltwirtschaft ist so stark verflochten, dass jeder dieser Bausteine von vielen interkulturellen Faktoren beeinflusst ist, und möglicherweise liefern sie nicht mehr dieselben positiven Ergebnisse wie im Heimatmarkt.

###### Interkulturelle Kernkompetenzen

Ausreichend interkulturell kompetent zu sein, um auf dem Weltmarkt erfolgreich agieren zu können, stellt die Unternehmen und das Management im Besonderen vor große Herausforderungen. Globale Manager müssen einen Balanceakt vollbringen. Sie sollen die verschiedenen Kulturdimensionen erkennen, verstehen und sich ihnen anpassen. Zudem müssen sie kulturelle und kontextuelle Intelligenz entwickeln und dementsprechend handeln, während sie sich gleichzeitig auf die Grundsätze

einer guten Unternehmensführung verlassen sollen. Interkulturelle Kompetenz muss in allen Bereichen eines Unternehmens Einzug finden. Vennapoosa (2012) schlägt vor, dass interkulturelle Kompetenz zunächst auf höchster Führungsebene erworben wird (und in den Unternehmenszielen, im Leitbild, den Werten und der Unternehmensstrategie zum Ausdruck kommt) und dann auf betrieblicher Ebene und in der Folge von den einzelnen Mitarbeitern erlernt wird.

###### Interkulturelle Fähigkeiten in der Planung

Auf strategischer Ebene müssen Unternehmen, die den Weltmarkt erobern wollen, bei ihrer künftigen Ausrichtung interkulturelle Kompetenz beweisen, sei es bei der Aufgabenbeschreibung, der Festlegung des Leitbildes und der Unternehmensgrundsätze oder bei den Zielsetzungen, Strategien und Taktiken, die sie verfolgen. Will man eine globale Präsenz aufbauen, benötigt man interkulturelle Kompetenz. Auf Herausforderungen und Bedrohungen, die sich einem in den Weg stellen, wird dann nicht mehr bloß reagiert, sondern Strategien werden proaktiv umgesetzt.

Ethnozentrismus Die Überzeugung, dass eine dominante Ethnie anderen Ethnien überlegen ist.

Im Zuge einer Studie über interkulturelle Fähigkeiten, die für das Topmanagement eines Unternehmens relevant sind, befragte Gibbson (2015) Unternehmensleiter aus 28 multinationalen Unternehmen. Damit sollte die Hypothese „**Ethnozentrismus** beginnt oben“ überprüft werden. Es stellte sich heraus, dass die interkulturellen Fähigkeiten eines Unternehmensleiters sehr wohl einen Einfluss auf die Unternehmensziele haben können. Gibson teilte das Konzept der interkulturellen Kompetenz in fünf Bereiche ein. Diese schienen den größten Einfluss darauf zu haben, ob ein Unternehmensleiter seine Ziele erreicht (oder nicht). Diese Bereiche beschreiben sich wie folgt (Gibson, 2015):

1. Kulturelles Selbstbewusstsein bedeutet, sich der eigenen kulturellen Identität bewusst zu sein und zu verstehen, wie sich dadurch die eigene Wahrnehmung von Menschen aus anderen Kulturen im Geschäftsumfeld ändert
2. Kulturelle Sinneswahrnehmung bedeutet, dass man erkennt, wenn kulturelle Differenzen auftreten und sich diese auf den Geschäftsbetrieb auswirken
3. Weltoffenheit bedeutet, dass man anderen Kulturen gegenüber nicht voreingenommen ist und unterschiedliche Verhaltensweisen, Denkweisen und Ansichten ebenso ihre Gültigkeit haben und akzeptiert werden
4. Globale Sichtweise bezieht sich auf die Fähigkeit, ein Unternehmen in einem wirklich globalen bzw. internationalen Kontext zu betrachten, anstatt dieses in erster Linie als inländisches Unternehmen wahrzunehmen, das auch im Ausland tätig ist
5. Anpassungsfähigkeit bezieht sich auf die Fähigkeit, Planung, Kommunikation und Verhalten entsprechend den jeweiligen kulturellen Gegebenheiten anzupassen

Gibson (2015) stellte fest, dass die größte Herausforderung für Unternehmensleiter darin liegt, Führungskräfte mit unterschiedlichen kulturellem Hintergrund zu leiten und zu motivieren, wobei sie ihr eigenen Verständnis von Führung überdenken und dieses den kulturellen Bedürfnissen und Prägungen ihrer Mitarbeiter anpassen müssen.

###### Interkulturelle Fähigkeiten auf betrieblicher Ebene

In vielen global aufgestellten Organisationen stellt man sich nun der Herausforderung, Führungkräfte und Mitarbeiter mit den passenden interkulturellen Fähigkeiten auszustatten.

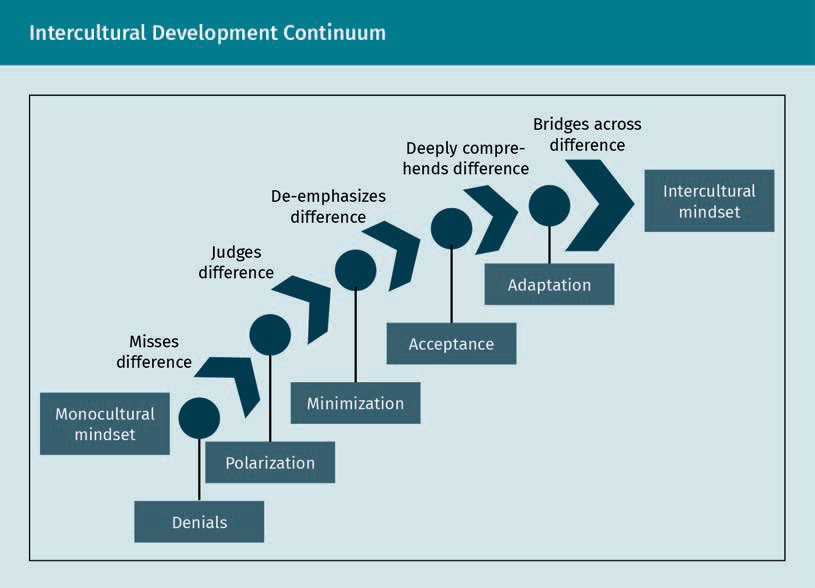
IBM (das Unternehmen, in dem Hofstede seine erste Forschungsarbeit durchführte und die fünf Kulturdimensionen entdeckte) bietet allen seinen Mitarbeitern über das firmeneigene Intranet Zugang zum

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„Ländernavigator“, einer Orientierungshilfe, in der kulturelle Merkmale und Unterschiede von Kulturen auf der ganzen Welt aufgelistet sind. Darüber hinaus können die Mitarbeiter an intensiven internen Schulungen teilnehmen, die sich mit interkulturellen Unterschieden befassen. Das internationale Beratungsunternehmen Accenture bietet interne Schulungen zu interkultureller Kompetenz an. Die Teilnehmer erhalten unter anderem Zugang zum Accenture Culture Index, der Unterschiede in der Unternehmenskultur und den verschiedenen Geschäftsumfeldern auf der ganzen Welt aufzeigt (Mithel, 2012).

Das Intercultural Development Inventory ([IDI], 2021), ein Unternehmen das sich auf Dienstleistungen für die Entwicklung interkultureller Kompetenz und Lösungen für interkulturelle Konflikt spezialisiert hat, hat eine Reihe an Fähigkeiten erarbeitet, die entlang einer Skala angeordnet sind. Diese bilden die Veränderungen in der Denkweise ab, die ein globaler Manager und seine Mitarbeiter herbeiführen müssen, um eine ausgeprägte interkulturelle Denkart zu entwickeln. Unternehmen verwenden das Intercultural Development Inventory, das auf einer Umfrage mit 50 Fragen basiert, um interkulturelle Kompetenz zu bewerten. Mithilfe der Antworten kann man in den Unternehmen feststellen, wo sich ein Mitarbeiter oder Manager derzeit auf der Skala befindet. Die Skala umfasst die folgenden fünf Stufen, die jeweils den Erwerb und die Anwendung von besonderen Kompetenzen erfordern:

* 1. Die Stufe Ablehnung zeichnet sich dadurch aus, dass man sich nicht für andere Kulturen interessiert und diese vermeidet. Stereotype und kulturbezogene Verallgemeinerungen sind bei Menschen, die einer dominaten Kultur angehören, weit verbreitet. Organisationen, die sich in der Phase der Ablehnung befinden, nehmen kulturelle Unterschiede kaum wahr.
  2. Die Stufe der Polarisierung zeichnet sich dadurch aus, dass kulturelle Unterschiede als Bedrohung wahrgenommen werden, die die Arbeitsweise in der eigenen Kultur in Frage stellen. Es entsteht eine „Wir und die anderen“-Mentalität, und kulturelle Vielfalt wird als etwas Unangenehmes empfunden.
  3. Die Stufe der Minimierung zeichnet sich dadurch aus, dass kulturelle Unterschiede langsam akzeptiert werden. Man passt sich an und konzentriert sich auf die kulturellen Gemeinsamkeiten, was jedoch bei weniger dominanten Kulturen zu Entfremdung führen kann.
  4. Die Stufe der Akzeptanz zeichnet sich dadurch aus, dass sowohl Gemeinsamkeiten als auch Unterschiede zwischen den Kulturen erkannt und angenommen werden. Durch ein hohes Maß an Selbstreflexion versucht man Werte und Normen zu akzeptieren, die der eigenen Kultur fremd sind.
  5. Die Stufe der Adaption zeichnet sich durch eine tiefgreifende Veränderung der Denkweise aus. Dies betrifft sowohl kulturelle Ansichten als auch das Verhalten. Personen, die sich in dieser Phase befinden, sind mit einer Reihe von Techniken und geistigen Fähigkeiten ausgestattet, um auf kulturelle Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten optimal einzugehen.



Zusammenfassung

Global ausgerichtete Unternehmen müssen sich mit dem Erwerb interkultureller Kompetenz beschäftigen. Dabei muss man von einem breiteren Kontext ausgehen, der den zahlreichen Anforderungen gerecht wird, die ein internationales, sich ständig veränderndes Geschäftsumfeld mit sich bringt. Unternehmen müssen sich außerdem mit den vielen neuen Trends und Entwicklungen befassen, die sich aufgrund der Globalisierung, der Entstehung neuer Märkte und der unaufhörlichen politischen, rechtlichen, technologischen und wirtschaftlichen Veränderungen abzeichnen. Es gibt kein Patentrezept, mit dem eine Organisation jede Entwicklung im internationalen Geschäftsumfeld in Angriff nehmen kann. Aus diesem Grund muss ein globaler Manager, wenn er erfolgreich sein will, über kontextuelle Intelligenz – die Fähigkeit, zu akzeptieren, dass unser Wissen und unsere Annahmen Beschränkungen unterliegen und dass wir das Umfeld, in dem unser Unternehmen tätig ist, verstehen und uns daran anpassen müssen – verfügen.

Um den Herausforderungen, die ein globales Geschäftsumfeld mit sich bringt, zu begegnen, passen die Unternehmen sowohl ihre Organisationsstruktur als auch ihre Werte, Normen und Erwartungen (ihre Unternehmenskultur) an. Die Organisationsstruktur und die Unternehmenskultur können an die Landeskulturen angepasst werden oder diese imitieren. Sie können aber auch so beschaffen sein, dass eine Landeskultur abgelehnt wird. Die Globalisierung mit ihren großen Herausforderungen hat Organisationen veranlasst, ihre Unternehmenskultur und die verschiedenen Organisationsstrukturen grundlegend umzugestalten.

Die Funktion und Bedeutung des interkulturellen Managements für Unternehmen

Ausreichend interkulturell kompetent zu sein, um auf dem Weltmarkt erfolgreich agieren zu können, stellt die Unternehmen und das Management im Besonderen vor große Herausforderungen. Um die besten Ergebnisse zu erzielen, muss interkulturelle Kompetenz zunächst vom Topmanagement erworben werden und sich in den Unternehmenszielen und im Führungsstil widerspiegeln. So kann verhindert werden, dass Ethnozentrismus „von oben nach unten“ weitergegeben wird.



# Lektion 3

## Diversity Management im interkulturellen Management

#### LERNZIELE

Nach der Bearbeitung dieser Lektion werden Sie in der Lage sein, ...

... das Diversity Management in einen interkulturellen Kontext einzubetten.

... zu erkennen, welche Führungsstile sich für individualistische bzw. kollektivistische Kulturen eignen.

... unterschiedliche Vorgehensweisen zu erkennen, die zur Bewältigung von interkulturellen Problemstellungen und Konflikten herangezogen werden.

DL-E-DLMINTIM01\_E-U03

1. Diversity Management im interkulturellen Management

### Aus der Praxis

Im Januar 2011 wurde gegen die amerikanische Tochtergesellschaft des internationalen Technologiekonzerns Toshiba aus Japan eine öffentlichkeitswirksame Sammelklage eingereicht (der sich ungefähr 8.000 weibliche Mitarbeiter anschlossen). Man warf dem Unternehmen vor, Frauen am Arbeitsplatz systematisch zu diskriminieren. Bray (2011) erklärte „der US-Ableger des Elektronikherstellers Toshiba Corp. sieht sich mit einer Klage konfrontiert, in der die weiblichen Angestellten 100 Mio. $ Schadensersatz fordern, da sie sich in Bezug auf Bezahlung und Beförderungen ‚systemisch‛ diskriminiert fühlen“ (Abschnitt 1). Die Vorwürfe lauteten unter anderem ungleiche Entlohnung bei gleichwertiger Arbeit, ungerechte Bevorzugung von Männern bei Beförderungen, geschlechtsbezogene Umsetzung von Richtlinien und Verfahren, unzureichende Untersuchungen bei Vorwürfen von sexueller Belästigung, und Beförderungen, die nicht auf Leistung sondern persönlichen Beziehungen zu einer Gruppe von männlichen Führungskräften zurückzuführen waren (Bray, 2011). Die Tatsache, dass das Topmanagement der amerikanischen Tochtergesellschaft von Toshiba damals aus Japan kam (McFarlin & Sweeney, 2017), wirft folgende Fragen auf:

* + Welche Rolle könnte die japanische Kultur dabei gespielt haben, dass man diese Rückschlüsse zur Rolle der Frau am Arbeitsplatz gezogen hat?
  + Wie könnte man die unterschiedlichen Einstellungen, die in den verschiedenen kulturellen Normen begründet sind, überbrücken?
  + Wie kann man in den Unternehmen die kulturellen Denkmuster von Führungskräften und Mitarbeitern dahingehend verändern, dass Vielfalt mehr Raum im Arbeitsleben einnimmt?

### Diversität in den Unternehmen leben

Bereits etablierte Kulturmodelle werden laufend angepasst, um dem heute vorherrschenden sozialen Klima gerecht zu werden. Probleme wie fehlende Chancengleichheit sind mittlerweile allgemein bekannt und viele Organisationen versuchen Maßnahmen zu treffen, die der Gleichbehandlung insbesondere von benachteiligten Gruppen förderlich sind.

Das Diversity Management hat sich in der Geschäftswelt im Laufe der Zeit herausgebildet. Anfangs hatten die Unternehmen einfach nur reagiert, wenn sich die gesetzlichen Auflagen geändert hatten, und neue Richtlinien wurden nur bei Bedarf umgesetzt. In jüngerer Vergangenheit hat sich das Diversity Management jedoch zu einem entscheidenden Instrument entwickelt, mit dem sich Unternehmen, die über eine vielfältige Belegschaft verfügen, proaktiv einen Vorteil verschaffen können. Dies geht Hand in Hand mit dem wachsenden Interesse an ethischen Geschäftspraktiken und der zunehmenden Bedeutung von gesellschaftlicher Unternehmensverantwortung.

Nichtsdestotrotz haben Unternehmen, ebenso wie die Gesellschaft in der sie agieren, noch einen weiten Weg vor sich, bis sie das Diversitätskonzept vollständig in ihre Organisationen integriert haben. Nur wenige Organisationen haben das Diversity Management bereits vollständig in die Unternehmenskultur eingebettet und genutzt, damit es ihnen als strategisches Ziel einen Wettbewerbsvorteil verschafft.

Diversity Management im interkulturellen Management

###### Dimensionen des Diversity Management

Das Management der Vielfalt ist mittlerweile zu einem wichtigen Thema geworden und stellt Unternehmen – vor allem solche, die in einem multinationalen Umfeld arbeiten – vor enorme Herausforderungen. Unternehmen, die sowohl Teil einer regionalen als auch globalen Kultur sind, haben sich angepasst und spiegeln die sich wandelnden gesellschaftlichen Werte und Meinungen wider. Die Elemente, die diesem Wandel anheim sind, sind von Land zu Land unterschiedlich ausgeprägt, doch ein roter Faden ist überall zu erkennen: Man wünscht sich Veränderung. Vielfalt soll anerkannt und respektiert und mehr Chancengleichheit gewährleistet werden.

Das Konzept der Vielfalt betrifft viele gesellschaftliche Themen und diese sind nicht in allen Ländern gleich. Doch im Allgemeinen versteht man unter Achtung der Vielfalt, dass alle Menschen anerkannt, geschätzt und gleich behandelt werden, unabhängig von Geschlecht, Religion, ethnischer Zugehörigkeit, sexueller Orientierung, Alter, Behinderung, Lebensstil oder Lebenssituation.

Diesen Wertvorstellungen wird in den verschiedenen Kulturkreisen eine unterschiedliche Bedeutung beigemessen, was in unterschiedlich stark ausgeprägten hierarchischen Strukturen und im Umgang mit den einzelnen Personen zum Tragen kommt. Die vorherrschende Einstellung zur Vielfalt wirkt sich darauf aus, wie viel sozialen Einfluss ein Individuum in einer bestimmten Gesellschaft hat und inwieweit ihm der Zugang zu sozialen Ressourcen offensteht (Eine Welt der Vielfalt, o. D.). Der Kulturbegriff beeinflusst die Debatte zur Diversität maßgeblich. Einerseits ist er ein weiterer Maßstab, der herangezogen wird, um Menschen zu beurteilen und innerhalb einer Gesellschaft unfair zu behandeln. Dies ist beispielsweise der Fall, wenn jemand, der einem anderen Kulturkreis angehört, anders behandelt wird, vor allem in Situationen, in denen der Person Argwohn und Misstrauen entgegengebracht wird. Andererseits spielt Kultur eine entscheidende Rolle, wenn in einer Gesellschaft Werte und Einstellungen entwickelt werden, die der Vielfalt förderlich sind. Die eigene Kultur prägt die eigene Sichtweise entscheidend, sei es in Bezug auf Geschlechterrollen, Ethnien, die Toleranz gegenüber anderen Religionen und viele andere Bereiche des Lebens. So gesehen kann Kultur auf die gesellschaftlichen Machtverhältnisse, die den Kern der Diversität bilden, auf zweierlei Weise Einfluss nehmen: als „Angreifer“ und als „Opfer“.

###### Die Bedeutung des Diversity Management für das interkulturelle Management

In Verbindung mit dem interkulturellen Management wird der Gegenstand der Diversität noch komplizierter, da man in jedem Kulturkreis etwas anderes darunter versteht und anders damit umgeht. Unternehmen, die in einem interkulturellen Umfeld tätig sind, müssen sich darüber im Klaren sein, dass Kulturen unterschiedliche Einstellungen zum Thema Diversität haben. Inklusion und Chancengleichheit müssen in den Unternehmenswerten so widergespiegelt werden, dass es die Normen der vorherrschenden Kultur nicht verletzt. Es gilt, ein stabiles Gleichgewicht herzustellen.

McFarlin und Sweeney (2017) beschäftigen sich zum Beispiel mit den Einstellungen, die in den verschiedenen Ländern zum Thema Geschlechtergleichheit vorherrschen. In den USA sind inzwischen fast die Hälfte aller Stellen für Fach- und Führungskräfte mit Frauen besetzt. Im Vergleich dazu sind es in Japan nur etwas mehr als 15 Prozent. Dies lässt erkennen, wie traditionell man dort vor allem in der Arbeitswelt eingestellt ist, wo sich Frauen den Männern unterordnen sollen. Obwohl man im Jahr 1986 Gesetze erließ, die der Geschlechterdiskriminierung entgegenwirken sollten, hat sich die Haltung der Japaner in Bezug auf Geschlechterrollen kaum verändert (McFarlin & Sweeney, 2017). Shinzō Abe, ehemaliger Premierminister Japans und selbst starker Verfechter von Frauenrechten, ernannte vier weibliche Regierungsmitlieder und erklärte, dass das Problem hauptsächlich darauf zurückzuführen sei, dass die Einstellung zu den Geschlechterrollen „unbewusst

tief in uns verwurzelt ist“ (McFarlin & Sweeney, 2017, S. 198). Die Sammelklage wegen diskriminierender Behandlung von Frauen am Arbeitsplatz, die die amerikanische Tochtergesellschaft gegen den japanischen Weltkonzern Toshiba anstrengte, könnte darin begründet sein, dass das japanische Management nicht klar erkannt hat, wie wichtig den Amerikanerinnen ihre Rechte auf Geschlechtergleichheit sind.

Die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter ist in den verschiedenen Ländern der Welt unterschiedlich weit fortgeschritten. Daher muss man in den multinationalen Unternehmen verstehen, wie die Rahmenbedingungen in den Ländern, in denen sie tätig sind, aussehen. Der Global Gender Gap Report des Weltwirtschaftsforums aus dem Jahr 2020 zeigt auf, dass noch kein Land der Welt die Geschlechterparität erreicht hat (d. h. Gleichbehandlung und gleiche Chancen für alle Geschlechter) (World Economic Forum, 2021). Die Zahl der Frauen, die im privaten und öffentlichen Sektor Führungpositionen bekleiden, ist auf 36 Prozent angestiegen. Trotzdem ist die Kluft zwischen den Geschlechtern immer noch beträchtlich, und es gibt nur sehr wenige Länder, die die Geschlechterparität nahezu erreicht haben. Die Länder sind nach den Werten gereiht, die sie in Bezug auf die Geschlechterparität erzielt haben, wobei 1.0 der höchstmögliche Wert ist. Keines der 15 Länder, die hinsichtlich der Gleichstellung der Geschlechter am Arbeitsplatz führend sind, gehört zu den großen Handelsnationen. Die USA liegen auf Platz 26 (0.756), Deutschland auf Platz 48 (0.723), das Vereinigte Königreich rangiert an 58. Stelle (0.702) und Frankreich belegt Platz 65 (0.691). Die aufstrebenden BRIC-Staaten nehmen folgende Plätze ein: Russland 32 (0.749), Brasilien 89 (0.653), China 91 (0.653) und Indien 149 (0.354). Das Weltwirtschaftsforum (WEF) schätzt, dass es über 250 Jahre dauern wird, bis die Kluft zwischen den Geschlechtern, was Gleichbehandlung am Arbeitsplatz und Chancengleichheit anbelangt, geschlossen ist. Dies setzt voraus, dass sich die Veränderungsprozesse weiterhin im selbem Tempo vollziehen.

Das interkulturelle Management verlangt von den Unternehmen, dass sie Diversität sowohl länderübergreifend (die Integration von Mitarbeitern aus dem Mutterland und aus Ländern, in denen das Unternehmen tätig ist) als auch innerhalb der Länder (die verschiedenen Gruppen, mit denen die Mitarbeiter innerhalb eines bestimmten Landes interagieren) fördern. Die EU hat zum Beispiel eine große Anzahl an Zuwanderern verzeichnet, die grundverschieden und vielfältig sind. Nachdem diese in die Mitgliedsländer aufgenommen wurden, traten sie schließlich auch in den heimischen Arbeitsmarkt ein (McFarlin & Sweeney, 2017).

Viele Unternehmen reagierten, indem sie das Konzept der Diversität in die Werte und Ziele ihrer Organisation aufnahmen. Es wurden Personalsysteme, Richtlinien und Verfahren eingeführt, die die gesetzlichen Vorschriften zu Diversität und Chancengleichheit erfüllen. Die Kommunikation wurde angepasst, um einen sensiblen Umgang mit Themen der Diversität sicherzustellen. Dies betrifft die firmeninterne Kommunikation als auch die Interaktion mit Akteuren, die nicht zum Unternehmen gehören, und erstreckt sich nicht nur über regionale Kulturen sondern auch über verschiedenste Kulturkreise.

Am Eisbergmodell der Kultur findet man diese Maßnahmen – die Antwort einer Kultur auf Diversität – am sichtbaren Teil wieder. Es sind erkennbare Artefakte, die zeigen, dass sich die Einstellungen und Ansätze im Diversity Management innerhalb einer Organisation verändert haben. Weitaus problematischer sind die nicht sichtbaren Teile des Eisbergs, da sie ein grundlegendes Umdenken erfordern. Nur so können tief verwurzelte kulturelle Normen und Werte innerhalb einer Organisation und eines regionalen Umfeldes verändert werden. Um das interkulturelle Bewusstsein zu stärken, müssen die Unternehmen außerdem bei der Interaktion, die zwischen Kulturen innerhalb der Organisation stattfindet, Synergieeffekte erreichen.

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###### Vorteile des Diversity Management

Viele Organisationen haben im Bereich des Diversity Management Prozesse und Verfahren eingeführt, um den gesetzlichen Vorgaben zur Chancengleichheit und Gleichbehandlung von Mitarbeitern in den verschiedenen Ländern zu entsprechen. Wer sich mit Diversität allerdings nur aufgrund von Vorschriften beschäftigt, verkennt die tatsächlichen Vorteile, die ein effizientes Diversity Management einem Unternehmen bieten kann.

Innovation und Kreativität

Menschen aus verschiedenen Kulturkreisen haben unterschiedliche Sichtweisen und entwickeln voneinander abweichende Lösungsansätze. Arbeiten unterschiedliche Kulturen zusammen, steigert sich daher die Kreativität und Innovationskraft. Hewlett et al. (2013) zufolge „[werden] Unternehmen, deren Führungskräfte mindestens drei angeborene und drei erworbene Diversitätsmerkmale aufweisen, als [...] Unternehmen mit 2D-Diversität [definiert und] sind innovativer und leistungsfähiger als andere ... [z. B.] ist es 45 % wahrscheinlicher, dass sie Marktanteilsgewinne vermelden ... und 70 % wahrscheinlicher, dass sie ... einen neuen Markt erschließen“ (Absch. 3–4). Tatsächlich führt Diversität am Arbeitsplatz zu mehr Innovationen und einem schnelleren Marktwachstum.

Mitarbeiterbindung und Produktivität

Mehrere Studien haben belegt, dass Organisationen, die sich ernsthaft mit dem Thema Vielfalt am Arbeitsplatz auseinandersetzen, die höchste Mitarbeiterbindung verzeichnen. Anand (2013) verweist auf Mitarbeiterumfragen, deren Gegenstand die Mitarbeiterbindung war.

Cultural awareness

An organization that more clearly resembles the diversity of the customers that it is attempting to serve will have a better chance of fully understanding the customers’ needs. The different cultural characteristics of a particular location are best served by managers and employees who have a close cultural afﬁnity with that location.

Marketing opportunities

Potential customers (and, indeed, employees) are increasingly interested in companies that represent diversity. Many companies now ensure that their promotional materials show a diverse range of ages, ethnicities, and abilities. Companies also promote their own diversity, as illustrated in Lufthansa’s tweet celebrating the diverse backgrounds of their employees: “*Pﬁati, merhaba, ciao, Γειά σоυ, Hoi*! Over 100 nationalities are repre- sented amongst the Lufthansa Group staff in Germany” (Lufthansa, 2017).

Attracting talent

In the increasingly competitive quest to recruit the best talent into the organization, it is important to be seen to be promoting diversity in the workplace; this is now a signiﬁ- cant factor for candidates when evaluating potential employees and employment opportunities. New hires must also be in tune with cultural differences and familiar with diversity management concerns because these attributes are fundamental to the development of truly synergistic multiculturalism.

###### Challenges of Diversity Management

Achieving a state of synergistic multiculturalism, and promoting, supporting, and build- ing upon the positive beneﬁts of cultural differences and diversity across the organiza- tion presents a series of signiﬁcant challenges at all levels within the multinational business.

Leadership

The drive for change needs to come from the top of the organization, through the com- pany’s corporate mission, vision, and values, and the senior leadership that seeks to implement these statements.

Parochialism A limited or narrow outlook, especially focused on a local area, is called paro-

chialism.

According to McFarlin and Sweeney (2017), the evidence indicates that very few corpo- rate executives are proactively managing and leading diversity in the organization. At best, diversity management is seen as the responsibility of the human resources func- tion. Research involving 150 multinational companies found that around 90 percent of the 4,000 executives included in the study were not adequately promoting diversity. Of most importance to the CEO was being seen to be compliant with regulatory require- ments imposed from outside the organization, rather than looking to transform the cul- ture within the organization. They state further that it was far more common for busi- ness leaders to adopt **parochialism** or ethnocentrism (i.e., the belief that their culture is better than another) as their default approaches to tackling diversity.

Hiring and promotion practices

Organizations are faced with the challenge of the “exclusion-inclusion paradox” (Daub- ner-Siva et al., 2017) when attempting to balance diversity management with talent management. This occurs when organizations are faced with providing opportunities for all employees regardless of their backgrounds, while being able to select the most tal- ented individuals when ﬁlling important positions. Veering too much toward diversity in hiring and promotion decisions can lead to accusations of positive discrimination within the organization. Insufﬁcient consideration of diversity can lead to accusations of inequality of opportunity and favoritism within the organization. The challenge is for organizations to ﬁnd the right balance to manage the paradox, so that both diversity and talent management can co-exist in a way that enhances the business and creates a competitive edge.

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Diversity training

Although businesses have made signiﬁcant efforts to educate and train their staff in diversity and cultural awareness, the results of this training can often be counterpro- ductive. This is largely because, like intercultural awareness in general, it cannot easily be taught, and training courses tend to focus on controlling or changing management behaviors rather than instigating an authentic change in mindset. This approach, if anything, tends to provoke bias and cause a negative reaction toward management rather than improving the situation. More effective programs focus less on control and procedure and more on encouraging positive engagement with diversity and increased contact with others (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). In more recent follow-up research, Dobbin and Kalev (2020) suggest that a limited number of systemic changes, such as targeted recruitment, diversity taskforces, mentoring schemes, and voluntary (rather than com- pulsory) skills training can make a much more signiﬁcant contribution to promoting workplace diversity and equality of opportunity than traditional instructional training courses.

Alienation of workers

Despite the best intentions of an organization to understand and manage differences in cultural dimensions across the global organization, including the management of diversity, there is a signiﬁcant challenge to avoid alienating the very people that these intentions set out to protect. Some individuals working at the middle and lower levels of an organization can perceive themselves as weak or unimportant, and therefore alienated from the corporate environment. Such feelings can be reinforced by being the beneﬁciary of “charitable” initiatives and seemingly inauthentic gestures, which only provide the illusion of being valued and provided with equal opportunity.

Diversity management is a challenge to the organization because, like intercultural awareness, it cannot easily be taught or learned, and even less so can it be imposed on someone through directives or regulations. Diversity management is an evolutionary process that takes time and perseverance, and which can only be effective when it is authentic and lived on a day-to-day basis within the organization.

### Management Styles in Individualistic and Collectivist Cultures

The discipline of business management abounds with hundreds, if not thousands, of books and articles about management and leadership. For some theorists, manage- ment and leadership styles are viewed as separate entities, while others view them as two sides to the same coin. Whatever view is held, it is certainly the case that there is no single approach to either management or leadership that is guaranteed to be effec- tive in all situations. This is true in the domestic setting, but it is especially clear that the challenges of management and leadership are further ampliﬁed when operating in a multicultural setting. The scope of management responsibility can vary from leading a diverse, multicultural workforce in a domestic setting to an overseas unit as an expa- triate manager. Each demands management and leadership sensibilities that are appropriate to the context and environment.

###### Global Management and Leadership Styles

Managing in an international context requires leaders to be responsive to the cultural context in which they are operating, understanding what leadership style best ﬁts the local culture, and how best to inﬂuence the performance of people in that culture. McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) provide a summary of leadership attributes (based on the ﬁndings of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research (GLOBE) project) and how they are interpreted across different cultures, illustrated in the table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Attitudes to Leadership Attributes | | |
| Viewed positively across all cultures | Viewed differently across cultures | Viewed negatively across all cultures |
| * Decisiveness * Positivity * Integrity * Communication skills * Honesty * Intelligence * Trustworthiness | * Ambition * Enthusiasm * Being logical * Sensitivity * Risk-taking * Individualismus | * Being a dictator * Being egocentric * Showing irritation * Ruthlessness |

Decisiveness, honesty, and positivity are leadership attributes that appear to be uni- formly valued across cultures. Other attributes, such as being autocratic, ambitious, or ruthless are not valued equally across cultures. Even where an attribute (e.g., being supportive) is generally viewed positively, it may still be interpreted or expressed differ- ently depending on the cultural setting. For example, an American manager (typically individualistic) may demonstrate being supportive by listening to the ideas of employ- ees, while a Japanese manager (typically collectivist) might show their support by spending time with their employees as a group.

Cultural expectations of leadership are a “moving target,” and something that might have been appropriate ﬁve years ago may no longer be appropriate or desirable, creat- ing yet another challenge. McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) cite the examples of cultural change in the former Eastern Bloc countries (e.g., Poland, Romania, Czech Republic) and South Korea, whereby the leadership styles in these countries have become increasingly aligned with Western leadership styles.

Western management theory has traditionally distinguished between two styles of leadership behavior: task oriented and relationship oriented. Task orientation requires leaders with technical knowledge, who can assist with planning, determining proce- dures, setting goals, and providing information. A relationship orientation requires a

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manager who has strong personnel management skills, who can encourage, empathize with, and coach employees. These managers often show concern for their employees’ general well-being, but leadership styles are no longer limited to those evident in tra- ditional western economies. McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) describe a number of alter- native leadership behaviors emerging from other parts of the globe. For example, the challenging environment faced in India, where old and new create something of a cul- ture clash, has led to the emergence of an employee-focused leadership style based on nurturing, which combines empathy and employee well-being with the need to get the job done. They also describe the Japanese example where management tends to com- bine both performance leadership (focus on problem-solving and group motivation) and maintenance leadership (focus on good working relations within the group). These behaviors differ from the Western implementation because of where they ﬁt within the Japanese cultural context.

While there is no universal approach for leadership among diverse cultures, Thomas and Inkson (2017) present a number of important factors that the culturally intelligent leader should consider when operating in a different cultural setting. These are as fol- lows:

* The effectiveness of leadership is based on the perception of followers. When a per- son is perceived to be a leader, they will be followed and be given the appropriate authority, respect, and power.
* Followers look to their leader to embody the vision for the group and should be able to communicate and organize with this vision in mind.
* Although elements of task and relationship orientation are present across all cul- tures, the ways these manifest through leader and follower behavior will differ from one culture to another.
* The importance placed on each of these leadership dimensions will vary, depending on the cultural context.
* Attempting to copy leadership styles from a culture may not produce the intended result because followers may view it as being inauthentic or even offensive.

###### Individualistic versus Collectivist Cultures

A number of attempts have been made to provide a framework for managers to deter- mine the most appropriate leadership style for a given cultural setting. These models use the dimensions of culture formulated by Trompenaars, Hofstede, and the GLOBE study to give guidelines for matching leadership styles and different dimensions of cul- ture. Of course, these can only be a guide. The leader still needs to use cultural and contextual intelligence to determine the appropriate leadership response in the spe- ciﬁc cultural situation.

McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) describe the following four leadership styles and attempt to determine the best ﬁt for different cultural value dimensions:

* + 1. Directive. Leadership is based on rules and procedures that employees must follow.
    2. Participative. Leadership is based on participation of and consultation with employ- ees, so that they are actively involved in making decisions.
    3. Supportive. Leadership is based on building positive relationships with employees, primarily by showing concern for their well-being and needs.
    4. Achievement-oriented. Leadership is based on setting ambitious targets and goals to motivate employees to be more productive and effective.

Path-goal approach

A path-goal approach to leader- ship is where the leader adopts behaviors best suited to the needs of employees and the working environ-

ment.

They describe a **path-goal approach** whereby the manager should adopt the appropri- ate leadership style for the given circumstances (both business and cultural), with the primary dimension being the distinction between individualistic and collectivist cul- tures.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Leadership Styles: Individualism versus Collectivism | | |
| Individualism-Collecti- vism | Most suitable leadership style(s) | Example |
| Collectivist | Directive, supportive | Taiwan |
| Individualist | Participative | Denmark |
| Medium-individualist | Participative | Argentina |

McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) also summarize best ﬁt leadership styles against the power distance dimension of culture, that is, the extent to which members of the group accept or expect that power is equally or unequally distributed.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Leadership Styles: Power Distance | | |
| Power distance | Most suitable leadership style(s) | Example |
| Small distance | Participative | Sweden |
| Large distance | Directive | France |
| Medium distance | Supportive, participative | The US |

The power distance dimension determines how power is reﬂected within an organiza- tion, and how this is interpreted in different parts of the world. In low power distance, **egalitarian** cultures, such as Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Australia, the

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leader is seen as a coach or facilitator, and communication is free and multi-direc- tional. In contrast, in high power distance, hierarchical cultures, such as China, India, Japan, Korea, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia, the leader is the authority and has high status, working and communicating according to a multi-layered and ﬁxed hierarchy (Meyer, 2016).

McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) also summarize best ﬁt leadership styles against the uncertainty avoidance dimension of culture.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Leadership Styles: Unsicherheitsvermeidung | | |
| Uncertainty avoidance | Most suitable leadership style(s) | Example |
| Strong avoidance | Directive | Greece |
| Weak avoidance | Participative, achieve- ment-oriented | England |
| Medium avoidance | Participative, achieve- ment-oriented | Germany |

### Reconciliation of Cultural Dilemmas

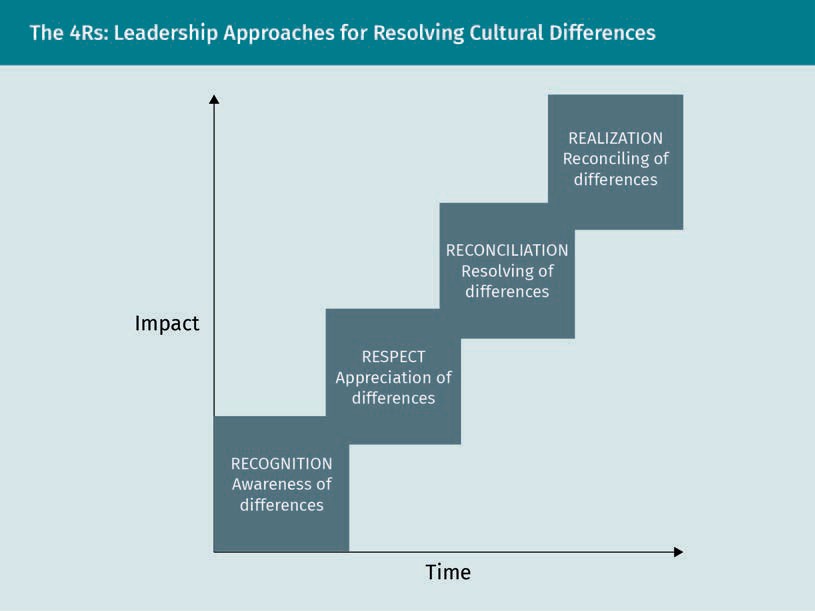
Problem-solving, decision-making, conﬂict resolution, and tackling dilemmas are all constant features of the business setting. Even within a single cultural environment, a business is tasked with resolving dilemmas arising from different perspectives in all aspects of the operation, from strategy to day-to-day operational issues. These arise from the differing ideas and interests of the individuals, teams, projects, business func- tions, locations, and stakeholder groups that make up the complex business environ- ment.

Tackling and reconciling dilemmas is further complicated by cultural differences. Cul- ture affects how individuals perceive dilemmas, problems, and conﬂicts. It also affects how individuals approach reconciling and resolving these issues, and how they go about planning for future risks or problems. In an intercultural setting, it may be the cultural differences themselves that are the root cause of the problem or dilemma.

An organization is unlikely to be able to adapt immediately to the dilemmas and differ- ences it faces in a multicultural operating environment. Trompenaars and Hampden- Turner (2012) propose four stages (“the 4 Rs”) through which good leadership needs to evolve in order to achieve intercultural competence. Of these four stages, the ﬁrst two steps require the organization to become aware of and appreciate cultural differences.

Egalitarian

This is the principle that all people are equal and deserve equality of treatment and opportunity.



Recognition

Initially, the organization needs to become fully aware of the existence of cultural dif- ferences. This is not always a simple task, because differences and dilemmas are not always a direct result of culture, and different cultural inﬂuences can exist at a range of levels, e.g., national, functional, or organizational. Cultural differences can also manifest in a number of ways, from management and leadership styles to communication and attitudes to teamwork. In recognizing that there is a difference, it is also essential to be clear as to what the dilemma or difﬁculty is that this difference creates.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) provide the example of an American CEO meeting with a Japanese delegation and, as is customary, exchanging business cards at the start of the meeting. At a particularly stressful point in the negotiation, the Ameri- can CEO began rolling up and ﬁddling with the card given to him by the Japanese presi- dent. This caused great offence and the meeting had to be brought to a halt. A lack of awareness of cultural difference can have hugely negative consequences.

At a minimum, business leaders need to be given sufﬁcient training in the process of acquiring cultural awareness and the recognition of cultural differences. This training needs to avoid reinforcing cultural stereotypes and focus on raising awareness of the risks associated with perceiving the statements and actions of others, through one’s own cultural lens.

Diversity Management im interkulturellen Management

Respect

Once a leader has become aware of the different mental cultural programs that people from different cultures use to process their surroundings, it is possible to move on and grow to respect and appreciate these differences in values and behaviors. This process, again, needs to avoid the pitfall of stereotyping and also the tendency to ascribe a judgement as to which cultural response is better or worse. The end goal is to create a genuine respect for the differences that exist, acknowledging that they are different, but equally valid, ways to go about doing things.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) give the example of a European manager vis- iting a potential Korean supplier, who, at the ﬁrst meeting, gave him an expensive pen as a gift. The European manager, sensitive to the potential for bribery, politely refused the gift. At the next meeting, the Korean supplier gave him a more expensive gift of a stereo system, which he again refused. Finally, on the third meeting, having been offered an even more expensive gift, the European manager became aware of the cul- tural differences that were at play. This was not an attempt at bribery, but an attempt to build their business relationship, and his refusals had been interpreted by his Korean counterpart as meaning that the gifts were not good enough. Awareness and appreciation of cultural differences such as these can alleviate negative consequences and also avoid judgements being made about other cultural conventions.

Reconciliation

Once the business leader is able to understand and respect the mental processes and behaviors driven by their own and other people’s cultural backgrounds, they are more likely to be able to resolve those cultural differences through reconciliation. Integrating differences means that an organization can potentially beneﬁt from the integration of the strengths of both cultural positions.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) give the example of a company from the Netherlands, oriented toward innovation, partnering with a Belgian company, oriented toward its prestigious tradition. The difference between their achievement and ascrip- tion orientations could have been the source of dilemma and conﬂict. However, through reconciliation, they worked to create a reputation founded on both innovation and quality, which was a win-win solution that ﬁtted both companies.

Realization and rooting

The ﬁnal stage in the transformation of intercultural competence arises when the proc- ess of reconciliatory practice is ﬁrmly established and structured in such a way that it becomes standard operating practice. The team culture is transformed, so that it can operate effectively across all cultures. Critical to this success is the idea that the proc- ess is continuous and iterative, and that it is often necessary to go back a step in the process in order to gain better understanding.

When reconciling different cultural perspectives, the organization needs to continually navigate around cultural differences in what Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) refer to as the “inﬁnity loop for innovation.” Innovation is the ability to reconcile crea- tivity and adaptation as the organization navigates around this inﬁnity loop.

Tackling dilemmas arising from cultural differences through an iterative process of rec- onciliation provides a different approach to problem-solving and issue resolution. In the same way that establishing cultural synergy has the potential to create competitive advantage for an organization, using a reconciliation approach to resolve cultural dilemmas presents opportunities for innovation through harnessing adaptation and creativity together.

Summary

In the world of business, the management of diversity has evolved over time and become a key consideration. Business organizations increasingly seek to harness the diversity of the workforce for the beneﬁt of the company. Dies geht Hand in Hand mit dem wachsenden Interesse an ethischen Geschäftspraktiken und der zunehmenden Bedeutung von gesellschaftlicher Unternehmensverantwortung.

Unternehmen, die sowohl Teil einer regionalen als auch globalen Kultur sind, haben sich angepasst und spiegeln die sich wandelnden gesellschaftlichen Werte und Meinungen wider. These changes, and the elements within them, have differed in scale and scope from one nation to another, but the common thread is a shift toward recognition and respect toward diversity and dif- ferences, and to the increasing provision of equality of opportunity for all.

Approaches to diversity reﬂect the cultural setting within which the organization ﬁnds itself and, indeed, cultural differences themselves are a key component of diversity management.

The challenge of management and leadership is intensiﬁed for businesses operat- ing in an international, multicultural setting. Management and leadership styles need to be appropriate to the context and environment. In particular, the differen- ces between individualistic and collectivist cultures demand different styles of leadership in order to meet the needs and expectations of employees. Leadership style also varies with the culture value dimensions of power distance and uncer- tainty avoidance, but these value dimensions can only act as a guide. The leader still needs to use cultural and contextual intelligence to determine the appropriate leadership response in any given situation.

When it comes to managing dilemmas and conﬂict within an intercultural setting, a similar level of cultural and contextual intelligence is required to determine the appropriate response. Tackling dilemmas, which arise from cultural differences, through an iterative process of reconciliation appears to provide a more effective approach to problem-solving and issue resolution when compared to the old-fash- ioned approaches. In the same way that establishing cultural synergy has the potential to create competitive advantage for an organization, using a reconciliation approach to resolve cultural dilemmas presents opportunities for innovation, through harnessing adaptation and creativity.



# Lektion 4

## Entrepreneurial Decision-Making Dimensions of Intercultural Management

#### LERNZIELE

Nach der Bearbeitung dieser Lektion werden Sie in der Lage sein, ...

… apply the formulation and implementation of strategy within an intercultural context.

… identify the impact of culture on marketing strategy and the components of the marketing mix.

… recognize the impact of culture on approaches to human resource management (HRM).

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1. Entrepreneurial Decision-Making Dimen- sions of Intercultural Management

### Aus der Praxis

ACE Software are a highly successful software development company based in England. They write software for clients who require virtual reality software applications and have produced several best-selling games, which they market and sell in stores and online. Since their formation eight years ago, they have grown to over 100 software designers, developers, and testing analysts located in their expensive, but now over- crowded, London ofﬁce space.

Sensing the opportunity to grow the business to meet ever-increasing demands from overseas, and to take pressure away from the London operation, the company’s founder Tim Simpson is examining the possibility of creating a software development capability in Bangalore, India, where he has heard that well-qualiﬁed and relatively affordable IT expertise is available. He is also considering a possible second European operation based in southern Germany, close to a technical university where there is access to well-qualiﬁed young professionals. He understands that these recruits will expect to be well paid.

Tim is a young entrepreneur who set up the company from scratch. He has very little experience working outside of the UK market. Given the risks involved in any interna- tional expansion he should consider the following:

* + What are the strategic implications of making such a move at this stage in the development of the company? How might Tim need to adjust the business strategy? How might having new Indian or German managers and employees impact the for- mulation and implementation of that strategy?
  + What adjustments might Tim need to make to the way the company carries out its marketing, if it is planning to sell into markets outside of the UK?
  + What issues might the small human resources (HR) department have to consider when opening a German or Indian subsidiary ofﬁce?

### Strategy

Business strategy This is the setting of long-term plans of action for the whole organization, consis- tent with the busi- ness vision, mission,

and aims.

**Business strategy** is inevitably shaped by cultural considerations. Igor Ansoff, consid- ered by many to be the founder of strategic management, describes strategy as “a deci- sion that runs relations between the enterprise and the environment” (as cited in Isac & Remes, 2018, p. 76). At a domestic level, business strategy needs to be consistent with both the internal corporate culture and the external national culture that make up the environment in which the business operates. For international companies for whom operating in the global market has become essential, strategic planning must now con- sider the wider international environment in all its manifestations. Internally, business strategy must be consistent with international corporate culture, so that management and employees across international boundaries have a clear, shared understanding of what the company is all about and what it is trying to achieve in the short-, medium-,

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and long-term. Externally, the business strategy must make sense to all the external stakeholders of the company: customers, suppliers, distributors, regulators, govern- ments, communities, competitors, and interest groups. Each of these stakeholder groups will differ, depending on the cultural context from which they originate. Since both the current activities and the future direction of the company will stem from its overall business strategy, it is essential that senior management both formulate and implement strategy in a way that is meaningful across all the constituent cultures that make up the company, its stakeholders, and its environment.

###### Culture and Strategy

In many respects, the distinction between culture and strategy is unclear. This is because culture itself can be viewed as the strategic framework that a society uses to tackle the problems and dilemmas it faces. Schneider et al. (as cited in Isac & Remes, 2018) deﬁne culture as “the solution to problems of external adaptation and internal integration” (p. 77) and argue that it is equally applicable when attempting to deﬁne the meaning of strategy. Trompenaars (1996) deﬁnes strategy as “a systematic way of acting on the environment” (p. 52). Thus, the process of strategy deﬁnition must be closely linked to the cultural context in which it takes place.

Strategy is another way in which people seek to address dilemmas in a cultural setting and is another process that is embedded with cultural considerations. This is counter to traditional approaches to strategy and planning, which have tended to adopt a cul- ture-free approach. When assessing the impact of culture, it is essential to consider the multiple dynamics of culture that interact in the formulation and implementation of strategy, especially in a multinational company operating across different geographical regions. Internal culture, encapsulated in the vision and mission of the organization, drives the key components of strategy. The participants in the strategy deﬁnition proc- ess will depend on the corporate culture, encapsulated in the leadership, decision- making processes, and organizational structure of the company.

To be effective, strategy needs to be credible, understandable, and motivational to all employees, whatever their location or cultural background. It also needs to make sense to all external stakeholders of the organization who will each have their own cultural context. Moreover, strategy needs to be feasible within the cultural setting of target countries. The political and regulatory setting of individual countries is the embodi- ment of the cultural values of the nation expressed for the economy and the commer- cial environment. National governments have a major inﬂuence in shaping the culture of the workplace through speciﬁc legislation, incentives, and barriers, and provide a framework within which multinational ﬁrms must operate, both domestically and abroad.

The close links between culture and strategy have had a signiﬁcant impact on the choices made by companies in their expansion activities overseas. Cultural distance has an impact on the choice of new markets, with the closest ﬁt cultures frequently being the ﬁrst destinations for overseas expansion. These represent lower levels of risk and enable familiar methods to be used for breaking into a new market. However, com-

panies have had to be more culturally adaptive and aware when reacting to the chang- ing global marketplace and venturing into culturally distinct markets, especially those in the emerging economies.

Each of the different value dimensions of culture identiﬁed by Hofstede, Trompenaars, and the GLOBE Project (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). present aspects of cul- ture that may have a signiﬁcant impact on the success or failure of business strategy in an intercultural setting. For example, the ﬁve value dimensions identiﬁed by Hofstede (1980) will each have an impact on the way strategy is deﬁned and in the way that the strategy is ultimately implemented:

1. Power distance index (PDI). The extent to which people view the appropriate distri- bution of power within a society or group will inﬂuence how strategy is developed and agreed and who is involved in that strategy development process. The content of strategy will also differ depending on the cultural norms associated with the dis- tribution of power.
2. Individualism versus collectivism (IDV). The tendency of people to look after them- selves (individualism) versus the tendency to feel part of a group (collectivism) will have an inﬂuence on the types of strategic goals deﬁned by an organization, from the setting of aggressive, competitive targets to strategic goals for the general bene- ﬁt of society.
3. Uncertainty avoidance (UAI). The extent to which people avoid or embrace ambigu- ity in their life and social situations will inﬂuence the level of rigor, planning, detail, and risk management built into the strategy deﬁnition process and the strategic goals themselves.
4. Masculinity versus femininity (MAS). The extent to which the pursuit of success (masculine) or the quality of life and a caring approach (feminine) is valued will have an impact on the nature of the strategic goals being set.
5. Long-term versus short-term orientation (Confucian dynamism). The way that peo- ple view their relationship to time will have an impact on the short- or long-term nature of strategic goals and the timeframe in which they need to be delivered.

###### Culture and Strategy Formulation

How an organization sets about formulating strategy will reﬂect the cultural context in which strategy formulation is taking place. This will impact who is involved in setting the strategy, the approach to deﬁning and agreeing that strategy, the time taken to for- mulate strategy, and the types of strategic goals that will be produced. This reﬂects the manner in which culture impacts the leadership and decision-making functions of an organization. For example, a German or Swedish organization might take a lot of time to produce precise, detailed statements of strategy. An English organization might involve a wider circle of experts in formulating strategy. An American organization might pro- duce strategy statements very quickly and then be prepared to modify them on an iter- ative basis as time progresses. Of course, setting strategic goals for products and serv- ices will be signiﬁcantly inﬂuenced by the customer preferences in their particular cultural setting (Tayeb, as cited in Isac & Remes, 2018).

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Schneider (as cited in Isac & Remes, 2018) produced a comparative model that contras- ted the likely strategy formulation approaches that might be adopted in two different cultural settings (presented below). He described the approaches likely to be followed in cultures with high and low scores on the value dimensions of individualism, uncer- tainty avoidance, and power distance.

Model one: High individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance Organizations measuring high on these three cultural dimensions seek to reduce uncertainty and increase control, as reﬂected in the hierarchical nature of the organiza- tion and decision-making process. This results in a systematic approach to strategy, using analysis and focused research, quantitative methods, and the use of expert knowledge. The decision-making processes required to formulate strategy reﬂect the top-down power structure so that strategy is the domain of the most senior levels in the organization. Strategy is about formulation of tasks that can be achieved with cer- tainty and are relatively short-term in perspective. Validation of strategy is based on what has happened previously or what is enshrined in the rule-set of the organization and its bureaucracy.

Model two: Low individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance Organizations that are at the other end of the scale on these three culture dimensions adopt a quite different approach to strategy formulation. These organizations have a greater tolerance for uncertainty or ambiguity, with a more reactive approach to plan- ning and change. Their greater focus on the group and comparative lack of hierarchy means that a consensus-based approach to strategy is possible. Decisions are based less on rigorous analysis and more on intuition, monitoring, and personal experience. The resulting strategy tends to have a longer-term focus without detailed speciﬁcation of tasks and is likely to be more people-oriented than results-based.

Of course, most organizations do not occupy positions at the extremes of the cultural scales, so their approach to strategy formulation is likely to fall between these two models. International organizations seeking to formulate strategy across geographical boundaries will ﬁnd this easier when other regions in the organization occupy a similar position on the scale. Where there is a clear discrepancy, as in the example of the failed merger of Daimler Chrysler (Watkins, 2007), the clash of national cultures (e.g., German versus American) makes the approach to the formulation of strategy, like all other leadership and decision-making processes, extremely challenging and often impossible to reconcile.

###### Culture and Strategy Implementation

Cultural differences do not just impact the manner in which strategy is formulated by an organization in the strategic planning process. There are frequently signiﬁcant dif- ferences in the nature of the resulting strategies that then need to be implemented across the organization. Strategy represents the way in which the organization seeks to meet its vision and mission in the real-world environment, and these corporate vision and mission statements will be impacted by the cultural context.

This distinction is most clearly visible when comparing the types of strategic goals orig- inating from Western and Eastern cultures. Typically, Western strategic goals focus on competitive, ambitious, quantiﬁable, and measurable goals (being the biggest, the best, the leader, exceeding the growth target, etc.). These strategies are based on rational thinking and the solving of speciﬁc problems in a ﬁxed period of time in the competi- tive environment (Isac & Remes, 2018). Eastern cultures tend to take a more pragmatic approach to strategy, rooted in their Confucian philosophy. Nonaka and Zhu (as cited in Isac and Remes, 2018) describe pragmatic and holistic thinking rooted in more spiritual and emotional thinking, the search for interconnectedness, and a longer-term progres- sive journey to a future state.

Kono and Clegg (as cited in Isac & Remes, 2018) produced a comparison of the charac- teristics of corporate strategies originating from the US and Japan to illustrate this cul- tural difference between West and East. The traditional American strategy focuses on a short-term proﬁt orientation resulting from lower levels of investment. This includes competitive relationships with suppliers and distribution channels to drive down costs in order to increase short-term proﬁtability. Volume of production, economies of scale, reduction in overheads, mass sales, and the development of competitive market posi- tioning are all components of the likely strategic goals. Competition even exists within the organization itself, with potential conﬂict arising between the development, pro- duction, marketing, and sales functions.

Just in time This production strategy aims for continuous material and information ﬂows along the sup-

ply chain.

Lean production This production strategy aims to minimize waste and increase quality.

In contrast, the characteristics of competitive strategies originating from Japan were likely to be long-term in perspective. Long-term growth, facilitated by investment in people and research and development, and the forging of positive relationships with suppliers and distributors (to enable **just in time** (JIT) systems and **lean production**), were a common feature. In the competitive arena, Japanese companies viewed the quality of both their product and their relationship with their customers as the avenue to competitive success.

This difference in approach to competitive strategy creates potential challenges when that strategy needs to be implemented across geographical boundaries. For example, the American giant Walmart, with a distinct strategy focusing on low costs and high vol- umes, is likely to face cultural resistance in the Asian market from all stakeholders. Low cost is seen as a reﬂection of quality and commitment to the customer, so what works strategically in North America may not be a close cultural ﬁt in China. Similarly, a Toyota or Honda car production plant in North America may experience resistance when implementing lean production methods and a Japanese corporate culture.

###### Approaches to Strategy in an Intercultural Context

Different multinational companies have adopted a variety of approaches to business strategy in response to the challenges of globalization. According to Ghemawat (2011), for many businesses and management theorists, the response to globalization has been to conceive of a business environment that is now free from geographic bounda- ries. It consists of a single global market, with no limits to supply chains and distribu- tion channels across borders. Corporate strategy has aimed to promote a uniform

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approach to meeting strategic goals across the globe. However, Ghemawat argues that this approach has been shown to be fallible and unrealistic, and that, in fact, most companies are still deeply entrenched within their own domestic culture. Even more importantly, the stakeholders of a company are especially rooted in their own domestic setting.

Ghemawat (2011) describes this state as World 3.0, “a world that is neither a world of distinct nation-states (World 1.0) nor the stateless ideal (World 2.0) that seems implicit in the strategies of so many companies” (para. 10). He states that it is absolutely possi- ble to have a global strategy and approach, but that this needs to be based not on the elimination of differences between nations, but rather a better understanding of peo- ple, cultures, and locations. This means ﬁrst being very clear about the core values and roots of the organization, and then being able to recognize both similarities and differ- ences in the different regions of the globe. Understanding similarities and recognizing differences enables an organization to modify their approach in a culturally appropri- ate way.

Ghemawat (2011) had previously identiﬁed three approaches that companies can take to be competitive across borders. His “AAA strategies” of adaptation, aggregation, and arbitrage are described as follows:

1. Adaptation (attempting to adapt and adjust to local differences and to be respon- sive to local needs and demands)
2. Aggregation (looking to overcome differences between local cultures and environ- ments, in order to gain greater economies of scale and broaden the scope and reach of the company)
3. Arbitrage (seeking to take advantage of differences between locations to harness positives attributes in speciﬁc regions (e.g., cheap labor, low costs, and speciﬁc expertise) to increase reach and proﬁtability)

Despite having advocated an arbitrage approach to globalization (i.e., exploiting differ- ences) in his earlier work (Ghemawat, 2007), he modiﬁed his position to recommend that companies focus on a strategy of adaptation. This change in stance arises from the response of people around the globe toward globalization and international compa- nies. He cites the following key reasons for an adaptive approach:

* protectionism. Where companies show respect for differences, the receiving nations are less likely to be protectionist and are more likely to remove barriers to entry or competition.
* reputation. When exploiting differences, multinational companies have appeared to be greedy and disrespectful of the environments in which they operate. An adaptive approach creates respect and sensitivity to the different operating environments, and therefore has a positive impact on corporate reputation.
* growth opportunities. Most signiﬁcantly, being adaptive means companies are better positioned to be able to thrive in previously difﬁcult new markets, particularly the emerging markets where traditional approaches to globalization have been espe- cially misplaced.

In contrast to the culturally imperialist manner in which companies previously tackled the challenge of operating in a multinational, intercultural environment, corporate strategy now needs to be more selective and focus on those regions and cultures where an adaptive approach that respects the people, culture, and business stakehold- ers involved, will yield positive outcomes.

### Marketing

Marketing plays the pivotal role in an organization of bringing together the business and its customers. It seeks to identify and satisfy the needs of consumers by ﬁnding the right combination of products and pricing at the right time and in the right place, while also ensuring proﬁtability for the company. At the heart of the marketing activity is a clear understanding of the customer and the market in which they are a partici- pant. The increasing impact of globalization on products, capital, and labor has created both challenge and opportunity in international marketing. Selling products and serv- ices in locations outside of the original domestic market has required businesses to adapt traditional marketing strategies to enter new markets and provide products that satisfy the needs of consumers from a wide range of national cultural contexts.

In line with overall corporate strategy, marketing strategies and approaches need to be tailored to ﬁt the overall global aspirations of the organization, while being relevant and meaningful to the customer groups in all the target markets. These strategies can vary, from the creation of global brands that are uniform across markets (e.g., Coca- Cola), to products that need very little modiﬁcation because of their characteristics (e.g., pharmaceuticals), to products that are tailored to the local characteristics of par- ticular markets. Choice of strategy will often depend on the importance of overseas markets to the business. Companies where the domestic market is still the dominant revenue source are unlikely to modify a successful formula to cater for a smaller export market. Companies with truly global aspirations, on the other hand, need to view their domestic market as just another market that needs to be satisﬁed as part of a truly global marketing strategy.

###### Marketing Strategies in an International Context

Companies have adopted a number of approaches to marketing in an international context. The appropriate approach depends on a wide range of factors, including the type of product, the global reach and aspirations of the company, the target customer groups, and the cultural similarities or differences evident in the target markets. Your- Target (2020) identify four distinct international marketing strategies that have been employed by companies as they have extended into overseas markets.

Strategy one: International strategy

This is perhaps the most common approach to international marketing, especially when a business is entering new foreign markets for the ﬁrst time. It consists of export- ing products and services without moving the company location from the domestic set-

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ting, so there is no need to invest in employees or facilities overseas. The business is likely to continue to have the domestic market as its primary focus, with foreign mar- kets as an add-on.

The main challenges of this approach consist in creating a sales network to cover new locations and a distribution channel that ensures effective logistics processing, as well as ensuring compliance with any regulations or restrictions in the new market. This approach, often referred to as an exporting strategy, suits smaller companies, espe- cially where the product needs little modiﬁcation to be offered in a new market (e.g., local specialty products such as food or wine).

Strategy two: Multi-domestic strategy

This approach consists of a company creating a physical presence in the target over- seas market and using this as a means of modifying products or services to meet the speciﬁc needs of the local market. Marketing and promotional strategies are also adjusted to the new cultural setting (norms, values, expectations, and traditions) so that they are appropriate for and effective in the target market.

While the main company headquarters might remain in the original domestic location, the company is likely to set up a network of regional or local headquarters through which the relationship with customers in new overseas markets can be more effectively managed. This approach is a good ﬁt for larger companies in industries such as food and drink, where the product can be easily modiﬁed, re-packaged, and marketed to meet local needs. Nestlé is a good example of a global organization that tailors its products for the local setting and creates sales and marketing strategies that are adap- ted to meet the characteristics of each of these markets (YourTarget, 2020).

Strategy three: Global strategy

Companies that follow a global business strategy treat the globe as one single market. Products and services are offered with very little local modiﬁcation, branding is global, and the aim is to reach as many consumers with as little additional cost as possible. Of course, there is sometimes a need to make minor adjustments to product offerings (e.g., a fast-food chain adding or removing menu items to suit local tastes) but these are minimized in order to maximize economies of scale (YourTarget, 2020). Typically, there will be a head ofﬁce for the company (usually in the original domestic location), but this will be at the center of a network of regional operations across the globe.

Strategy four: Transnational strategy

A transnational strategy is a hybrid model that mixes components of multi-domestic and global strategies. In this model, the company creates a transnational product or service that is sold in all locations, without any modiﬁcation, across the globe. The way in which the product is packaged and marketed may differ across locations.

The company typically operates from a single headquarters (usually in the original domestic location) but will operate a network of overseas operations to produce and distribute the product. Marketing and research and development (R&D) services may also be carried out in local markets. Coca-Cola is an example of a transnational com-

pany. The product is the same everywhere (except for wording on the packaging) with a global branding approach, so that the Coca-Cola experience is uniform across all loca- tions (YourTarget, 2020).

###### Impact of Culture on the Marketing Mix

The marketing strategy of a business plays a critical role in its likely success or failure. Effective marketing means creating a marketing mix: the four Ps of product, price, pro- motion, and place. This mix should be closely aligned with corporate strategy, resonate with the characteristics of new and existing customers and markets, and be appropri- ate for the particular stage in the product life cycle. An effective marketing mix is a coherent, integrated approach to the way that a product or set of products is presented to the outside world.

In a local setting, the marketing mix is created within the context of local cultural norms, values, and expectations, with speciﬁc adjustments made to appeal to particu- lar market segments or target customer groups. It can be developed under the umbrella of corporate branding that provides a framework for the marketing mix of speciﬁc products. The marketing mix will have been modiﬁed and updated with the growth and establishment of the product in the domestic market.

When a company decides to expand into foreign markets, it faces the challenge of adjusting the marketing mix so that it is appropriate for the cultural setting of that new market. Business management literature is littered with examples of culture fails in the marketing mix of companies entering foreign markets. For example, Walmart’s difﬁcul- ties in entering the Chinese market have largely been due to a failure to cater for the tastes and expectations of the Chinese consumer in terms of products, pricing, and promotion (Jacobs, 2018). Failure to get the marketing mix right in a new location, either through a lack of cultural awareness or through the assumption that the existing mar- keting mix will work anywhere, can have serious implications for the success of the new venture.

Product

The starting point for the marketing mix is to have a product that meets the current or future needs of the consumer in the target market. If the product fails to meet a need, then it will not be successful. This means businesses need to closely examine the cul- tural norms and values of the target market and make adjustments to the product offering where there is a potential discrepancy. Only when a match has been found between a target market and a product can the rest of the marketing mix be estab- lished.

Oreos are an example of a product range that has been successfully modiﬁed for a tar- get market in China. When launched there in its original format in 1996, the product failed to make an impact and was on the verge of being withdrawn by manufacturer Kraft. After research into Chinese consumer preferences, however, Kraft changed the

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recipe for Oreos to reduce the sweetness, produced smaller, less expensive packs, cre- ated Oreo rectangular wafers and straws rather than cookies, and even produced a green tea ﬂavor ﬁlling (Smith, 2012).

The case of General Motors in Japan provides a contrasting example (Ferris, 2019). Although Japan is the world’s third largest car market, General Motors sold only 700 cars to Japan in 2018. Although this is partially due to trade restrictions on imports, in greater part, this is because of the lack of ﬁt between the American product and the needs of the Japanese market. Japanese consumers believe that American cars are poor quality and unreliable. They also do not want to drive large American cars in a country where space is at a premium and where 40 percent of the cars on the road are smaller Kei cars, which are built for ease of parking and maneuvering in busy cities. According to Ferris (2019), American car companies have failed to create or adjust their products to be a good ﬁt with Japanese consumer demands.

Price

Pricing is a complex variable in the marketing mix because it must balance the cultural expectations of the target market with the economic realities of exchange rate ﬂuctua- tions, oil prices, tariffs and taxes, labor costs, distribution costs, and the ﬂuctuating price and availability of raw materials. A product being launched into a new market needs to be priced so that it is proﬁtable in the context of the economic environment in which it is being offered. Pricing is the one aspect of the marketing mix that has a direct impact on the company’s revenue stream, so getting the price right is extremely important. In an international environment, pricing is likely to vary from market to mar- ket because of the differences in manufacturing costs, distribution costs, advertising and promotional costs, market conditions, standards of living, competitor pricing, and regulatory/tax implications. Of course, the price also needs to be consistent with the expectations of the target customer and the rest of the marketing mix.

A product is often priced so that it is too expensive in the target market. When McDo- nald’s opened its ﬁrst fast-food franchise in Moscow in 1990, the price of a Big Mac meal represented half a day’s wage for the average customer, making it the most expensive fast-food restaurant in the world. Prices have since fallen dramatically so that their prices in Moscow are now among the cheapest in the world (Cordell, 2020). Interestingly, however, low pricing can also represent a poor cultural ﬁt. Part of Wal- mart’s failure in Japan can be attributed to the low-price mantra of the company, because Japanese consumers associated low prices with low quality (Jacobs, 2018).

Promotion

In the local domestic market, promotional activities, such as advertising and public relations, can be carried out without too much fear of cultural misunderstanding (although companies still do make mistakes and errors of judgement where there is a diversity of cultures within their local market). In an international setting, promotional tactics and the appropriate mix of promotional elements need to be determined based on the best ﬁt with the characteristics of the target market and its cultural characteris- tics.

Promotional campaigns need to take into account a wide range of cultural factors—lan- guage, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, ethnicity, religion, and even colors or symbols—so that there is a close ﬁt along each of the cultural value dimensions. Multinational com- panies, such as the global bank HSBC, have harnessed the power of cultural differences as a key feature in their promotional campaigns (SchoolTube, 2019). Other companies, such as Apple (Danova, 2018) and Toyota (Bhasin, 2018), have devised global promo- tional campaigns but have modiﬁed these subtly for each local market, retaining the power of the global brand combined with local imagery or characters.

There are, however, countless examples of promotional mistakes made by global com- panies. These vary from simple translation errors (e.g., KFC’s “Finger Lickin’ Good” slo- gan translated into Chinese as “Eat Your Fingers Off”) (Stampler, 2012) to examples of deeper cultural misunderstanding. Proctor and Gamble, for example, promoted its soap Camay in Japan with an advertisement that showed a man walking into the bathroom while his wife took a bath. The target audience, Japanese women, found the ad offen- sive since the invasion of a woman’s privacy is seen as disrespectful and bad manners in their culture (Wooten, 2011).

The promotional message that is most likely to be effective in a particular market needs to resonate closely with the cultural value dimensions of that environment. Par- ticular care needs to be taken with promotional campaigns in an international setting, because this is the part of the marketing mix that is reaching out to the consumer. Even unintentional cultural mistakes or misjudgments can be damaging to reputation, credi- bility, and market share. At the very least, promotional campaigns should be market- tested in some way before they are launched for a wider audience.

Placement

Placement is the part of the marketing mix that determines how and where a product is to be made available to the target customer, taking into account the speciﬁc market- place, consumer habits, competition, and knowledge of which locations are most effec- tive in a particular market. Clearly, luxury brands need to ensure that they are placed in appropriate consumer outlets that are consistent with their quality image, in the same way that discount brands need to be available in the appropriate retail settings. Star- bucks experienced problems in the Australian market by locating outlets in retail malls, when coffee drinkers actually preferred to visit their local coffee store (Turner, 2018). The use of e-commerce as a distribution channel has provided a further component of placement that international businesses need to consider in the marketing mix. The internet marketplace and online retail channels in one country do not necessarily rep- licate themselves in another location.

###### Localization versus Standardization

Branding is an important component of the marketing approach, providing an overall, recognizable “personality” for a set of products. The international company needs to decide whether a global brand is more effective than using different branding strat- egies for different groups of country markets (Broeways & Price, 2019). The approach to adapting and marketing products to meet the needs of customers in different locations

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is as much about localization as it is about globalization or standardization. To be attracted to a particular product, customers need to be able to identify with it in some way. This might be because it ﬁts comfortably within their national culture (local iden- tity) but, equally, it might be attractive because it exposes them to something new or different from outside of their cultural setting (**exoticism**). This latter trend has been exacerbated by the increase in the levels of international travel and tourism. For exam- ple, Chinese consumers are increasingly attracted to Western luxury goods, clothing, shoes, food, and health products (Broeways & Price, 2019).

Marketers can usefully cluster countries or customers into groups based around mean- ingful cultural characteristics. These clusters can be based around geographical prox- imity, where two or more countries share similar cultural dispositions toward a particu- lar product. Alternatively, clustering might be based around market segments (e.g., age, gender, educational attainment, or income) that share a similar cultural disposition. An example here might be individuals aged between 15 and 20 who originate from such culturally diverse regions as the US, Europe, and Japan, but who have high levels of cul- tural afﬁnity. In both cases, it is possible to standardize products because the target market segments share a similar cultural environment. This trend toward greater uni- formity in consumer preferences and behavior (especially in younger age groups) is increasingly important (Usunier & Lee, as cited in Broeways & Price, 2019).

Some global brands adopt a standardized approach to all aspects of the marketing mix. This is a viable approach where the product has a distinct niche (e.g., luxury brands such as Cartier or Rolex) or where the product is linked with a particular source loca- tion (e.g., Rioja wine, French brandy). In some cases, a company will localize the market- ing strategy completely to meet the needs of each target market. The appropriate approach—standardization, localization, or **glocalization**—is usually determined as a result of a thorough analysis of the target markets via market research.

###### Market Research

Traditionally, marketing activities are underpinned by market research that helps to better understand consumer opinions and motivations about products, buying behav- ior, and trends in the market. It would appear sensible, therefore, for the international marketing function to undertake regular and signiﬁcant market research to better explore cultural differences across markets. This assists in helping the company deter- mine the appropriate levels of standardization or localization that are required. It would also help to avoid some of the cultural mistakes or misunderstandings that reg- ularly occur in international promotional campaigns.

However, in addition to the cost and complexity involved, Welford et al. (as cited in Broeways & Price, 2019) identiﬁed a number of further challenges in carrying out mean- ingful market research. These challenges often result from the very same cultural dif- ferences that the research itself is aiming to better understand. These are as follows:

Exoticism

This is the quality of something being unusual or special because it is from another country.

Glocalization This term is used

when a globally pro- duced item is adjus- ted to meet local demands.

* + language barriers. Both translation and the meaning ascribed to particular words make comparison of responses problematic, because there is no guarantee that respondents have answered the same question.
  + sensitivity of questioning. Depending on the cultural setting, respondents are more or less likely to reveal particular types of information about themselves.
  + research techniques. Some research methods (in-depth interviews, focus groups) emanate from cultures where individuals are willing to talk openly and honestly, even about personal matters. These methods do not travel to other cultures where such openness is not a feature.
  + cultural differences. Again, the way people live, think, and behave differs according to the cultural setting, so any research that is based on one culture is unlikely to be consistent with every other cultural setting.
  + suspicion. Different cultures have varying levels of suspicion about what the infor- mation they give is being used for and may be unwilling to participate.
  + statistical comparisons. Data collected in different locations may not always be comparable because the collection methods and classiﬁcations made are often dif- ferent.
  + fragmentation. Where organizations carry out autonomous research in different regions, it may be impossible to bring the results together because of different col- lection methods and approaches.

### Human Resources Management

Human resource management (HRM) is the strategic approach taken by a company to manage its employees so that they help the organization meet its strategic objectives and create a competitive advantage. The responsibilities of HRM are both short- and long-term in perspective, and span all aspects of employee management. HRM over- sees the life cycle of an employee within the company, including recruitment, training, appraisal, rewards, promotion, dismissal, and redundancy. It ensures that these are car- ried out within the regulatory framework of the country of operation, in accordance with company policies and procedures. HRM can also play a signiﬁcant part in the building and maintenance of organizational culture, employee motivation, and staff well-being.

Laissez-faire In this leadership style, employees are given freedom to determine tasks and make decisions.

Given that HRM is the employee-facing function of the business, it is no surprise that national culture has a signiﬁcant impact on the way that function is implemented and carried out. National culture expectations combine with the culture of the organization to create the corporate approach to employee management. Even within the same cul- ture, two organizations can adopt quite different approaches to the management of their people. Compare the open, *laissez-faire* employee-management approach taken by Google with the stiff, bureaucratic, rules-driven approach taken by a US government agency.

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When a company steps out of its local setting and embarks on an international strat- egy, HRM is faced with the challenge of adding new layers of cultural complexity to the already complex mix. This challenge becomes increasingly complex as every new loca- tion (and its management and employees) is added to the portfolio of people overseen by the human resources (HR) function.

###### HRM in International Management

As companies become more international, and eventually global, the context, role, and nature of HRM changes and broadens. International Human Resources Management (IHRM) requires “the management of employees across countries and hence across dif- ferent systems for organizing business in general and human resources in particular” (Ferner, as cited in Browaeys & Price, 2019, p. 272). HRM needs to consider a variety of issues as the organization extends its operations into new locations. All these consider- ations need to be made in the context of both the company’s strategy and approach to internationalization, and in the cultural requirements of the new locations. The range of issues to consider are described below.

Regulation

Company employment practices need to be compliant with whatever the new local reg- ulatory and legal environment demands. A US-based company venturing into a German market needs to ensure compliance with the more rigorous employment laws that exist to protect employee rights.

Organizational structure

How a company implements its HRM strategy will need to go hand-in-hand with how it decides to structure the new international organization. This might result in a central- ized HR function, or the function might be carried out independently in each location. In either case, or in any hybrid model, the resulting HR function needs to be able to provide a coherent, consistent, and effective approach to the management of employ- ees.

Reward systems

HRM needs to be able to implement and manage systems for remuneration and reward that are consistent with corporate culture, policies, and expectations but which are also appropriate to the local environment. Minimum wage requirements, where they are in place, need to be adhered to and cultural expectations about how employees are rewarded need to be met. The drivers that motivate employees will likely differ from one country to another, with remuneration playing a different role in employee motiva- tion, depending on the location and the nature of the work being carried out.

Employee representation

Organizations need to understand and accommodate the different levels and roles of employee representation (e.g., trade union, works council) in new locations. Making changes in areas such as the organizational structure, job descriptions, **remuneration**,

Remuneration

The ﬁnancial reward received for work is called remuneration.

working conditions, or contracts may be possible without consultation or approval in some locations, but in other locations (e.g., Germany, France) there are strict protocols for the involvement of workers’ representatives in any major decisions or changes.

Recruitment practices

Local practices for hiring staff may not be transferrable to other locations. Different countries have different levels of regulation in place that inﬂuence how employment processes must be carried out. In some countries, hiring people can be done on the basis of personal contact and informal networks. In other locations, formal procedures and requirements need to be followed in order to comply with local employment regu- lations.

Diversity

The HRM function plays a key role in ensuring the effective management of diversity in the workplace. While there may be a corporate standard in place for ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment of all employees, the local attitudes and expectations may be somewhat different. There may be different legal regulations in place that regu- late how companies are expected to comply with local diversity expectations and requirements, or there may simply be none.

Culture

All of the factors above are inﬂuenced by the national cultural settings in which the company is operating. HRM alone is not responsible for creating or managing organiza- tional culture, but it does play a critical role in ensuring that management (and employees) are prepared for cultural differences, either through providing training, expatriate assignments, or recruitment of suitably qualiﬁed staff with intercultural experience.

This list of considerations appears somewhat daunting. The manner in which an organ- ization tackles them will vary, depending on the role that HRM already has within the organization and the local cultural setting in which it has previously been operating.

###### HRM across Cultures

The cultural value dimensions of Trompenaars, Hofstede, and the GLOBE project impact all aspects of the international business environment and its stakeholders, but they particularly inﬂuence the work-related attitudes, norms, expectations, and values that have an impact on the management of employees in an international setting. Broeways and Price (2019) identify ﬁve key elements of these culture value dimensions that have a particular inﬂuence of the HRM task in an international setting.

Power and authority

Depending on the attitudes to power and authority in the local culture, there will be a different level of tolerance toward inequality in the workplace. In some cultures, employees will expect to be involved in decision-making and in shaping the way their careers, employment conditions, and opportunities are managed. Where employees are

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in a culture that tolerates higher levels of inequality, they are more likely to expect top- down decision-making and are less likely to want to challenge any of the changes or decisions made by management.

Ambiguity and risk

In some cultures, employees value the level of autonomy, freedom, and independence they are given in carrying out their role. Employees enjoy working in an atmosphere of ambiguity and are willing to take risks. In other cultures, however, employees have a lower tolerance for ambiguity and risk, will look to management to make decisions on their behalf, and will be less likely to work outside of the clearly-deﬁned scope of their job description.

Trust

Different cultures bring with them different levels of interpersonal trust between man- agement and employees. In some cultures, managers may not trust the ability or inten- tion of their employees. Employees may be wary of dealing with management. In other cultures, however, the relationship between management and employees may be built around trust and conﬁdence, and employees may be encouraged to show initiative and make decisions for themselves.

Individualism versus collectivism

In individualistic cultures, the employee and the workplace are linked together through their contractual relationship, and this relationship is distinct from the employee’s pri- vate life. In collectivist cultures, the workplace is often seen as an extension of family life, the relationship with management is based more on loyalty and commitment than a contract, and the company often plays a role in protecting the well-being of employ- ees in a wider sense.

Leadership

Different cultures respond to different leadership styles. Leadership in one culture may be most effective when it is task-related and autocratic in style. In another culture, employee-related leadership that is paternalistic in style might be a better ﬁt. Other cultures may respond better to a laissez-faire style of leadership that gives autonomy and independence to the employee.

HRM practices, themselves, have emerged and developed in different ways, depending on their original cultural setting. As Browaeys and Price (2019) note, even the concept of human resource management is itself a culture-based construction. Emerging from the US in the 1960s, traditional textbook HRM “best-practices” reﬂect the model of employee management that ﬁts best with American cultural norms and values. With employees being a key asset to the organization, they needed to be managed effec- tively and provided with the knowledge and skills that would be required in order to gain competitive advantage.

Communal and Brewster (as cited in Browaeys & Price, 2019) describe how this created the American model of HRM, based around private enterprise, the formalization of process and procedure, management freedom and autonomy, and little intervention from the government. Attitudes toward employee representation through trade unions

were often hostile. They compare this model with the HRM model that has since emerged in the European Union, despite cultural differences between member states. In Europe, HRM fulﬁlls more of a set of responsibilities toward the employee in how they are managed and organized. Diversity is likely to be seen as having a positive, qualitative impact, and the involvement of workersʼ representatives is widely recog- nized and supported. European HRM functions also need to cater for the greater impact of rules and regulations that need to be followed around employment practices.

In Asia-Paciﬁc cultures, the emergence of HRM has been less uniform and homogene- ous (Rowley, as cited in Browaeys & Price, 2019), even for companies within the same country. Some companies have introduced traditional, hierarchical models; some have implemented market-oriented practices with performance-based reward systems; and some have created hybrid models where performance-based reward is limited only to certain functions (e.g., sales). According to Rowley, there is no evidence of a move toward a single HRM-model that mirrors the European experience.

Browaeys and Price (2019) suggest that in the instance of HRM, the application of the value dimensions of culture is somewhat problematic. This is because the complexity of the HR problem is not driven by cultural variables alone but is also reﬂected in the economic tradition and development of the country and in how the systems of busi- ness have evolved over time in that location.

###### Approaches to HRM in an International Environment

Companies have taken a variety of approaches in trying to best adapt themselves to meet the human resources challenges of an international operation. Tayeb (as cited in Browaeys & Price, 2019) identiﬁes three factors (which are ﬂuid and change over time) that companies need to consider in determining their HRM approach:

1. The social, political and cultural environment of the locations in which the parent company is seeking to operate;
2. The preferred ways of operating in that location (from the perspective of the subsid- iary); and
3. The corporate HRM strategy of the parent company.

Tayeb (as cited in Browaeys & Price, 2019) goes on to present four strategic options that a parent company can take in its approach to HRM:

1. Ethnocentric. The parent company ignores the local culture and operating environ- ment and implements the company’s domestic HRM approach across all its interna- tional subsidiaries.
2. Polycentric. The parent company takes into account the different culture and oper- ating environment experienced by employees in other locations and modiﬁes the HRM approach to better suit local needs and preferences.

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1. Global. The parent company acknowledges that being global is different and seeks to create a new organizational culture based on strong cultural synergy by imple- menting a new global HRM function across the company.
2. Hybrid. The parent company takes into account the various cultural and environ- mental characteristics by implementing different HRM approaches for each of its subsidiaries.

Although companies have tended toward the approach of attempting to transplant their corporate HRM strategies across all locations, evidence suggests that this is rarely successful (Browaeys & Price, 2019). For example, Japanese companies attempting to export lean production and management methods to Western cultures, such as the UK, found that they had to make adjustments in order to make these effective. According to Elger and Smith (as cited in Browaeys & Price, 2019), there is more evidence of a hybrid- ization approach when implementing HRM strategies.

McSweeney et al. (as cited in Browaeys & Price, 2019) reject the idea of a convergence of HRM through the implementation of global HR approaches, simply because there are so many sources of diversity in local cultures that make this approach difﬁcult. In real- ity, companies are faced with a mixture of inﬂuences, bringing together universal and local practices, international and local competition, and corporate and local cultures. The result is most likely to be a complicated interplay of international and local forces that together converge and diverge. The HRM challenge is to be able to understand, react to, and manage this complex task.

Zusammenfassung

When a business decides to expand its operation into the international arena, the focus is initially on market opportunity, increasing revenue and proﬁt, achieving economies of scale, and achieving competitive advantage. However, the realities of operating in new cultural settings bring a number of key challenges to the core business functions of strategy formulation and implementation, marketing, and human resources management.

The way in which an organization sets about formulating strategy is a reﬂection of the cultural context within which that strategy formulation is taking place. This will impact who is involved in setting the strategy, the approach to deﬁning and agree- ing to that strategy, the time taken to formulate strategy, and the types of strategic goals that will be produced. When operating in an international environment with multiple locations, cultural sensitivity is required to ensure that the resulting cor- porate strategy is relevant, meaningful, and appropriate to all management and employees in all locations.

Marketing products in multiple international locations creates both opportunity and challenge. The marketing strategy needs to be adjusted to ensure that the needs and expectations of customers in all locations can be met. This means care- fully considering the marketing mix (four Ps) and making adjustments to ensure that the marketing message is appropriate within the targeted cultural setting.

Human resources management (HRM) plays a critical role in ensuring that the employees of the company are managed in a manner that is consistent with corpo- rate values, policies, and procedures, while also meeting local regulatory require- ments, cultural expectations, and interfaces with employee representative bod-

ies. Culture plays a signiﬁcant role in the relationship an employee expects to have with their place of work, and the HRM challenge is to ensure that these expecta- tions are met across all operating locations.



# Lektion 5

## Focal Points of Intercultural Management

#### LERNZIELE

On completion of this unit, you will be able to…

… recognize the importance of corporate governance in international management.

… distinguish between styles of communication in different cultures.

… identify the challenges of managing intercultural teams.

DL-E-DLMINTIM01\_E-U05

1. Focal Points of Intercultural Management

### Aus der Praxis

Rainbow Fashions is a German company based in Leipzig that produces a range of nov- elty T-shirts aimed at the youth market. These are then sold in fashion stores through- out Europe, including Germany, France, Italy, and Spain. To reduce the cost of produc- tion, the company has outsourced its production to a company in Bangladesh. This has reduced costs signiﬁcantly with no reduction in product quality. However, Rainbow Fashions has learned that one of the factories is using child labor. Worried by the potential impact on their reputation, Rainbow Fashions are considering their future options:

* + cancel their relationship with the supplier completely;
  + insist that the use of child labor ceases immediately, or else the contract with the supplier will be terminated; or
  + turn a blind eye to the supplier’s working practices, since they are not the responsi- bility of Rainbow Fashions.

The production manager visits the supplier in Bangladesh. They discover that the use of child labor, while contrary to the ethical values of Rainbow Fashions, provides an alternative for many young and vulnerable children in the city. The money they earn is an essential part of their family’s income. Based on their ﬁndings, the production man- ager is faced with the following difﬁcult ethical questions:

* + What will the impact be on Rainbow Fashions’ reputation if the use of child labor in their production process becomes publicly known?
  + Will terminating the contract with their supplier be in the best interests of the chil- dren currently being employed?
  + What, if anything, should Rainbow Fashions do now?

### Intercultural Management and Corporate Governance

Corporate governance is a broad topic that covers all areas of how companies are gov- erned so that they are managed efﬁciently and effectively, in keeping with the goals and objectives of the business and interests of the internal and external stakeholders of the company. According to Angela Guerria, Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the purpose of good corporate gover- nance is to “help build an environment of trust, transparency and accountability neces- sary for fostering long-term investment, ﬁnancial stability and business integrity, thereby supporting stronger growth and more inclusive societies” (OECD, 2015, p. 7). In many cases, the principles of corporate governance are set down in laws, standards, and expectations that make them legally binding and mandatory in a particular country or region. Corporate governance standards may also be established by the particular industry or business sector within which a company operates. In addition, companies

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often set down their own principles for corporate governance that are consistent with their overall goals and objectives and reﬂect the norms and values of the organization itself.

Corporate governance principles include the following practices: communication, open- ness and transparency, the availability of information, controls, systems and proce- dures for the management of risks and compliance, deﬁnition of structures and pro- cesses for meeting the business objectives, mechanisms for stakeholder involvement, reward and evaluation of senior management, diversity management, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and business ethics. As Nadaf and Navi (2017) state, “a company without a system of corporate governance is often regarded as a body without a soul or conscience” (p. 67). The resulting corporate governance structure will likely consist of a broad range of internal and external controls and procedures that reﬂect how the busi- ness wants to run and how it wants to be perceived.

Naturally, whether internally or externally applied, corporate governance standards and principles often closely align with the cultural context in which they operate. For this reason, corporate governance will likely differ from one country to another depending on cultural characteristics. This creates a signiﬁcant challenge for the multinational organization where stakeholders exist across different cultural settings, each with their own different set of expectations for corporate governance standards.

###### Corporate Governance and Culture

The principles of corporate governance are frequently an artifact of the national culture in which they operate; thus, it is highly likely that expectations and standards will vary from one country to another. Traditionally, there have been different general approaches applied toward corporate governance. The traditional Anglo-American approach can be described as the “shareholder approach” where the key relationship with shareholders lies at the heart of corporate governance standards. Here, corporate governance has accountability as its primary focus, seeking to minimize risks to share- holders and provide management with the opportunities to develop the company so that shareholders can beneﬁt from business success and proﬁt maximization (Strange et al., 2009).

Elsewhere, the focus has tended to be toward the relationship between the company and the society within which it operates. This is described as a “stakeholder approach,” whereby the relationships with internal and external stakeholders lie at the heart of corporate governance good practices (Siriu, 2018). Increasingly, this stakeholder approach has embraced the principles of CSR and honest, ethical business practices. But, in many cases, countries and companies operate without any clear system of cor- porate governance, leaving businesses open to the risks of scandal, malpractice, and unethical practices.

When operating across borders, a business needs to be aware of these differences in corporate governance norms in different locations. These norms are often encapsula- ted in national codes of conduct or guidelines that companies operating in that coun-

try are expected to follow, especially if they wish to be credible with stakeholders and investors in that location. Indeed, restrictive corporate governance expectations may act as a barrier to entry to or investment in a particular country because they are so different to those experienced in the domestic location. On the other hand, a lack of corporate governance standards in a particular location can leave an organization open to the risk of corporate scandal and signiﬁcant reputational risk.

In Germany, for example, a strong corporate governance code of conduct was estab- lished in 2002 to provide companies operating therein with a set of expectations and guidelines that should be followed. Although this code is not mandatory or legally binding, it is prudent for companies wishing to operate in the German business envi- ronment to follow these guidelines. Businesses are expected to operate according to the highest principles of business ethics, honesty, and transparency (Strange et al., 2009).

In contrast, Nadaf and Navi (2017) describe a series of corporate scandals in India, resulting from a lack of credible corporate governance, that have damaged both the reputation of the Indian economy and many companies operating within it. The schol- ars provide an extensive list of scandals involving companies, such as Satyam Com- puter Services who falsiﬁed accounts, the Unit Trust of India (UTI) investment collapse, the major stock market frauds committed by well-known business ﬁgures, and scandals including the Indian Premier League (IPL) and the Commonwealth Games (CWG), as examples of a lack of a corporate governance culture in Indian business.

According to the McKinsey Global Institute (as cited in Doh et al., 2016), the growth of multinational companies originating from emerging and developing countries will be hugely signiﬁcant, rising from just ﬁve percent of Fortune Global 500 companies in 2000 to nearly 50 percent by the year 2025. With this signiﬁcant growth comes the increasing demand for businesses in developing economies to demonstrate globally acceptable standards of corporate governance, business ethics, and corporate social responsibility. Without them, it is difﬁcult for businesses to gain credibility with potential customers, business partners, suppliers, investors, and other stakeholders from more developed countries with expectations of more stringent standards of business behavior.

###### Business Ethics and Culture

The combination of business ethics and corporate governance makes a signiﬁcant con- tribution to a business and how it decides to function. Corporate governance is a set of standards and guidelines that a business implements to represent, protect, and inform the various stakeholders of a company. Business ethics, in turn, provide the norms, val- ues, and ethical principles that the business intends to follow in pursuing its business interests and in following these standards and guidelines. The two are inextricably linked, because the governance standards and guidelines are likely to be a formaliza- tion of many of the ethical values of the company and its leadership.

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McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) encapsulate the difﬁculties associated with business eth- ics in the international business environment, stating that “many people feel that the concept of business ethics is about as murky as it gets when borders are crossed” (p. 335). What is viewed as ethical business practice in one cultural setting may not be seen in the same way in another. Cultural norms and values inﬂuence ethical behavior across all dimensions, including bribery and corruption, the poor treatment and exploi- tation of the workforce, and the respect paid to the local environment, sustainability, and pollution. In response to this dilemma, McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) present two broad perspectives on how ethics are approached in the business setting: universalism and cultural relativism.

Universalismus

The universalist approach argues that there are certain behaviors and approaches that every culture believes to be wrong, and which should be universally avoided, including such things as cruelty to others, stealing, bribery, and corruption. For this reason, a uni- versalistic approach implies the feasibility of implementing a set of universal, global guidelines for ethical behavior in business. Entities such as the United Nations, the OECD, the European Union, and the US each have sets of guidelines or standards cover- ing ethical topics such as human rights, free speech, equal opportunities, corruption, and workersʼ rights.

The United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) was set up in the year 2000 by a combina- tion of governments, companies, academics, and workers’ organizations involved in international commerce. The UNGC is now endorsed by over 13,000 partners across 170 countries, including some of the world’s largest multinational companies (e.g., Coca- Cola, Starbucks), and consists of ten principles for ethical behavior (McFarlin & Swee- ney, 2017).

Although the UNGC website seeks to clarify and elaborate on these ten principles, dif- ferences in cultural interpretation still cause difﬁculties with such a universalistic approach. For example, agreeing on what decent working conditions are, what corrup- tion is, what abuse of human rights is, or what cooperation with the government really means, are all subject to local norms, values, and interpretations. Additionally, the ten principles are a guideline, but are not enforceable or mandatory in any jurisdiction. This means that countries and companies, even if they have become members of the UNGC, can choose which of these ethical obligations to adopt and which to ignore.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact | | |
| Human rights | 1. | “Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and” |
|  | 2. | “make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.” |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact | | |
| Labor | 3. | “Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;” |
|  | 4. | “the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;” |
|  | 5. | “the effective abolition of child labour; and” |
|  | 6. | “the elimination of discrimination in respect of employ- ment and occupation.” |
| Environment | 7. | “Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;” |
|  | 8. | “undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and” |
|  | 9. | “encourage the development and diffusion of environ- mentally friendly technologies.” |
| Anti-corruption | 10. | “Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.” |

When in Rome This expression refers to following local customs when visiting a foreign

place.

Cultural relativism

Because of these inherent difﬁculties in the interpretation of universalistic guidelines across cultures, McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) point to the emergence of an alternative approach to business ethics: cultural relativism. Here, the deﬁnition of what is ethical is determined by the local culture, regulations, and business practices. McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) describe this as the “**when in Rome**” approach, where local ethical standards are adopted out of respect for the local operating culture. This means that paying the occasional bribe or following other local, possibly unseemly working practi- ces can be justiﬁed in the context of local expectations. McFarlin and Sweeney con- clude that both approaches are problematic and plausible, and continue to exist despite the growth of international business. Even where countries share similar approaches (e.g., the US and China tend toward universalism), there can still be signiﬁ- cant differences in behaviors in speciﬁc business areas, e.g., marketing ethics.

It is likely that most companies adopt an approach to business ethics that sits some- where between these two different approaches. Enderle (2014) provides an alternative approach by examining three different levels at which business ethics can be applied or analyzed across boundaries and borders: micro (individual business participants),

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meso (business organizations), and macro (economic systems). Cutting across these three levels, he identiﬁes a set of international dimensions or borders across which these levels need to be resolved or managed.



These international dimensions indicate the signiﬁcance of the type of international relationship and the permeability of the borders involved when applying business eth- ics, and offer a middle ground between the two extremes of universalism and cultural relativism presented by McFarlin and Sweeney (2017).

Foreign country type

Here, each country is viewed as being different, borders are viewed as being impermea- ble in both directions, and the company adapts to the ethical standards of the foreign country (“ethical relativism”), often out of respect for the values and traditions of that country. This mirrors the cultural relativism approach presented by McFarlin and Swee- ney (2017).

Empire type

International relations can be viewed as an expansion of domestic relations into other countries without the need for signiﬁcant change. Enderle (2014) describes this rela- tionship as ‘‘ethical imperialism’’ since ethical standards are based on values and norms seen in the home country and imposed on the receiving country without modiﬁ- cation. A typical example is the relationship between Great Britain and its colonies (e.g., India) stemming back to the days of British imperialism and colonialism, where ethical standards are still largely inherited from that time.

Interconnection type

International and domestic relations are different but inextricably linked so that the distinction between national and international relations becaomes blurred. Enderle (2014) describes this as an ‘‘ethics of reciprocity’’ where ethical standards originate from both sides in order to gain mutual advantage. He cites the example of the rela- tionship between member states and the European Union as an example.

Globalization type

Here, international relations take on an importance that renders national borders as almost meaningless or irrelevant. Enderle (2014) cites the emergence of truly global issues, such as global climate change, as examples that transcend national borders. These international issues are bound together by ‘‘universal ethics.’’ As Enderle (2014) states, “the relevant ethical standards apply to all actors on the planet Earth regardless of their different local traditions and cultures” (p. 726). This approach mirrors the uni- versalism approach presented by McFarlin and Sweeney (2017).

Whichever of these four approaches outlined above is applied, there are clearly differ- ences in attitudes toward business ethics depending on culture and nationality. It is also possible that even apparently similar attitudes toward business ethics will stem from a different moral position or reasoning. Indeed, McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) cite examples of research that showed that US managers viewed issues, such as employee theft and other personnel dilemmas, differently from managers in Germany and Aus- tria. American managers view the individual as being the primary source of ethical val- ues, whereas in Germany and Austria, ethical values are seen in the context of the rela- tionship between the business and the local context. To the authors, it appeared that American managers were more concerned by ethical issues than equivalent managers from Germany.

Transparency International (2017), a global coalition against corruption, deﬁne corrup- tion as paying a bribe to gain access to public services within the last 12 months. In their survey of over 160,000 people across the world, they found that one in four busi- nesspeople across the globe had fulﬁlled this deﬁnition of corruption. Comparing dif- ferent regions, the variations in corruption ranged signiﬁcantly from an average of nine percent in Europe to 30 percent in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Common- wealth of Independent States. Moreover, the variation within each of these regions was even more signiﬁcant, with some countries reporting no bribery at all (e.g., United King- dom), and others reporting a bribery rate in excess of 75 percent (e.g., Yemen). The emerging BRIC nations showed the following results: Brazil (11 percent), Russia (34 per- cent), India (69 percent), and China (26 percent). Undoubtedly, the prominence and acceptability of bribery and the level of corruption varies signiﬁcantly according to cul- ture and location.

Whatever the cultural context, the failure to follow any sort of ethical standards or code of conduct across the multinational organization can expose a company to signiﬁcant reputational risk. In the 1990s, Nike was on the receiving end of intense media scrutiny and criticism for its failure to adhere to its own codes of ethics. The use of child labor, clear evidence of poor working conditions, low wages, and the willingness to allow local working practices and regulations to be followed across their extensive network of con-

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tract suppliers and producers, had a signiﬁcant detrimental effect on Nike’s corporate image (McFarlin & Sweeney, 2017). Nike has had to work hard to restore credibility over the last 25 years, putting pressure on suppliers to adopt better working practices and being more open and transparent in disclosing its network of suppliers. Despite Nike’s support for ethical and moral campaigns as part of its global marketing strategy, the company is still under continual ethical scrutiny. For example, an article in *The Wash- ington Post* highlighted the use of forced labor of Uighur Muslim minorities in manu- facturing in the Xinjiang region of China (Fiﬁeld, 2020).

Businesses are often torn between the conﬂicting demands of achieving economies of scale and reducing costs while following ethical business practices. If a network of sup- pliers in a developing country is able to produce goods at a substantially lower cost than in the home location, the multinational business may need to be prepared to turn a blind eye to worker safety and welfare to achieve these savings. Where a company outsources production and operations to third party suppliers, should it take responsi- bility for overseeing and policing the conduct of those suppliers?

Deresky (2017) describes the highly publicized case of the Tazreen Fashions Factory in Bangladesh, which was destroyed by ﬁre in November 2012, resulting in the death of over 1,100 workers. The factory was a supplier to large US multinationals, such as Sears and Walmart, who claimed no responsibility for the factory owner’s negligence on the basis that they did not know the factory was producing goods for them. A series of other serious ﬁres in Bangladeshi factories, culminating in the death of over 1,200 workers in the collapse of a Dhaka factory, led to Bangladesh being suspended from the US’s preferential trade program. They also brought the issue of ethical business practices and corporate responsibility ﬁrmly into the public view, pressuring multina- tional companies into taking a more proactive involvement in their networks of out- sourced suppliers in developing countries. However, this has failed to eradicate the problem, as Bangladesh is now the world’s second largest exporter of fashion garments with low wages, poor working conditions, and no worker representation (Deresky, 2017).

Any business operating across international locations is faced with ethical dilemmas based on the conﬂicting demands of business interests (increasing proﬁtability, driving down costs, expanding global reach) and being seen to be doing the right thing. Dere- sky (2017) provides a set of guidelines for managers faced with such ethical dilemmas to assist in making the right decision:

* Ensure that the laws of neither the home nor host countries are being broken.
* Ensure compliance with the appropriate code of conduct that covers social respon- sibility and ethical behavior.
* Ensure compliance with the company’s own ethical standards and principles.
* If these three steps still fail to provide clear guidance, consider the rights of the var- ious stakeholders involved and assess the level of harm versus beneﬁt that a deci- sion might cause, both in the short-term and the long-term.
* Make a decision that is consistent with your own conscience and ethical values, so that you are able to stand by the decision.

###### Corporate Social Responsibility and Culture

The competing forces of universalism and cultural relativism that inﬂuence business ethics across the globe can make decision-making problematic at a company level. Adopting a relativistic approach might mean a company endorsing poor working condi- tions in one country that would be viewed as unethical in their local environment. The payment of bribes in one location might simply be illegal in the local environment. Alternatively, applying a universalistic approach to business ethics does not guarantee that the same principles will be followed in every location in the same way.

Companies are increasingly embracing the concept of CSR as a means of empowering themselves to be ethical and socially responsible, working to a set of self-imposed and self-regulated standards and guidelines for business practices that help to overcome some of these dilemmas presented by cultural differences across locations. CSR is expressed through the goals of the organization and reﬂects the ethical and moral position of the company in carrying out its business objectives.

A company embracing CSR is expected to have a stance on a wide range of societal issues, including poverty, equal opportunities, the environment, social inequality, employee safety and well-being, corruption, and sustainability. Typically, CSR is classi- ﬁed according to four categories (Stobierski, 2021):

Philanthropic Being philanthropic means promoting the well-being of others through benevolent acts or

giving.

1. Environmental responsibility, the belief that the company should behave in a responsible way toward the environment
2. Ethical responsibility, the belief that the company should operate in a fair, honest, and ethical manner toward all its stakeholders across all locations
3. **Philanthropic** responsibility, the belief that the company should contribute to the well-being and improvement of the wider society through charitable giving or com- munity initiatives
4. Economic responsibility, the belief that the company should act with economic bal- ance, not solely to maximize proﬁt, but also to enable the other three aspects of CSR to be realized

There is increasing pressure on companies to display CSR and, according to McFarlin and Sweeney (2017), management attitudes toward CSR have changed signiﬁcantly in recent times. They cite a survey of over 1,000 international executives where 60 percent of respondents now believed that CSR was a high priority, compared to only 35 percent in an earlier survey. CSR was seen by respondents as an essential cost and conse- quence of doing business, helping their company to improve decision-making pro- cesses, and thereby contributing to an improvement in their reputation in the market.

In addition to promoting social responsibility in the way that business is conducted, CSR has also yielded competitive beneﬁts for those companies that have adopted it, as identiﬁed by Weber (as cited in Deresky, 2016). These beneﬁts are as follows:

* increased ability to access ﬁnance and capital;
* ability to obtain operating licenses;

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* + increase in revenue and proﬁtability;
  + decrease in costs;
  + reduced risk;
  + brand value increase;
  + consumer appeal and retention improved;
  + reputation enhanced; and
  + improvement in staff morale, retention, and ability to recruit.

However, the rise in corporate social responsibility has been met with a rise in cynicism about its authenticity. Certainly, multinational companies can claim to have made sig- niﬁcant contributions to the social and economic development of less developed coun- tries, but this has often been a byproduct of their primary pursuit of proﬁt and reduced costs rather than a replacement. Critics state that companies are left with no choice in the modern world but to follow CSR in order to be accepted by social commentators, stakeholders, potential investors, non-governmental organizations or **NGOs**, and social media. Following a CSR agenda does not appear to be having a detrimental effect on levels of proﬁtability.

Perhaps the largest challenge of a CSR agenda is the seemingly simple task of deter- mining the right thing to do from an ethical point of view. For example, McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) describe, how in Apartheid-era South Africa, many multinational corpo- rations withdrew their operations from the country in reaction to the repressive and unethical regime. However, many other companies argued that by divesting in South Africa, they would cause far more damage (in terms of jobs, inequality, and security) to those people whom such sanctions were meant to protect. By remaining present in South Africa, these companies believed they would have a greater ability to inﬂuence the behavior and reform of the country’s regime. According to McFarlin and Sweeney (2017), both arguments have their merits.

###### Creating Shared Value (CSV)

According to Porter and Kramer (as cited in Deresky, 2016), the existing idea of CSR is limited because it views corporate responsibilities to the wider society as lying outside of the business itself. CSR concerns itself primarily with issues of legal compliance, codes of conduct, and reputational protection, which, in themselves, cannot signiﬁ- cantly enhance value creation and competitiveness. As an alternative, they promote the idea of Creating Shared Value (CSV), which views the future success of the company as working in combination with the social and economic development of the locations in which it operates. CSV “leverages the unique resources and expertise of the company to create economic value by creating social value” (Porter & Kramer, as cited in Deresky, 2016, p. 67). They cite Nestlé, Google, and Intel as companies who have created shared value by “reconceiving products and markets; redeﬁning productivity in the value chain; and enabling local cluster development” (p. 68). Nestlé further clariﬁes this approach by stating a clear business case for a CSV approach “sustainably delivering on share- holder expectations while helping to address global societal challenges. When we ach- ieve this, we become a force for good that enhances the quality of life for everyone” (Nestlé, 2021, para. 2).

NGO

A non-governmental organization is a legally constituted organization that operates independ- ently of any govern- ment.

The Nestlé business case is underpinned by a detailed approach of ten components. Some of these include: “Taking care of our people; Putting our values at the heart of what we do … Collaborating for major change … Aligning our commitments and ambi- tions with the UN Sustainable Development Goals” (Nestlé, 2021, para. 3). Nestlé has moved on from the position of CSR, where it needed to be seen to be responding to external pressures and circumstances, to a position of CSV, where both internal inter- ests and societal or community interests and initiatives are integrated into corporate objectives, strategy, and the business model.

### Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is what happens when individuals or groups from differ- ent cultures interact with each other, bringing their culture’s way of thinking and living into the interaction. Browaeys and Price (2019) describe it as “a fabric created by the individuals or groups from different cultures and woven from the perceptions they have of each other, ... the values, codes, lifestyles and thought processes belonging to their respective cultures,” i.e., a “fabric of relations” (p. 354). Communication contains a message or content. In an intercultural context, what is of particular importance is the nature of the interaction between the participants and the way in which they interpret the combination of content, situation, and the interaction itself. This interpretation is driven by the cultural norms, values, and expectations of each participant; thus, culture becomes a central part of the network of relations that makes up the experience of communication.

###### Business Communication across Cultures

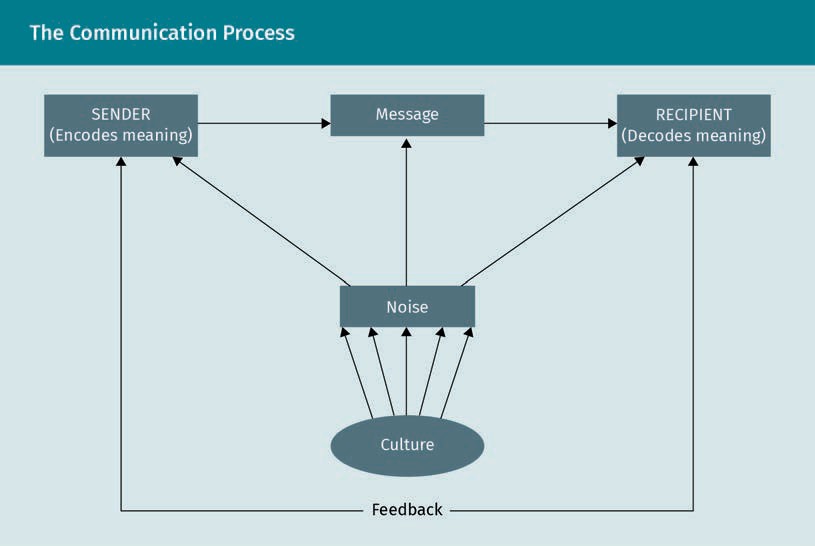
Communication, and how it is interpreted, is heavily inﬂuenced by the situational con- text. Different cultures will ascribe different expectations and meanings to different communication contexts. Being aware of the situational context allows the participant to more easily predict and interpret the nature and meaning of communication. For example, the communication conventions experienced in a church will be very different to those experienced at a football game, a court of law, or a business meeting. Culture provides the context and all of the norms, values, expectations, conventions, and sym- bols to make sense of communication in a particular situation.

The business context is one such situational context in which participants from differ- ent cultures apply their own customs. This means that participants originating from dif- ferent cultural backgrounds are likely to ascribe different interpretations to the same shared communication event. These interpretations are further complicated in a busi- ness setting because communication will also be impacted by the culture of the organ- ization itself.

Communication in the intercultural business context can take a variety of forms, with the traditional forms of written and spoken communication now being extended through the increasing use of electronic communication media. The ability to commu-

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nicate effectively is a key component of the intercultural management role and can have a signiﬁcant impact on both the success of international business activities and the management of a culturally diverse set of employees. It is essential, therefore, that the recipient of a particular communication interprets it as closely as possible to the way in which it was intended by the sender.



Unfortunately, this business communication process contains numerous points at which its original meaning or intent can become distorted. This process of distortion is often referred to as “noise.” This noise occurs as participants “ﬁlter, or selectively understand, messages consistent with their own expectations and perceptions of real- ity and their values and norms of behavior” (Deresky, 2017, p. 151). Naturally, the greater the differences between the cultures involved, the more likely that the meaning and intent of the communication will be misunderstood or misinterpreted. Intercultural managers, therefore, need to be aware of **cultural noise** to optimize communication and reduce misunderstanding.

###### Written Communication

A large amount of business communication continues to be carried out through the written media. Although there is less cultural noise to be found in the written form (because the interaction between sender and recipient in the dialogue is not an itera- tive and multi-faceted, sensory experience like face-to-face, verbal communication), there can still be considerable differences in the cultural expectations that surround written communication. A range of cultural variables inﬂuence the effectiveness of writ- ten communication.

Cultural noise This term refers to

the various cultural factors that are likely to impact the effec- tiveness of commu- nication.

Nuanced Communication is nuanced when it is characterized by dif- ferent shades or lev- els of meaning or

expression.

Language

An obvious obstacle to mutual understanding is the choice of language to be used in written communication. Where the recipient receives communication that is not in their primary language, there is the risk of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. This can vary from a lack of awareness of subtle, **nuanced**, informal language to the difﬁculties in understanding highly technical or specialized language. Where a participant is forced to communicate in writing this language, their ability to express exactly what they want to say, in the manner in which they wish to say it, is immediately restricted.

Status of written documents

Different cultures have different attitudes to the status of written communication. For example, in Western cultures, such as the US, Germany, and the UK, conﬁrming details in writing is seen as an important stage in the business relationship. Written contracts are seen as binding and are often expressed in detail to ensure there is no lack of understanding. Written agreements are referred to regularly in the business relation- ship. In other cultures (e.g., the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia), written agree- ments are seen as secondary to the relationship that has been built through personal contact. Written documents and contracts are viewed either as a starting point or as having ﬂexibility to be changed later. The point in the relationship when written docu- mentation is introduced may also vary across cultures. In Germany, producing detailed documentation at an early stage in the business process is a sign of professionalism, credibility, and rigor. In other cultures, (e.g., Asian) this is not as important as building the relationship at the early stages (Hooker, 2012).

Level of detail

Edward T. Hall’s (1976) identiﬁcation of low- and high-context cultures provides a clear distinction between the levels of detail that different cultures expect to see in written communication. In low-context cultures (typically Western cultures, such as the US, Ger- many, the UK, Canada, Australia, and much of the rest of Europe), written communica- tion is expected to provide full details. Businesses in this context abound with formal documentation, employee memos, policy manuals, and templates (e.g., contracts, holi- day request forms, and user guides). Written documentation goes hand-in-hand with the procedures and processes that are expected to be followed in the work setting. In high-context cultures, on the other hand, written correspondence is less prevalent and more is left out, with far more detail and content left to the discretion of the partici- pants and the personal relationships they share (Hooker, 2012).

Local standards

Doing business in an overseas location requires compliance with or an understanding of local documentary standards. The style in which a contract or agreement may need to be written in order to meet local legal requirements or conventions can differ signiﬁ- cantly. The local conventions for business salutations, titles, acceptable style, and pre- sentation are likely to be different.

The scope of written communication has been extended in recent years as the impact of electronic written media continues to transform business communication. The use of electronic media has gone hand-in-hand with globalization and the removal of barriers and borders. Using the internet as a communication medium has opened up the possi-

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bilities for enhanced and easier communication with internal and external stakehold- ers, as well as providing a platform for e-commerce and cross-border trade. In many cases, the use of electronic media has replaced traditional forms of written (and spo- ken) communication, blurring the rules and conventions for communication that previ- ously existed.

Email has largely replaced traditional written media as the primary mechanism for writ- ten business communication, providing enhanced efﬁciency and convenience. Text messaging and social media are also increasingly used in a business setting, both internally and externally. But the same issues arise with potential for intercultural mis- understanding and cultural noise, especially since electronic media are mistakenly per- ceived as conforming to global standards that are devoid of any cultural connotations. Cultural context has a profound impact on the interpretation of choice of language, lev- els of formality, salutations, and levels of detail, and these factors are equally as important and inﬂuential when using electronic media as other means of communica- tion.

###### Verbal Communication

Where communication takes place in a face-to-face setting, the potential for cultural noise to interfere with understanding and interpretation is signiﬁcantly increased. In addition to the message or content of the meeting, the situation, context, and human interaction add to the layers of complexity that are interpreted through the cultural lens of each of the participants.

Conventions for the ﬁrst meeting

Expectations for what happens at the beginning of an encounter are shaped by cultural norms and values. Browaeys and Price (2019) describe a hypothetical ﬁrst meeting between an American and a German manager, where the American manager aims to forge a friendly, informal, open relationship, while the German manager is cautious and reserved about giving too much away until respective positions and credentials have been established. Meeting with Japanese representatives requires a sensitivity about appropriate formality and deference to position or seniority, which may be counter to a Western approach which strives to “**break the ice**,” establishing informal communica- tion through the use of ﬁrst names and light-hearted small talk.

Language

Where participants do not share the same primary language, language differences can be overcome using an interpreter, the primary language of one of the participants, or a common language. In all three cases, the barrier of language will increase the level of cultural noise. An interpreter may be unable to successfully translate the subtleties and nuances of each side of the conversation. They may themselves become the focus of the conversation and act as a barrier to the forging of a relationship between the par- ticipants. Using one participantʼs primary language creates difﬁculties for the other party, establishing a power dynamic in the meeting because of different levels of lin-

Break the ice

The expression is used for doing or saying something to take the stress or tension out of a sit- uation.

guistic ability and understanding. Adopting a common language (e.g., English) creates barriers to all parties, tending toward superﬁciality in conversation and an inability for participants to assert personality and cultural identity (Browaeys & Price, 2019).

Conversation

Depending on the context and the attendees of a meeting, participants from different cultures will have different expectations of how the discussion should proceed. Some participants will expect an informal conversation where interruption is acceptable. Oth- ers may expect participants to take turns to speak. Some participants (e.g., Nordic and Scandinavian) may value silence and pauses as times to think and evaluate while oth- ers may ﬁnd silence uncomfortable and seek to ﬁll any pauses (e.g., American). Some participants may feel that they need to make an impression and be assertive; others may feel the need to negotiate and compromise (Browaeys & Price, 2019).

Questions

Direct questioning can be seen as threatening or conversely as a sign of weakness or lack of knowledge. Deresky (2017) gives an example of a German manager asking an Indian colleague the question “What can be done to make sure this project is ﬁnished on time?” The German manager sees this as empowering the Indian colleague, giving them the opportunity to take responsibility and have input to the problem-solving process. The Indian manager, on the other hand, is expecting to be given instructions and perceives the question as a sign that the German manager does not know what to do and is not credible as a boss.

Small talk Informal, polite dis- cussion about unim- portant or trivial things is referred to

as small talk.

Public and private

In some cultures, participants are comfortable to talk about any subject, happy to reveal aspects of their personal life, or disclose their own personal thoughts. In other cultures, there is a clear delineation between personal and public life, so participants are reluctant to reveal their personal thoughts or feelings. Molinsky and Hahn (2015) describe a situation where an American working in Germany experienced difﬁculties in forging relationships with their new work colleagues, who were unresponsive to their **small talk** and interest in their personal lives. They were unaware that their attempts at getting to know colleagues was perceived as obtrusive and aggressive, and that work relationships take longer to form in a German work environment.

These variables focus purely on the response to the communication process that takes place during an encounter between persons from different cultural contexts. These dif- ﬁculties are further intensiﬁed by the different cultural responses to and interpreta- tions of the actual content and objectives of the meeting or encounter.

###### Non-Verbal Communication

A signiﬁcant amount of cultural noise is contributed by differences in the non-verbal communication mechanisms adopted by participants from different cultures. Encoun- ters between two or more participants always include a level of “meta-communication,” which is the additional communication signals contained in, e.g., tone of voice, physical signals, body language, physical proximity, and other attitudes or expressions, which

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combine to give further meaning to the communication. These aspects of meta-com- munication are inﬂuenced by the cultural background of the participant in a number of ways.

Body language

The manner in which people sit and hold their body posture during an encounter can send signals to the recipient that are interpreted through their own cultural assump- tions. Sitting forward in one’s seat can be judged as being aggressive in some cultures, while other cultures would view this as showing interest and engagement.

Facial expressions

Although there are a number of universal expressions to indicate emotions, such as happiness or fear, the cause of these expressions might be different depending on cul- tural context. There are a further set of facial expressions that are speciﬁc to particular cultures. The interpretation of facial expressions, such as a smile, can also differ according to culture. Browaeys and Price (2019), for example, describe how a smile in Russia can often have negative connotations, indicating that the recipient of the smile is foolish. Differences also exist in the extent to which people hold eye contact or avert another’s gaze, depending on their culture. How this is perceived by the recipient also differs according to cultural context.

Gestures

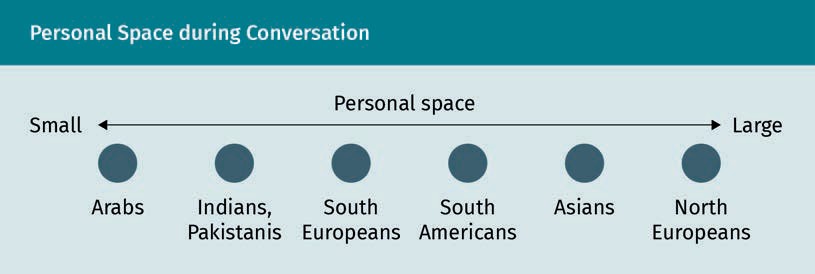
In many situations where the spoken word alone does not fully capture a person’s feel- ings or emotions, gestures are frequently used to reinforce or amplify meaning. Bro- waeys and Price (2019) compare an animated French speaker using a range of gestures with the upper part of their body to the Dutch speaker using very few gestures and lim- iting their movement to just the arms. Extreme use of gestures can be both irritating and cause anxiety to persons from less expressive cultures. Misunderstanding can also arise when gestures have different meanings in different cultures. For example, the thumbs up gesture is a positive, approving signal in most cultures; in Bangladesh, it is seen as an insulting gesture. Likewise, nodding one’s head can mean yes or no, depending on culture.

Silence

In Western culture, a short period of silence may be acceptable to mark a pause in pro- ceedings, but these pauses rarely last long. In others, such as Thailand and other Asian countries, silence is valued as a sign of respect and modesty and is preferred to unnec- essary verbalization (Browaeys & Price, 2019).

Proxemics

The way in which people perceive their own personal space varies between cultures and can be the cause of discomfort or misunderstanding when different cultures come into contact. Browaeys and Price (2019) give the example of the different expectations of personal space between Americans and those from the Middle East. Some Americans may feel uncomfortable when an Arab sits close during conversation and give less per- sonal space than is usual for Americans. They illustrate this personal space continuum, pictured below.



Physical contact is also viewed differently between cultures. In Italy, hugging and kiss- ing on both cheeks is a common business greeting. Shaking hands is common in most countries. But in traditional conservative nations, such as African and Arab countries, it would be unacceptable to greet the opposite sex by either shaking hands or hugging (Browaeys & Price, 2019).

###### High-Context versus Low-Context Communication

Differences in norms, values, and expectations relating to communication tend to cor- relate with many of the dimensions of culture identiﬁed by Hofstede and Trompenaars. Of particular signiﬁcance appears to be the contrast in communication mechanisms between high-context and low-context cultures. High-context cultures, such as those found in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and some of the Mediterranean countries, are characterized by not explicitly showing or expressing thoughts and feelings. In commu- nication, it is normal to have to interpret meaning and intention from an understand- ing of the context, surroundings, and people involved. This means that people originat- ing from high-context cultures tend not to need to communicate everything in the explicit, spoken (or written) message. Most of the information is provided by the physi- cal context or is internalized within the person themselves. Both parties in the commu- nication are involved: The speaker expects the recipient to elicit the meaning of the communication based on the relationship and the context and situation in which the communication is taking place (Deresky, 2017).

In contrast, people from low-context cultures, such as those found in Germany, the US, and Scandinavia, require communication to be much more speciﬁc and explicit. Inten- tions, feelings, and thoughts are stated explicitly in the communication, and it is expec- ted that all the required information will be provided. Knowledge of the context, sur- roundings, or relationship are not required because the information communicated provides this detail. Typically, they will transmit their thinking and planning in an explicit, direct style, and will expect other participants to do the same. Everything that needs to be included to ensure understanding is contained in the communication (Deresky, 2017).

The differences between high- and low-context cultures create the potential for signiﬁ- cant communication difﬁculties when representatives of both are involved in business interactions. Deresky (2017) describes the scenario where a German and an Arab might

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face difﬁculties in negotiation because the German expects detailed information prior to making any business decision, while an Arab will use their knowledge and experi- ence of the participants involved as the basis for their decision-making.

The potential for misunderstanding, frustration, and breakdown of trust is signiﬁcant. Participants from low-context cultures are likely to be frustrated by the lack of detail provided by high-context participants, viewing their counterparts as “secretive, sneaky, and mysterious” (Deresky, 2017, p. 166). Participants from high-context cultures, on the other hand, will likely be frustrated by the lack of understanding of mood, gesture, and situation shown by low-context participants, viewing their counterparts as “too talka- tive, obvious, and redundant” (p. 166).



###### Misunderstandings and Conﬂicts in Intercultural Communication

Barna (1994) developed a framework for describing the sources of misunderstandings and conﬂict in intercultural communication that identiﬁed the following six stumbling blocks that create barriers to understanding:

1. Assumption of similarities is the natural tendency for individuals to believe that everyone else shares the same views on how to behave and what to think, and to think negatively of someone who does not share our assumptions.
2. Language differences is the assumption that if one’s language is being spoken that everybody else understands it in the same way, even if it is not their primary lan- guage. Misunderstandings due to language difﬁculties are often assumed to be because of other differences.
3. Nonverbal misinterpretation is the misunderstanding of someone’s intent or mean- ing as a result of non-verbal signs, such as body language, appearance, or gestures.
4. Preconceptions and stereotypes is the tendency to make assumptions about peo- ple as a result of preconceived notions and stereotypes, which can then lead to dis- crimination, bias, or misunderstanding.
5. Tendency to evaluate is the habit of judging other people’s behavior or thinking according to one’s own set of cultural values, rather than considering why differen- ces might be a result of cultural differences. This links with the concept of ethno- centrism that judges one’s own culture as the accepted norm.
6. High anxiety is the state that arises when an individual encounters a situation where a different cultural perspective is prevalent, and they are unsure about how to behave or react.

The intercultural manager needs to be sensitive to these six sources of misunderstand- ing when communicating with people from different cultures. Cultural and contextual intelligence are essential pre-requisites for effective communication in an intercultural context.

### Intercultural Teamwork

Businesses continue to attach ever increasing importance to working in groups or teams. Management theory describes the power and potential of the team being capa- ble of exceeding the sum of the individual members that make up the group. Effective groupwork and teamwork is promoted as having a signiﬁcant positive impact on pro- ductivity, performance, and innovation, as well as providing employees with a greater sense of belonging, improved job satisfaction, loyalty, and morale. The ability to work well in teams is seen as a key personal attribute that is required when recruiting new professionals into a company.

Teams can take a number of forms, and the characteristics, expectations, and behaviors of participants can differ. Thomas and Inkson (2017) differentiate between three differ- ent types of work grouping, each with their own *modus operandi*:

1. Crews share the same work environment or leadership, but work relatively inde- pendently of each other.
2. Teams work in a collaborative manner, each integrating their specialist skills or knowledge into a speciﬁc process.
3. Task forces tackle a speciﬁc project or solve a speciﬁc problem for a speciﬁc period of time.

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However, even in a homogeneous environment, where all members of the group origi- nate from the same cultural setting, there are signiﬁcant challenges for management in ensuring that all groups are effective. The diversity of group members, with different knowledge, experience, expectations, and personality, creates a melting pot from which problems can arise. According to J. Richard Hackman (as cited in Couto, 2009), the research shows that teams frequently underperform because of the challenges of moti- vation and coordination that make group collaboration ineffective.

When the additional complexity of group members originating from different cultural backgrounds is added to this **melting pot**, the challenge of effective intercultural team- work can be profound.

###### Introduction to Intercultural Teamwork

Even in a domestic setting, diversity and multicultural issues present a key challenge in the management of teams. This challenge is further intensiﬁed when working in an international setting where teams are made up of participants originating from differ- ent countries, each with their own cultural needs and perspectives. The makeup of a multinational team and its elements of diversity create obstacles to performance, through difﬁculties in communication, team cohesion, decision-making, leadership, and motivation. It is essential, therefore, that the international manager is sensitive to these challenges and does not make the assumption that differences will automatically disappear with time.

Intercultural teamwork needs to be viewed as something of a long-term investment when compared to working in homogeneous teams. According to McFarlin and Sweeney (2017), homogeneous teams outperform intercultural teams in the early stages of their formation. However, evidence suggests that diverse teams outperform other teams over time because of the diversity in perspectives, knowledge, innovation, and behaviors (McFarlin & Sweeney, 2017).

###### Challenges of Intercultural Teamwork

A clear understanding of the dynamics of teams and how different cultures can impact the effectiveness of group work is essential in addressing the challenges of intercul- tural teamwork. McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) identify ﬁve broad areas that need to be addressed when managing intercultural teams and propose approaches for tackling them.

Decision-making

Difﬁculties can arise in teams where people have cultural norms and values that are different or are in conﬂict. This manifests itself in the decision-making process where different team members may have different perspectives on the process. McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) cite the example of Americans who, being individualistic, want deci- sions to be made quickly, with the ability to modify them later, so that rapid progress can be made, and time can be used efﬁciently. On the other hand, team members from

Melting pot

A melting pot refers to a situation where different people or ideas are mixed together.

collectivist cultures, such as Japan and Korea, may wish to ensure that sufﬁcient time is spent gaining input from all colleagues in order to gain consensus before a decision. A German team member will expect to be provided with all the supporting details and background information before making a decision. The result of such differences in approach can be destructive, causing team members to become frustrated and in con- ﬂict with each other, all contributing to the decreased effectiveness of the team.

McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) propose the approach of adaptation as being the most suitable method of tackling decision-making problems, especially where there is some awareness amongst the team of their cultural differences in approach. The authors give the hypothetical example of an American-Japanese team, where always making deci- sions quickly would be difﬁcult for the Japanese, while wasting time gaining group con- sensus over every decision would be intensely frustrating for the Americans. An adap- tive approach would lead to compromise, whereby moving quickly might be the best approach in some cases, but a consensus-based approach might be more productive in others.

Hierarchy

In a multicultural team there are frequently differences in perspective over status and hierarchy within the team related to the power-distance dimension of culture. Team members from low power-distance cultures (e.g., Australia, the UK) expect everybody in the team to be treated as equals, while those from higher power-distance cultures (e.g., Korea, Japan) may be more comfortable when there is a clearly deﬁned hierarchy and where they can defer to those who have more status. Such a clash of expectations over hierarchy can be destructive to the effectiveness of the team, resulting in anger and embarrassment, and the loss of credibility for some members of the team. McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) describe how Australian colleagues might see the Korean colleague’s deference to status as a sign of weakness or indecision.

McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) propose the approach of management intervention as being the most suitable method of tackling issues relating to hierarchy. In these situa- tions, where teamwork has broken down and there is negativity and conﬂict within the group, it is appropriate for management to intervene and to give guidance and direc- tion on how to proceed. While being a short-term measure, because the ultimate goal is for teams to be able to solve their own problems and issues, swift intervention pre- vents problems getting out of control and helps to develop new values and norms within the team as a result of having resolved the problem. The authors give the hypo- thetical example of a newly constructed team of Australian and Malaysian marketing professionals. Where conﬂict arises because of differences in power distance, the man- ager might intervene and bring the team together to reiterate that they were all on the same team because of their capabilities as marketing professionals. Discussion and concern over status and rank in the organization should be ignored and the team should assume no differences in status, position, or power while working together as a group.

Focal Points of Intercultural Management

Communication

Where teams are made up of persons from low- and high-context cultures, there are likely to be difﬁculties arising from different styles and expectations for communication within the group. In low-context cultures (e.g., Germany), participants expect to use and hear direct and precise views, opinions, and feedback. In high-context cultures (e.g., Indonesia), where there is a greater focus on collectivism and the group, communica- tion is likely to be less direct or precise with messages being delivered implicitly rather than explicitly. Such a clash of communication styles is likely to result in frustration and potential conﬂict. The German team member will be irritated and confused by the lack of clear and precise information being provided by Indonesian colleagues. The Indonesian team member may react negatively to direct and speciﬁc feedback, feeling threatened, blamed, and embarrassed by the confrontational nature of the communi- cation.

McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) propose the approach of structural intervention as being the most suitable method of tackling issues relating to explicit versus implicit commu- nication styles. In this approach, the manager makes changes to the way the team works or is structured in order to minimize the impact of conﬂicts or tensions arising from communication differences. They give the example of creating subgroups to work on speciﬁc tasks or solve particular issues that cannot be tackled by the group in its entirety. This needs to be done sensitively so as not to exacerbate the issue by creating isolation or the forming of groups within the larger group.

Language barriers

An obvious source of potential difﬁculty lies in the different language capabilities of the members of the team and the operating language. Those members of the team who are less ﬂuent in the operating language are likely to feel alienated, frustrated, and incompetent because they are less able to impart their knowledge or opinions on the rest of the group. Debray and Spencer-Oatey (2019) examined the impact of language deﬁciencies on participant positioning. Often, they found that the least proﬁcient speaker was perceived as different, difﬁcult, unwilling to speak, and even incompetent. Their language difﬁculties were often overlooked as a reason for lack of engagement. Eventually, less proﬁcient speakers become marginalized in team interactions, such as group meetings, and effectively silenced. When the less proﬁcient speaker did attempt to contribute, their efforts were often either ignored or treated with little interest. Even when their knowledge was critical to the success of the group, they were passed over for roles and responsibilities. In other words, the marginalization of team members goes beyond their difﬁculties with the operating language of the group.

McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) propose an exit approach as being the most suitable method of tackling issues relating to language barriers. If team members have become marginalized and are unable to play a signiﬁcant role in the team, exacerbated by the frustration and perceptions of other team members, there may be no other viable option than to remove those members from the team. This is not an easy situation for the manager, but the impact of having team members who cannot participate fully and have negative experiences within the group is ultimately detrimental to the effective- ness of the team.

Social loaﬁng

Social loaﬁng (sometimes referred to as the Ringelmann effect) is the term used to describe the phenomenon where group work is sometimes poorly executed because individual team members put in less effort or commitment to the endeavors of the group than if they were working on their own. The belief is that the group will somehow compensate for the lack of their individual effort: The work will get done by the group, so the individual does not need to worry about it. Social loaﬁng is linked to the level of commitment or investment that individuals have to the group and to the task in hand (Caffrey, 2018).

The extent to which social loaﬁng is a potential issue for teams is linked to cultural perspectives about working in groups or teams. McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) report that studies in the US reveal that people are generally less productive when they are working in a group than if they are working alone. This resonates with the idea of the US being an individualistic culture. But, collectivist cultures, such as Japan, do not appear to have such a signiﬁcant issue with social loaﬁng, although there are differen- ces depending on the nature of the group involved. While Japanese workers tend to function better in groups than on their own, performance is markedly better when working in “in-groups” (those to which the worker feels higher levels of attachment) than in “out-groups” (groups which feel less important, and which have lower levels of attachment).

The incidence of social loaﬁng is an important issue for intercultural teamwork, espe- cially since it is often difﬁcult to distinguish from a number of the other issues descri- bed above. McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) suggest, as a starting point, that any team members originating from collectivist cultures need to be organized around existing in- groups, to beneﬁt from already existing attachments and commitments. For partici- pants originating from individualistic cultures, the issue is more challenging, although experience with working in teams in countries continues to be more common.

###### Effective Management of Intercultural Teams

In a multinational working environment, managers need to be able to respond effec- tively to the challenges of managing the intercultural team. While this response can be reactive, dealing with problems or issues as they arise, it is prudent to consider poten- tial issues when considering the formation of teams and their participants. McFarlin and Sweeney (2017) provide a number of guidelines for the formation and management of intercultural teams.

People

Consider carefully the makeup of the team, selecting people who, in addition to the appropriate skills and abilities, show cultural intelligence, bringing a sensitivity to diversity and different perspectives to the team.

Focal Points of Intercultural Management

Cultural differences

Make differences in culture a feature of the team that people are encouraged to embrace and appreciate. Support the team on their journey to greater cultural under- standing, being open and transparent about how cultural differences can beneﬁt the team.

Vision and mission

Spend time clarifying the vision and mission of the team before the team begins to operate. This means that any previous discrepancies in understanding or expectations resulting from cultural background can be minimized.

Power and status

Be especially sensitive to different perspectives toward power and hierarchy on the team. This means avoiding the creation of power and status gaps or overlaps on the team. This is especially important if there is representation from the parent company in the team, which can create an imbalance of power or deferment from others that reduces the effectiveness, contribution, and creativity of the team.

Feedback

Overcome the difﬁculty that intercultural teams have in agreeing because of their dif- ferent frames of references and evaluation criteria by providing regular feedback to the team and individuals on it. The aim is to create a shared set of criteria and perspec- tives for making decisions, considering ideas, and being innovative.

Training

Often where there is a perceived problem or challenge ahead, the management response is to hold trainings. While intercultural and diversity training might be of ben- eﬁt, the response to training and the person giving the training will also vary depend- ing on the cultural perspectives of the person being trained. Krawczyk-Bryłka (2016) describes the importance of building trust as a critical factor in the effectiveness of intercultural teams. She identiﬁes ten dimensions of trust, split up into short-term and long-term categories. Short-term dimensions are based on initial impressions and impacting initial levels of trust:

1. Competence. This is the conﬁdence in the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the other members of the group.
2. Openness. This is the conﬁdence that all information will be shared in an open and proactive manner.
3. Integrity. This is the conﬁdence that each of the people in the team will fulﬁll their responsibilities and commitments and operate with integrity and reliability.
4. Reciprocity. This is the conﬁdence that others have the same levels of trust in us as we have in them.

Long-term dimensions involve deeper levels of trust built up over time as a result of positive experiences in the team. These beliefs are as follows:

* 1. Compatibility. Everyone in the group is working to the same set of objectives and has the same underlying set of values and criteria for reaching them.
  2. Goodwill. Everyone in the team cares about each other’s needs, issues, problems, or emotions.
  3. Predictability. Everyone in the team can be relied on because their behavior is con- sistent and adheres to a known set of principles of values.
  4. Well-being. Everyone in the team is secure and safe, and there is no need to be afraid of anybody else in the group.
  5. Inclusion. Everyone in the team is equal and is treated equally, and everyone is important in order for the team to complete its objectives.
  6. Accessibility. Personal relations can be built with any other members of the team and everyone is comfortable sharing personal information with others.

The manager can be proactive in ensuring that the short-term trust needs of the team are put in place as far as is possible before the team begins to function. However, the longer term, deeper elements of trust are largely built up by the team themselves as they experience working together.

This list mirrors the ﬁndings of research into the development of intercultural compe- tence indicating the relatively minimal impact of training people in advance. Rather, intercultural competence develops as a result of participating in intercultural interac- tion itself (Bartel-Radic, 2006). Intercultural teams effectively become communities of practice that develop the competencies required to make themselves effective. Both the positive and negative experiences of working in an intercultural team contribute to the development of intercultural competence.

Neeley (2014) discusses the manager role in the development of intercultural teams and intercultural competence, describing the manager as both an instructor (mentor, coach, or teacher) and a facilitator to promote intercultural awareness and understand- ing in the team. As a facilitator, the manager serves as a “cultural broker or intermedi- ary“ (para. 8), helping team members to interpret differences and resolve misunder- standings, acting as an intermediary to enable team members to develop their intercultural understanding and competence.

Zusammenfassung

The combination of business ethics and corporate governance makes a signiﬁcant contribution to a business and how it decides to function. Corporate governance represents a set of standards and guidelines that a business implements in order to protect and inform the various stakeholders of a company. Business ethics, in turn, provide the norms, values, and ethical principles that the business intends to follow in pursuing its business interests. Both closely align with the cultural context in which they operate and differ from one country to another, depending on cul- tural characteristics. Traditionally, two approaches are followed: cultural universal- ism and cultural relativism.

Focal Points of Intercultural Management

Business communication is heavily inﬂuenced by the situational context, with dif- ferent cultures ascribing different expectations, norms, and meanings to different communication contexts. The greater the differences between the cultures involved, the more likely that the meaning and intent of the communication will be misun- derstood or misinterpreted. Intercultural managers, therefore, need to be aware of “cultural noise” in order to optimize communication and reduce misunderstanding.

The challenge of managing teams is signiﬁcant when working in an international setting where teams are made up of participants, with their own cultural needs and perspectives. The makeup of a multinational team and its elements of diversity cre- ate obstacles to performance, through difﬁculties in communication, team cohe- sion, decision-making, leadership, and motivation. It is essential, therefore, that the international manager is sensitive to these challenges and does not make the assumption that differences will automatically disappear eventually. Instead, the manager needs to serve as a broker, helping team members to interpret differences and resolve misunderstandings, and acting as an intermediary to enable team members to develop their intercultural understanding and competence.



# Lektion 6

## Intercultural Management in Selected Countries

#### LERNZIELE

Nach der Bearbeitung dieser Lektion werden Sie in der Lage sein, ...

… recognize the characteristics of doing business in Germany.

… recognize the characteristics of doing business in the US.

… recognize the characteristics of doing business in China.

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1. Intercultural Management in Selected Countries

### Aus der Praxis

Charlotte Patel is a newly promoted product manager at a large multinational pharma- ceuticals company based outside of London, England. She has been given responsibility for the global launch of a new skin treatment product and has been tasked with visiting the subsidiary ofﬁces in Germany, the US, and China to discuss the appropriate imple- mentation plans for each country. This will be Charlotte’s ﬁrst major overseas visit in her new role as product manager. She has never conducted business in these countries before, and as a newcomer to the company, she has few contacts in these locations. She speaks a little French and has no language skills in German or Mandarin.

Understandably nervous about the challenge ahead, Charlotte sits down at her desk to prepare for her trip and for her ﬁrst meetings with her overseas counterparts. Her boss has mentioned that she needs to be sensitive to the cultural differences she is likely to encounter. Charlotte considers the following:

* + What are the key differences in business culture that she is likely to encounter in each of the three countries?
  + How will her presence as a female product manager be received in each of the three countries?
  + Should she bring a gift with her? If so, what?

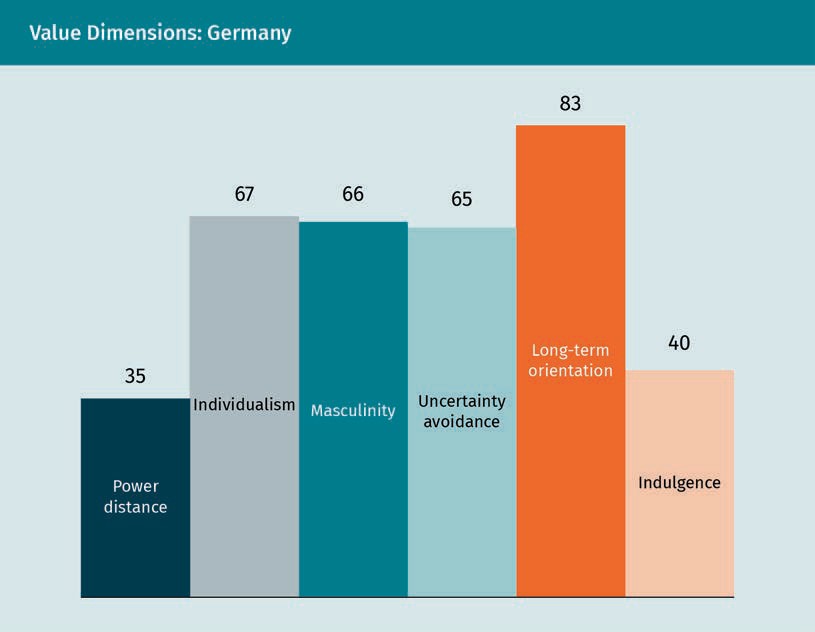
### Germany

Germany has enjoyed remarkable success as a business force in the global economy over the last 50 years. As Europe’s most populated (82 million people) and most indus- trialized nation, Germany has emerged as Europe’s leading economy, as well as the driving political force behind the European Union. Germany is one of the most success- ful economies on the international stage (it is in the top three trading nations), with 50 percent of its annual GDP generated through exports (KPMG, 2021). This success has been achieved largely on Germany’s own terms, with little evidence of the country hav- ing followed the business management theories and practices of the US or UK. This means that doing business in Germany requires an understanding of the speciﬁc cul- tural characteristics that underpin the German business environment.

###### Dimensions of Culture

The website Hofstede Insights (n.d.) provides a summary of Germany’s scores on Hof- stede’s six dimensions of culture. These provide a useful starting point for an under- standing of German business culture, especially when used in a comparative manner against other cultures. These scores are, of course, generalizations and do not reﬂect the variation observed within the country itself.

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|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hofstede’s Value Dimensions—Germany | | |
| Dimension | Score | Description |
| Power distance | 35 | * Among the lower power distance countries, reﬂec- ted in the nature of society as being largely decen- tralized. * Management needs to consider the right of workers to participate and to be involved in decision-mak- ing. * Respect for expertise and knowledge, rather than leadership through control. |
| Individualismus | 67 | * An individualistic society, with a strong belief in self-improvement and self-actualization. * Duty and responsibility are important, as reﬂected in employment contracts. * Communication is direct. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dimension | Score | Description |
| Masculinity | 66 | * A masculine society in which performance is impor- tant from an early age, and where individuals gain self-esteem from their achievements, often reﬂec- ted in status symbols, such as cars, jewelry, clothing, and devices. |
| Uncer- tainty avoid- ance | 65 | * Avoids uncertainty, and prefers logical, deductive reasoning. * Reﬂected in the need for detailed, well-thought-out proposals and decision-making, and respect for expertise. |
| Long-term ori- entation | 83 | * A pragmatic country where situation, context, and time, rather than history, are important in decision- making. * Detailed decision-making, the propensity to save, and a determination to achieve the ﬁnal result. |
| Indulgence | 40 | * Restrained in nature, work comes ﬁrst, and self- indulgence is frowned upon. * Social norms have a strong inﬂuence. * Tend toward negativity or cynicism. |

###### Business Organizations

Supervisory board This group of indi- viduals is selected by shareholders to represent their inter- ests in the gover- nance of the com- pany and to hire key

executives.

The top levels of German organizations tend to concentrate power and inﬂuence among a relatively small number of individuals through the **supervisory** and manage- ment boards. However, beneath board levels, the well-deﬁned roles and responsibili- ties of individuals within a rigid hierarchy tend to deﬁne their relative level of inﬂuence within the business organization. German business organizations tend to be character- ized by a formal structure that is governed by clearly deﬁned and well-understood pro- cesses, procedures, and regulations. This means that everybody knows their place and what is expected of them to achieve their individual and collective objectives. This rigidity, however, can lead to inﬂexibility and the inability to react or adapt quickly to change (Global Business Culture, n.d.-b).

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###### Management and Leadership

The low power distance score for Germany indicates that knowledge, expertise, and qualiﬁcations are the most highly valued professional attributes, so management and leadership roles tend to lie in the hands of technical experts (e.g., engineers) rather than management generalists or legal and accountancy professionals. Staff respond best to leadership based on their respect for the technical ability of the leader, inﬂu- encing the extent to which employees are willing to cooperate. Less technically compe- tent management can experience difﬁculties when employees feel they are not quali- ﬁed to lead. Education is valued highly as a mark of expertise and Germans are positive about revealing their qualiﬁcations and any professional titles (e.g., Doctor) they pos- sess. Employees are unlikely to contradict their superior in public, out of deference to their technical expertise.

Management expects their employees to be competent, professional, and hard-work- ing. These attributes are usually the key factors considered when appraising the per- formance of staff, rather than the wider set of soft skills often valued in the US and UK performance management systems. The relationship between management and staff can be perceived as somewhat formal, cold, and impersonal; close, personal relation- ships are an exception. German staff do not expect to be micro-managed, preferring instead to be allowed to be able to carry out and complete their tasks without undue intervention. Responsibility is largely delegated by the manager to the member of staff who has the most appropriate technical expertise for the given task. Instructions need to be clear, exact, and devoid of any ambiguity.

German management and leadership positions tend still to be dominated by men, with progress in gender equality falling somewhat behind the progress seen in other Euro- pean nations. This is perhaps a reﬂection of the preference for leaders having high lev- els of technical expertise and the accompanying shortfall in the number of females studying these subjects at university. However, Germany is making some progress in closing the gender inequality gap, and European regulations on gender equality in the workplace are likely to support continued progress in this area (Global Business Cul- ture, n.d.-b).

###### Communication

As indicated in Hofstede’s (1980) six dimensions of culture, the combination of low power distance and high uncertainty avoidance has clear implications for effective communication in the German business setting. The German persona is often stereoty- ped as lacking in any sense of humor. This is not the case; rather, Germans are sensi- tive to the right time and place for the use of humor. In a business setting, communica- tion is seen as a serious matter and is business-like in style. In a social setting, Germans have a very keen and distinct sense of humor. Germans are often perceived as being somewhat cold and devoid of emotion. However, this is because visible signs of emotion, such as anger, impatience, or frustration, are seen as signs of being unprofes- sional or of being weak and are therefore to be avoided. Communication style in Ger-

many can often be misinterpreted as blunt, arrogant, and even rude, because Germans prefer a direct and precise mode of communication based on facts and relevant infor- mation rather than emotion, vagueness, or opinion. Such a direct approach to commu- nication is perceived as business-like and respectful because it is focused on deter- mining the best solution rather than meeting an individual agenda or need. The expectation is that everything that is written or said can be trusted and veriﬁed. Ger- mans appreciate being given information in writing and view this as more trustworthy or reliable than information transmitted verbally. Important communication should always be conﬁrmed in writing so that it is put on record (Global Business Culture, n.d.- b).

###### Decision-Making

Low power distance and high uncertainty avoidance mean that decisions are made in Germany with the input of all the interested parties and based on full disclosure of information required. Germans can feel uncomfortable with ambiguity or uncertainty. This can make decision-making a long, drawn-out process with Germans rarely willing to go forward with a decision that is based on a whim or intuition. However, once a decision is made, the group will move forward with commitment to reaching that objec- tive, even if they disagreed with the original decision.

When preparing to make decisions, Germans will carry out fact-ﬁnding and research in advance so that they already have a clear picture of the best approach before any deci- sion-making meeting. It is important that they are given the opportunity to articulate their perspective, supported by information that they have researched and prepared in advance. Being put on the spot for a quick or immediate response is not something that is welcomed by the German participant (Global Business Culture, n.d.-b).

###### Meetings

The need to be aware of all the facts and pertinent information means that Germans will typically attend meetings fully prepared and ready to discuss their position with full supporting evidence. When being provided with information or being given a pre- sentation in a business meeting, attendees will expect to see full detail and evidence if they are to give that information any kind of credibility.

German meetings often include a large number of attendees because it is important that the appropriate specialists from every impacted area have been able to give their input. Deference is given in meetings to the expert on a particular topic. Discussion and debate, in keeping with German communication style, is often direct and strong rather than diplomatic, to the extent that it can be misinterpreted by outsiders as confronta- tional or argumentative. The concept of compromise is not necessarily welcomed because it implies uncertainty, weakness, or a lack of a clear decision. Meetings are not the forum to discover personal opinions or emotions. These are best discovered on a one-to-one basis outside of the meeting, in an informal setting. Because time is pre-

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cious, it is imperative to be punctual to meetings so as not to waste any of the valuable time of other participants. It is also important not to waste time in the meeting with irrelevant discussion or small talk (Global Business Culture, n.d.-b).

###### Teamwork

The concept of the team as a group collective is not consistent with the individualistic characteristic of German culture. Rather, teams are better viewed as the grouping of individuals, each with their own speciﬁc skills, area of expertise and roles, who each work for a speciﬁc leader in meeting the speciﬁc team objectives. The manager of the team is responsible for leading the team toward the objective, but is not expected to intrude on the technical ability of the employee when performing their individual tasks.

This approach works well when teams are constructed within speciﬁc functional areas or departments, but it can create difﬁculties or misunderstandings when team mem- bers originate from different departments. In these circumstances, the employee may experience a conﬂict with their position in their departmental hierarchy and the nor- mal rules and conventions of working, and may feel the need to defer back to their superiors back in their original department or function. This is because each depart- ment in an organizational hierarchy wishes to protect its own power base, so any rele- vant information is expected to go through that department (not via a single person in isolation) (Global Business Culture, n.d.-b).

###### Business Etiquette

There are a number of useful guidelines for some of the more speciﬁc aspects of busi- ness culture in Germany.

Dress code

German business attire tends to be smart but not overly formal, with business suits rel- atively uncommon. Men tend to wear sports jacket and trousers, with shirt and tie restricted to more formal business situations. Women tend to wear smart casual attire. In some circumstances, business attire is even less formal with the wearing of jeans. In whatever circumstance, however, Germans take pride in dressing well (Passport to Trade 2.0, n.d.).

Introductions

A short and ﬁrm handshake is the normal form of greeting when meeting a German for the ﬁrst time in the business setting. Eye contact is also expected. Given the German pride in education and qualiﬁcations, it is customary to refer to them with their correct academic salutation (e.g., Doctor) as a mark of respect (Kwintessential, n.d.).

Business entertaining

Most business entertaining takes place at lunchtime at a restaurant or in the company cafeteria, because Germans place a clear distinction between their work and home lives. It is rare to be invited to a business associate’s home for dinner. The host for lunch is expected to pay for the meal. Conversation is expected to cover a mixture of business and non work-related subjects (Global Business Culture, n.d.-b).

Language

Germans expect to conduct business in German in their own country. Where necessary, German professionals can conduct business in English, especially if conducting busi- ness abroad, although as many as 65 percent of German employees indicate that they have little or no knowledge of English. Managers are likely to be more proﬁcient in Eng- lish than other employees, but it cannot be taken for granted that Germans will be comfortable participating in business communication and meetings in English (Expan- sion.eco, n.d.).

Gifts

Germans follow similar conventions for gifts as the rest of Europe, where it is relatively uncommon in a business context. Business meetings tend to focus on the business subject-matter and less on relationship building, including the giving of gifts. On social occasions, however, gifts may be appropriate but the expectation is that they are not excessive or overly personal. The nature of the gift must not be misconstrued as con- stituting a favor or bribe to do business. It is the convention that gifts are opened immediately when they have been received (Passport to Trade 2.0, n.d.).

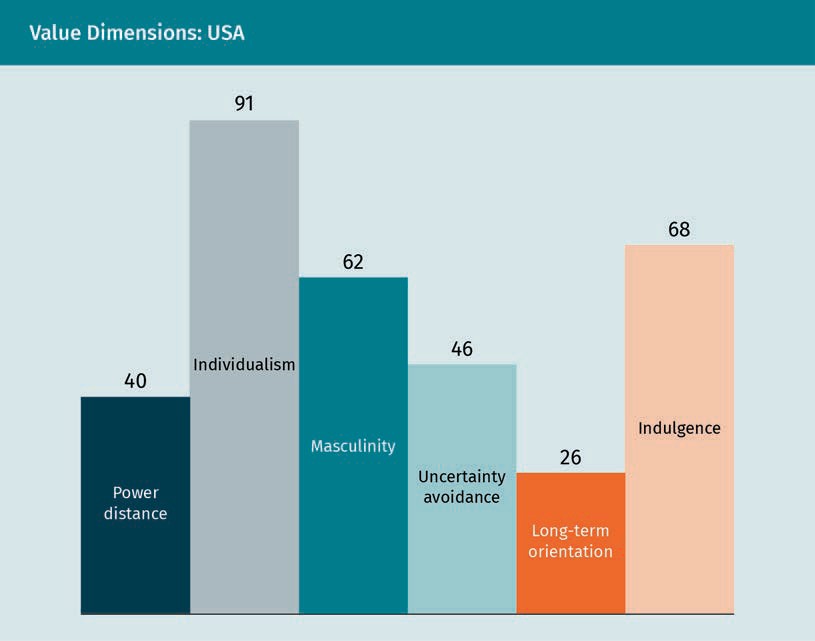
### The United States

The US remains the world’s largest economy with extensive multinational links with other trading nations, including Europe and the emerging economic nations. With a population of over 320 million, the US exerts considerable inﬂuence over consumer wants and needs, both at home and across the globe. Much of evolving business man- agement theory, promoting a scientiﬁc approach to business practices, emanates from the US business schools. The search for better ways of doing things has created a con- stantly changing business environment, with a need for businesses to continually adjust and adapt to new methods and practices.

###### Dimensions of Culture

Hofstede Insights (n.d.) provides a summary of this country’s scores on Hofstede’s six dimensions of culture.

Intercultural Management in Selected Countries



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| Hofstedeʼs Value Dimensions—USA | | |
| Dimen- sion | Scor | e Description |
| Power dis- tance | 40 | * A relatively low score implying lower power distance, reﬂect- ing the ideal of justice and equality for all. * Hierarchy and structure are only implemented if they serve a purpose. * Management and employees communicate openly with each other. |
| Indi- vidual- ism | 91 | * An individualistic society, with an emphasis on the Ameri- can dream, whereby everybody can achieve, and progres- sion is based on merit. * People are expected to be able to look after themselves and not rely on others for support. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dimen- sion | Scor | e Description |
| Mascu- linity | 62 | * A masculine society where achievement and winning are important, and individuals are keen to show off their achieve- ments. * Competition and confrontation are seen as positive and likely to bring out the best in people. |
| Uncer- tainty avoid- ance | 46 | * A relatively low score, indicating a willingness to adapt to new ways of doing things, and tolerance for the opinions of others. * Not based on rules and bureaucracy, and decisions often made based on instinct rather than facts. |
| Long- term orienta- tion | 26 | * A low score indicating a focus on the short-term, get- ting things done, and achieving fast results. * Normative rather than pragmatic, with a strong sense of “good versus evil”. |
| Indul- gence | 68 | * Indulgent in nature, with a “work-hard, play-hard" mentality. * A contradiction exists within American culture, whereby strong social norms (beliefs about what is good and what is evil) clash with the desire for personal gratiﬁcation. |

These six dimensions of culture can be recognized clearly when examining the Ameri- can business environment in more detail.

###### Business Organizations

American businesses can take a wide variety of forms and structures, but they share the characteristic of having separate legal identity (independent of employees). The relationship between the company and its people therefore tends to be contractual and transactional, so that there is less room for the sentiment and relationship seen in more collectivist cultures. American employees take their work seriously and work hard. This means that they generally work long hours (on average 20 percent more) and enjoy only a small amount of vacation time each year compared to their European counterparts (BBC StoryWorks, n.d.).

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At the top of the organization, there is usually a board of directors, but their involve- ment tends to be hands-off. This means that the chief executive ofﬁcer (CEO) exercises a great deal of control over the running of the organization, and the inﬂuence of their personality can be highly signiﬁcant. The CEO often holds celebrity status in American business circles, rather like the manager of a football team in sporting circles.

According to Global Business Culture (n.d.-c), respect is gained in the organization as a result of achievement, rather than traditional criteria such as age, qualiﬁcations, or background. Because of the transactional nature of the relationship between staff and the company, and in keeping with the individualistic nature of American culture, there is more likely to be frequent turnover of staff and long-term, stable employment is not an expected condition. The culture of constant change and evolution in American busi- nesses mean that employees are dispensable, and the acquisition of new skills, talent, and perspectives is important to the future success of the company (Global Business Culture, n.d.-c).

###### Management and Leadership

The extremely high individualism score for the US is reﬂected in the typical manage- ment style, where managers are clearly accountable for their areas of responsibility and for the results of any decisions that are made. For this reason, managers are less likely to seek consensus and agreement with staff, instead following their instincts in the knowledge that their personal success depends on the outcome.

The distribution of responsibility and accountability tends to be organized vertically, and it is important for the American employee to know exactly what the extent of their accountability and responsibility is, who they report to, who works for them, and where they lie in the larger scheme of things. The **litigation culture** in the US means that knowing the extent of one’s personal liability is important. The layers in the hierarchy are labelled with numerous job titles and descriptions that often give a false sense of power or importance to a position.

Americans see a clear distinction between management and leadership. Competent management of processes and organizational tasks is expected from anybody holding managerial responsibility, while inspirational leadership is expected from those in the top positions in the organization. The CEO and other senior management are expected to inspire, motivate, and drive the organization forward. They are not expected to be involved in day-to-day management of staff and processes.

Although gender inequality still exists in the US, especially when it comes to the most senior positions, women now occupy a large proportion of management positions, and the situation continues to improve. Political correctness and the equal treatment of women in the workplace are both important characteristics, and failure to adhere to these principles is perceived negatively (Global Business Culture, n.d.-c).

Litigation culture This term describes the increasing use of legal proceedings when attempting to settle a dispute.

###### Communication

American workplaces tend to be informal and less hierarchical than in less individual- istic cultures. The ﬁrst impression when meeting Americans in the workplace is that they are warm, friendly, and caring. Americans will frequently open a conversation with the question “how are you?”, but this can be confusing because they do not expect to be given a detailed answer. A response such as “I’m ﬁne thank you, and how are you?” is all that is required (BBC StoryWorks, n.d.).

This friendly, positive, upbeat manner is very much a social convention in the US and should not be misconstrued as an offer of friendship. Given their individualistic nature, this outwardly friendly demeanor can be seen as somewhat self-serving. Their ﬁrst pri- ority is to make the deal or agree on the approach, and they do not need to strike up a relationship in order to do this. Relationships therefore take longer to build, although being friendly and showing signs of being trustworthy are obviously seen in a positive light (Zachwieja, 2017). Moreover, it is customary for Americans to be comfortable with discussing their private lives in public. This can be uncomfortable and intrusive for those coming from more closed European or Asian cultures, especially when they are asked questions of a personal nature at an early stage of a professional relationship.

In contrast, in regular communication, it is normal for Americans to be direct and blunt, to the extent that they can appear to be either rude or confrontational. This reﬂects the attitude to time as being precious and not to be wasted, and therefore the need to “cut to the chase” and get to the point. Americans want to discuss and debate issues directly and openly, and indirect or implied messages are not welcomed. Conﬂict and confrontation in communication is perceived as a healthy, positive sign and does not mean that communication has broken down.

Ironically, given the dislike for indirect or coded language, Americans are very likely to use business jargon and the latest management terminology in their communication, usually to indicate their prowess or capability and the fact that they are keeping up with the times. This can sometimes make it difﬁcult to understand the real meaning of some communication.

Verbal communication is increasingly being replaced, with Americans being proliﬁc users of technology as a communication mechanism. Email and text messages reﬂect their direct communication style and are usually concise and direct in style without any unnecessary content (such as salutations or closing good wishes). This style is consis- tent with the desire for effective use of time, with messages being short, rapid, and efﬁ- cient, rather than being a sign of disrespect or rudeness (Global Business Culture, n.d.- c).

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###### Decision-Making

Although Americans like to discuss and debate issues, often in a lively and confronta- tional manner, the process of making decisions is not driven by the need for the input of all interested parties and for consensus to be reached. Ultimately, managers will take responsibility for making decisions in areas for which they are accountable. This might involve listening to the views of others when deciding on the best way forward, but this is not always the case. Decision-making goes with the responsibility of the job, as do the risks and rewards related to the outcomes of a particular decision. Decision- makers are not afraid to take a risk if there is the potential for a large payoff from the decision.

Compared to Germany, the USA has a lower uncertainty avoidance score. This means decisions are often made without every piece of information needing to be known and discussed. Instinct and **gut feeling** are often equally or more important, and it is nor- mal for an agreed approach or decision to be modiﬁed several times after it has ini- tially been formulated. It is more important to be moving forward and getting on with the task of ﬁxing a problem, rather than spending too long deciding what needs to be done (Global Business Culture, n.d.-c).

###### Meetings

Effective use of time is important, so Americans do not appreciate meetings that go off- topic or where it is unclear what point is being made. Punctuality is also important. The critical objective is to make a decision or agree on what steps need to be taken next, and this objective takes precedence over being diplomatic or ensuring everybody has their say (Global Business Culture, n.d.-c). Given the individualistic nature of Americans, meetings are an opportunity to demonstrate competence and impress others, and this is reﬂected in the expected quality of presentations and the way they are presented. Participants in meetings are expected to show enthusiasm, commitment, and open body language.

Americans generally feel uncomfortable when there is silence in a meeting so they will aim to ﬁll any silent gaps. They are also not afraid to ask for clariﬁcation when some- thing is confusing or unclear to them. According to Zachwieja (2017), not asking ques- tions implies that you are clear on everything, and not speaking in a meeting can imply either that you have nothing to contribute or that you are unprepared for the meeting.

###### Teamwork

The strong individualistic characteristic of American culture means that teams are viewed as groups of individuals brought together for a temporary period of time in order to meet a particular objective or deliver a particular project. Employees then

Gut feeling

A gut feeling is an immediate reaction or feeling that is not based on any partic- ular rational basis.

move on to new teams regularly. This is not seen as a problem for group loyalty or commitment, but rather just a feature of working life. The collective thinking and belonging that is observed in other more collectivist cultures is rarely seen.

When working as part of a team, an individual is under pressure to prove their worth and impress their colleagues. This means team members display high levels of enthusi- asm and commitment to the project. Team members do whatever is necessary to meet the objectives and ensure the project is a success, because a successful outcome will therefore reﬂect well on them. Negativity and cynicism among colleagues are not toler- ated (Global Business Culture, n.d.-c).

###### Business Etiquette

There are a number of useful guidelines for some of the more speciﬁc aspects of busi- ness culture in the US.

Dress code

Given the size of the country and the range of climates experienced, combined with the individualistic nature, it is extremely difﬁcult to provide general guidelines for appro- priate business attire. For men, anything from wearing formal business suits to casual shorts and T-shirts can be acceptable, depending on the company. The range of accept- able female attire is equally as wide. It is prudent to be prepared to dress for any even- tuality and to do research on dress code prior to doing business in an American com- pany (Global Business Culture, n.d.-c).

Introductions

A short and ﬁrm handshake is the normal form of greeting when meeting an American. As a culture who prefer to keep their physical distance, touching and standing close is otherwise kept to a minimum. It is customary to exchange business cards, and it is nor- mal to address each other on ﬁrst name terms right from the outset. Americans are usually warm and friendly on ﬁrst meeting, but this does not guarantee that the same levels of warmth will follow in subsequent meetings and negotiations (BBC StoryWorks, n.d.).

Business entertaining

Business entertaining can take place at any time of the day, including early morning breakfast meetings, although lunchtime is probably the favored time. Dinner can be as early as 5:30 p.m. Meals are seen as an accepted part of the business process, and it is usual for business topics to be the main focus of the conversation (although not exclu- sively). Much business is conducted and many agreements are made over the restau- rant table. It is also customary for business entertaining to occur at other events, such as sports games, concerts, or social events (Global Business Culture, n.d.-c.). Socializing with work colleagues, including visiting each other’s homes and meeting family, is com- mon and welcomed.

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Language

The variety of regional accents present across America can also create a challenge in understanding spoken language. Americans expect to carry out business communica- tion in English, even though more than 300 languages are spoken in the US. The lan- guage can be informal and can contain both references from popular culture (e.g., ﬁlm and TV), as well as business jargon and terminology.

Gifts

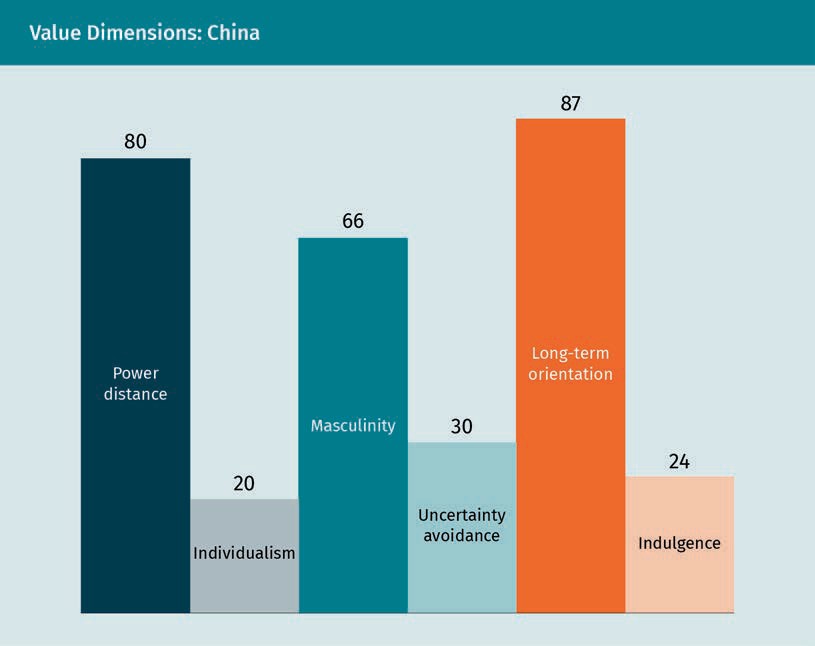
The giving and receiving of gifts in a business context is relatively uncommon in the US. In many contexts, it is actively frowned upon for employees to give or receive gifts (especially monetary gifts). Indeed, for government employees, it is forbidden to receive any gift at all, since this might be perceived as an enticement to do business (Global Business Culture, n.d.-c).

### China

China is now the world’s second largest economy with gross domestic product estima- ted to grow to 20.6 trillion USD by 2024 (Reynolds, 2021), having transformed itself into a new economic superpower that combines capitalism with traditional communist princi- ples. A massive population of potential consumers, a growing middle class population, an attraction to Western products and services, and a huge source of labor and produc- tion expertise for Western companies, have combined to make China an inevitable ave- nue of opportunity for multinational companies. But operating effectively with Chinese businesses requires a deep understanding of the unique combination of cultural val- ues that underpin that business environment.

###### Dimensions of Culture

Once again, we use Hofstede Insights (n.d.) as a starting point.



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| --- | --- | --- |
| Hofstedeʼs Value Dimensions—China | | |
| Dimension | Score | Description |
| Power distance | 80 | * China has a high power distance index score, reﬂecting the idea that inequality is an accepted fact of life, authority should be accepted, and that people should not aspire to climb above their rank. |
| Individualismus | 20 | * A highly collectivistic culture, where the interests of the group outweigh personal interests. * Personal relationships are more important than the company or the task being carried out. |

Intercultural Management in Selected Countries

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Dimension | Score | Description |
| Masculinity | 66 | * A masculine society where success is important, as reﬂected in the level of sacriﬁce people are willing to make on behalf of their employer. * Work-life balance and leisure time are unimportant compared to the pursuit of success. |
| Uncertainty avoidance | 30 | * A low uncertainty avoidance score, indicating that people are comfortable with ambiguity. * Adaptability is a key characteristic. |
| Hohe Langfristorientierung | 87 | * A high score indicating pragmatism and a belief that what matters depends on the context, time, and situation, adapting traditions as appropriate to ﬁt the context. |
| Indulgence | 24 | * A low score indicating restraint, often manifesting itself as pessimism or cynicism. * Self-indulgence is frowned upon, there is little focus on leisure time, and people exercise self- control. |

These six dimensions of culture are recognized when examining the Chinese business environment in more detail.

###### Business Organizations

Chinese society follows Confucian principles, so it is no surprise that business organi- zations reﬂect this in the hierarchical nature of organizational and operational struc- tures. Chinese businesses have rigid command structures and styles of management that must be respected and followed.

Although the traditional Communist regime has adapted, the underlying allegiance to a person’s work group, or *dan wei*, has remained, with workers feeling secure when pro- tected by the support mechanisms that their group provides. For this reason, it is difﬁ- cult for Western countries to set up operations in China that are new and unknown. Rather, it is more beneﬁcial to enter into joint venture arrangements with Chinese organizations in order to integrate effectively into the Chinese work environment and tap into the network of Chinese business relationships.

Personal relationships and personal connections (*Guanxi*) are essential when attempt- ing to do business in China, and the formation of a joint venture is the optimum way to develop these connections. The task of ﬁnding the most appropriate partner, however, is a signiﬁcant challenge and takes a long period of time to establish (Global Business Culture, n.d.-a).

###### Management and Leadership

Since culture is underpinned by Confucian philosophy, it is no surprise that inequality is an accepted feature of the Chinese business environment. Older employees are respected and honored by their younger colleagues, and senior colleagues are respec- ted by their subordinates, as a natural and automatic feature of business hierarchy. Notions of empowerment, consensus, equal opportunity, and freedom of access to information for all, are considered as negative features of the Western world.

In keeping with the strict hierarchical order, management style tends to be autocratic and directive, with orders and instructions being issued from the top and ﬂowing down the hierarchy into the organization without question or challenge. Indeed, any attempt to challenge the actions or directions from above would be considered disrespectful and would cause embarrassment and loss of credibility for the perpetrator. Although management styles in China are directive, they are also paternalistic, with the manager perceived as a father ﬁgure who takes a paternal interest in all aspects of the well- being of their family of subordinates. In return, the manager receives unquestioning loyalty and support.

A key inﬂuence in management structures in China remains the Communist Party. Often, senior managers are linked closely to the Party. As a result, business decisions are frequently subject to scrutiny by the Party before being conﬁrmed or rejected. Given the reliance on traditional management practices, combined with the huge growth and modernization of the economy, there is a critical shortage of contemporary manage- ment skills to move the economy forward. This means companies, including Western joint venture operations, are in ﬁerce competition to recruit and retain the best man- agement talent.

Although women ofﬁcially have the same workplace entitlements as mean, the con- cepts of equal rights and gender equality are somewhat contrary to the Confucian phi- losophy that underpins Chinese culture. However, according to Global Business Culture (n.d.-a), women occupy relatively senior positions in Chinese companies, and the con- tinued growth in their educational success means that they are likely to play an even more prominent role in the future. For a foreign woman doing business in China, she is likely to be treated with great courtesy and good manners. However, it is likely that the Chinese will assume that the senior person in a Western group is male, even if this is not the case (Global Business Culture, n.d.-a).

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###### Communication

The major initial stumbling block in communication with Chinese business associates is the language barrier. If you (or a representative of your company) are able to speak ﬂuent Chinese (Mandarin), then this is an advantage. Otherwise, business will need to be carried out via an interpreter or with an English-speaking representative of the Chi- nese organization. In both cases, there is a risk that meaning is lost or that the focus of the conversation switches to the translator, who may or may not be competent to act as an intermediary in your communication. This means that communication in China can be a long, drawn-out process with continual risk of misunderstanding. It is essen- tial, therefore, to go over key points of the communication multiple times to conﬁrm that there is shared understanding.

In keeping with much of Asia, the Chinese have a problem with saying “no,” because in Chinese culture this causes a loss of credibility and is therefore embarrassing. In situa- tions where the Chinese disagree, they are more likely to agree in a less convincing or powerful manner. This is the approach you should also take when wanting to disagree or refuse. The same reluctance is applied to the giving and receiving of negative mes- sages. Generally, it is prudent not to be too direct in communication and be willing to take time (through tact, diplomacy, and harmony) in order to meet your objectives.

While communicating, the Chinese can give the impression of lacking emotion and being unreceptive, but this is largely a misinterpretation of their natural understated style of body language. The likely rigid and unemotional response, coupled with a lack of animated visual clues, just make it more of a challenge to understand or decipher reactions and opinions from Chinese counterparts (Global Business Culture, n.d.-a).

###### Decision-Making

Decision-making in Chinese business culture is signiﬁcantly different to that observed in Western business cultures. Decisions are rarely made quickly, and making on-the- spot decisions to enable rapid progress is seen as either aggressive, unwise, or even foolish. The Chinese will insist on being given sufﬁcient time to consider their options carefully as a sign of respect and pragmatism, where all aspects of the situation and context need to be taken into consideration (ChinaWindow.com, n.d.). The pragmatism associated with the high score on the cultural value dimension of long-term orienta- tion means that Chinese decision-making can often mean looking at the bigger picture or context and considering a wider range of factors than in Western decision-making. The idea of a “quick win” is unusual in Chinese culture (Bizshifts-trends, 2012). Those with appropriate seniority and power make decisions. It would be seen as extremely disrespectful for a subordinate to agree to anything without ﬁrst consulting or defer- ring to their superior. By the same token, it would be seen as disrespectful to send a person to negotiate an agreement or make a decision who is not sufﬁciently senior in the organization.

The initial parts of the decision-making process are normally spent establishing the relationship, and discussion may not cover speciﬁc aspects of the subject under con- sideration. Only when the relationship is established and trust has been formed will Chinese counterparts be willing to discuss and commit to any decision or agreement. It is also uncommon for the actual decision to be made during a meeting. Instead, it is likely that consensus will need to be reached outside of the meeting, including a wide range of people (including potentially the Communist Party), before a decision can be announced.

###### Meetings

Meetings follow strict protocols for appropriate behavior, in keeping with the high- power distance culture, and based on deference and respect. It is essential to be aware of who you are meeting and the level of deference that needs to be shown in each case. This includes standing up when a person of seniority enters the room. Respect is due based on seniority, age, or education, but it should also be shown to all aspects of the company and Chinese culture. Making unwarranted references to Chinese history, the Communist Party, or human rights would be highly inappropriate and insulting to the Chinese.

Local representatives are likely to be somewhat wary of an outsider in their presence, so it is essential to be respectful of the group and show yourself to be honorable at all times. Earning the trust and respect of the group is the priority before any form of negotiation or discussion can take place. The concept of *Guanxi*, (personal relation- ships) is hugely important and should not be underestimated.

Meetings are often iterative in China and can often seem long and without clear objec- tives. With each meeting, the relationship will develop further and more information will be exchanged. Impatience or pushing the group will not yield results and will be seen as disrespectful or aggressive. Again, it is essential that you do not openly push or disagree with anybody in front of the rest of the group, since this causes great embar- rassment (Global Business Culture, n.d.-a).

###### Teamwork

Although China is a collectivist culture where loyalty to the group outweigh individual interests, this does not necessarily mean that Chinese employees thrive when working in teams. Loyalty to the in-group can cause a conﬂict of interest and divided loyalties when placed in another working group (an out-group). Often, the individual will feel the need to defer back to their in-group, rather than committing wholeheartedly to the objectives of their new team.

The respect for hierarchy and acknowledgement of inequality being a fact of working life means that working in a matrix-style structure where all members are equal, bring- ing their speciﬁc skills to a role within the group, can be confusing and difﬁcult. The

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expectation is that management is directive and that instructions should be followed without question. This goes against the Western notion of effective teams made up of individuals working with autonomy toward a collective goal.

A particular challenge is presented when one or more Chinese colleagues are members of an international team. Language barriers create an initial obstacle, but the cultural adaptation required to work in such a different way is even more challenging. Differen- ces in social customs, decision-making, communication, and hierarchy are potentially extreme. This is why most successful entries into the Chinese business environment have taken the form of joint ventures rather than joint teams, because this enables Chinese counterparts to continue to operate in their familiar working environment.

###### Business Etiquette

There are a number of useful guidelines for some of the more speciﬁc aspects of busi- ness culture in China.

Dress code

Respect and deference are important when doing business in China and this should be reﬂected in one’s manner of dress. The default should be smart, conservative business attire. Chinese business people have adopted suits and ties for men, skirts and blouses for women, and appearance is a reﬂection of one’s status and success. However, being ostentatious with one’s appearance can also leave the wrong impression.

Introductions

Introductions in China are formal and somewhat ritualistic in nature. It is convention to shake hands, but this should not be a ﬁrm or overlong handshake. It is seen as impo- lite to look the other person directly in the eye; instead, eyes should be lowered as a mark of respect. The exchanging of business cards is a key part of the ritual of initial introductions. Your business card should be printed in Chinese on one side, and when it is offered, it should be done so with the Chinese side facing upwards. The card you receive should be closely examined with reverence, being held in both hands and being treated with the same level of respect that you would give to the person. Not looking at the card and just putting it in your pocket would be seen as disrespectful.

Business entertaining

Building relationships with your Chinese counterparts is essential, and it is therefore no surprise that entertaining is an especially important part of the relationship-build- ing process. The Chinese enjoy introducing outsiders to their cuisine and are very happy to give guidance on what to eat and what to do. A Chinese banquet can be the experience of a lifetime, consisting of 20—30 dishes brought to the table over an exten- ded period. It is good manners to try some of every dish, but do not feel compelled to ﬁnish everything. An empty plate is a sign that you are still hungry so there is the dan- ger that another plate of more of the same will be brought to you. Eating habits and table manners in China are quite different to those experienced in Western countries. It is appropriate to show your appreciation for the food by belching or slurping. Smoking

in restaurants is commonplace and takes place even during the meal itself. Alcohol is also likely to be consumed in large quantities and excessive drinking is normal but there is a danger of losing credibility and respect if too much is drunk.

The seating plan will have been worked out in advance, based on status and hierarchy, so you should wait to be told where to sit. If you are hosting the meal, the seating plan needs to be carefully considered in advance so as to avoid insulting anybody by seat- ing them in an inappropriate position.

Language

The misunderstandings that originate from language difﬁculties are among the most signiﬁcant challenges that a business faces in China. It is not good practice to expect your Chinese counterparts to conduct business in English. This means it is good prac- tice to hire an interpreter who understands the subtleties of the Chinese language and culture. Attempting to say a few words in Mandarin is also a positive gesture and will be welcomed by your Chinese counterparts (MarketingtoChina.com, 2021).

Gifts

The giving and receiving of gifts in a business context is a part of the process and ritual of building the business relationship. The choice of gift is important and needs to be considered carefully. It cannot be something too expensive or ostentatious because this might be perceived as a form of bribery or corruption, which are criminal offenses in China. The gift should be a present to the whole group (not an individual) and should be wrapped. It will most likely not be opened in front of the person who gave it.

Zusammenfassung

The business cultures of Germany, the US, and China are signiﬁcantly different, yet evidence suggests it is possible for these important nations to work together in healthy business relationships.

On the value dimensions of culture, of particular note for Germany are the high degree of long-term orientation and the low degree of power distance. These char- acteristics manifest themselves in the need for detailed, well-thought out propos- als and decision-making, and the respect that is held for expertise, knowledge, and qualiﬁcations.

Americans, on the other hand, score very highly in the dimensions of individualism and indulgence, and very low in the area of long-term orientation. The concept of following the American dream, where everybody can achieve and progression is based on merit, creates a business environment where people are expected to be able to look after themselves. The focus is on achieving quick results from which individuals can gain instant credit, creating a decision-making process that is often short and impulsive, with frustration at too many obstacles or at over-analysis of facts. American employees take their work seriously and work hard.

Intercultural Management in Selected Countries

The Chinese score very highly on the dimensions of power distance and long-term orientation, and very low in the area of individualism. In the workplace authority, rank and status are highly respected and form a key feature in the formality of business communication and decision-making. As a highly collectivist culture, indi- viduals act in the interests of the group ﬁrst and the building of personal relation- ships is extremely important.



# Anhang 1

## List of References

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