RESEARCH ON 5-DIMENSIONAL CULTURAL MODEL IN THE REGIONS OF LATVIA

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Abstract

After joining the European Union the culture of organisation has started to occupy a very important position in Latvia as well. European nations have different traditions. For the purpose of the research the author has used a questionnaire of the Institute for Training in Intercultural Management, which had been adapted to Latvia. The following 5 dimensions were researched – Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), and Confucian Dynamism (CDI).

The aim of the scientific study is to investigate 5 dimensions of culture in the regions of Latvia. The main objectives of the study are to aggregate information, to do questionnaire survey, and to analyse the obtained results.

1894 residents of Latvia were involved in the questionnaire survey, including 1022 females and 872 males. The research covered residents of two nationalities – Latvians and Russians, and also their domiciles – Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale, Latgale, and Riga.

Power Distance (PDI = 31) indicator is low in Latvia, which means that hierarchy is for convenience and everybody has equal rights. Individualism (IDV = 45) indicator is also low in the country, which shows collectivism – people belong to in-groups. Masculinity (MAS = 29) is low, which means that femininity values are the dominant ones in the society. Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI = 37) is also low, which means that people do not show their emotions and they do not take risk. Confucian Dynamism (CDI = 25) is low, which shows that people expect quick results, and they are spending for today.

Keywords: organisation, culture, 5-dimensional cultural model.

Introduction

The aspect of the evaluation of the culture of organisation in the European Union has become topical with the accession of Latvia to the European Union (EU). Worldwide the Western culture is considered to be a single entirety, yet the researches show that nations have different traditions. For the purpose of the research the author has used a questionnaire developed by Dutch Institute for Training in Intercultural Management, which was translated into Latvian and adapted to the conditions of Latvia. Five dimensions were analyzed – Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), and Confucian Dynamism (CDI).

The aim of the research is to identify the cultural dimensions of the residents of Latvia by means of 5-dimensional cultural model.

The following objectives were established to achieve the set aim:
• to study and aggregate information on the culture of organisation;
• to survey the residents of Latvia by means of questionnaire;
• to summarise and analyse the obtained results of the questionnaire.

Materials and methods

The monographic or descriptive, statistic, synthesis, graphical, and analytical methods have been used for the purpose of the research. Literature comprising opinions of different authors on organisational culture, as well as the questionnaire developed by Dutch Institute for Training in Intercultural Management were applied in the research.

Culture can be defined as a system of norms, rules, abilities, values orientation, beliefs, and attitudes, which by means of a symbolic help transfers information to the society, and also performs the representative, directive, and affective functions. Organisational culture is a notion subordinate to the culture of society; since the organisation is a cell of the society, a part of a whole public relation.

Organisational culture is a relatively stable amalgamation of beliefs, values and social norms prevailing in an organisation, and which has established itself by strengthening an inner organisational integration and adjusting to the socio-economic environment. The mentioned beliefs, values and norms determine perception, way of thinking and feelings of the mem-
bers of an organisation with regard to the problems of internal integration and external adaptation, are reflected in the activities of organisation’s members and formation of organisational environment itself. Organisational culture also comprises such symbolic activities and elements as organisational myths, rites, ceremonies, style of leading, character of people’s interrelations, and organisational design (Stephen P. Robbin, Mary Coulter Management).

Basic functions of organisational culture:
Adaptation to the external environment
Organisational culture ensures:
• comprehension of a common organisational mission and strategy, and harmonization of targets for the implementation of the mission;
• common understanding and harmonization of target achievement measures (organisational structure, division of labour, system of encouragement, hierarchy of power);
• agreement on the criteria for the achievement of the set targets;
• agreement on the changes in organisational strategy, in case the elected targets turn to be unachieved.

Internal integration of an organisation, formation and strengthening of its identity
Organisational culture ensures:
• use of common language and terms in the organisation;
• criteria for the welcoming of people to the organisation, and their future professional and power career;
• code of conduct in relations with the management, colleagues, representatives of the opposite sex, etc.;
• system of awards and sanctions due to which every organisational member is aware of either award or sanction for his/her action;
• ideology and system of common values, which enables to distinguish between the desirable and undesirable in the organisation.

A person becoming a member of an organisation gradually masters organisational culture; this fosters his/her integration into a particular organisation. A manager has to master the style and behaviour correspondent to the culture governing in the organisation; otherwise his/her efficiency would be effective only in the sphere s/he has acted before. Mainly managers are those who form organisational culture by embodying the values necessary for a successful operation of the organisation.

Levels of organisational culture:
1. The basic level of an organisational culture is presumptions of people on:
   • external environment and attitude towards it;
   • reality, time and space, human nature;
   • nature of human relations. These notions lie in an unconscious sphere of a human psyche, and only speculative judgement on the mentioned notions is possible due to their indirect expression at the other levels.

2. The system of organisational values and social norms forms the second level.

3. The third level represents external manifestations of organisational culture:
   • visible human actions expressed through organisational rites and ceremonies;
   • appearance of people;
   • interior and design of an organisation.

Formation and significance of organisational culture
Many mutually related factors determine the formation of a particular organisational culture. The key factors are as follows:

Social environment. Organisational culture is not isolated; it is always incorporated into a wider cultural context characteristic to a certain geographic region. The common cultural context largely defines the core assumptions that form the basic level of organisational culture.

Economic situation. Market factors and the sphere of organisation’s activity play a significant role in the formation of organisational culture, where the impact of technological factors is considered to be special.

Concrete persons in an organisation. People are the actual carriers of organisational culture. The impact of socio-cultural and economic environment on organisational culture occurs through people in a mediated way. The ideas of organisational personnel about the norms and values of organisational behaviour develop under the impact of the common cultural context. Formal and informal leaders of the organisation play decisive role in the formation of organisational culture. Leaders of an organisation set the main organisational targets, ensure and promote the activities for the achievement of the set targets. Leaders with their personality and behaviour serve as model for other organisational members. Organisational culture is directly connected with organisational efficiency. It may be said that organisational efficiency depends on the power of organisational culture; therefore the manager shall pay attention to the investigation of organisational culture and to leading it into the desirable direction. However, a different opinion also exists: powerful cultures may advance organisational efficiency only in certain
conditions – uncertainty in economic situation, stability of the personnel, and fair system of remuneration.

Organisational culture is very significant for the introduction of innovations into an organisation. It may foster positive changes, yet it may also become obstacle to them. It is very difficult to alter already established organisational culture – it is a long and expensive measure. However, there are many situations when these changes are highly essential – fundamental changes in socio-cultural and economic environment, organisational inefficiency and noncompetitiveness, growth and expansion of an organisation.

Culture can also be defined as an expression of a collective mind (programming), which helps to distinguish one group or category of people from another. This programming influences the way of thinking, it reveals the manner people perceive different aspects of life. This way of thinking shows up in different public institutions. Yet it does not mean that the whole society is programmed identically; big differences shall be found among individuals and sub-groups of individuals. Not always the statements on culture describe the real situation. Cultural systems of nations and their subdivision are very complicated [Gert Jan Hofstede, 2005]. He has identified five dimensions of culture in his study of national influences:

- **power distance** – the degree to which the less powerful members of society expect there to be differences in the levels of power. A high score suggests that there is an expectation that some individuals wield larger amounts of power than others. Countries with high power distance rating are often characterised by a high rate of political violence. A low score reflects the view that all people should have equal rights. Latin American and Arab nations are ranked the highest in this category; Scandinavian and Germanic speaking countries the lowest.

- **individualism vs. collectivism** – individualism is contrasted with collectivism, and refers to the extent to which people are expected to stand up for themselves, or alternatively act predominantly as members of a group or organisation. Latin American cultures rank the lowest in this category, while the USA is the most individualistic culture.

- **masculinity vs. femininity** – refers to the value placed on traditionally male or female values. Masculine cultures value competitiveness, assertiveness, ambition, and the accumulation of wealth and material possessions, whereas feminine cultures place more value on relationships and quality of life. Japan is considered by Hofstede to be the most “masculine” culture, Sweden – the most “feminine”. The US and UK are moderately masculine.

- **uncertainty avoidance** – reflects the extent to which a society attempts to cope with anxiety by minimizing uncertainty. Cultures that scored high in uncertainty avoidance prefer rules (e.g. about religion and food) and structured circumstances, and employees tend to remain longer with their present employer. Mediterranean cultures and Japan rank the highest in this category.

- **long vs. short term orientation** – describes a society’s “time horizon”, or the importance attached to the future versus the past and present. In long-term oriented societies, thrift and perseverance are valued more; in short-term oriented societies, respect for tradition and reciprocation of gifts and favours are valued more. Eastern nations tend to score especially high here, with Western nations scoring low and the less developed nations very low; China scored the highest and Pakistan the lowest [Institute for Training in Intercultural Management, 1993].

### Description of the situation

The questionnaire developed by Dutch Institute for Training in Intercultural Management was used to do the research on organisational culture in Latvia. The respondents had to answer questions divided into 5 groups. Each group reflects one of the cultural dimensions.

### Results

The questionnaire encompassed a total of 1894 residents of Latvia, of which 986 were females and 908 males, all falling in the age group of between 20 and 58 years. Gender differences were not studied separately due to the limited scope of the research. The study focused on the differences by the place of respondents’ residence, displaying 5 regions.
The number of respondents by regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurzeme</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vidzeme</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zemgale</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latgale</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riga</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Valuation of 5 dimensions by the regions of residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>PDI</th>
<th>IDV</th>
<th>MAS</th>
<th>UAI</th>
<th>DCI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurzeme</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vidzeme</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
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</tr>
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<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latgale</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riga</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The comparison of the obtained valuations by the regions of residence shows that they are quite similar. The largest ranges of valuation are seen in the valuations of Individualism (IDV) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). It may lead to the conclusion that similar attitude of the population towards organisational culture is observed in the whole territory of Latvia (Table 2).

Residents were studied by nationalities: 1374 were Latvians and 463 were Russians. The remaining 57 residents were the representatives of other nationalities, and thus, being the cases of minority, were not studied individually.

Valuation of 5 dimensions by nationalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>PDI</th>
<th>IDV</th>
<th>MAS</th>
<th>UAI</th>
<th>CDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latvians</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The comparison of the valuation of 5 dimensions by the Latvians and Russians shows no substantial difference. Masculinity (MAS) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) (Table 3) are a little more important for Latvians. The author considers that the fact that the representatives of the two nationalities live in the same country explains the similarity of the results.

Valuation of 5 dimensions by countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>PDI</th>
<th>IDV</th>
<th>MAS</th>
<th>UAI</th>
<th>CDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>55</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>70</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<td>94</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>74</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>United States</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latvia*</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*the research done by the author
The comparison of the obtained five-dimensional valuations by the residents of Latvia with the results obtained by Dutch Institute for Training in Intercultural Management in the Baltic States shows that there is no substantial difference in the valuations; thus proving similar mentality among the population of the Baltic States. The comparison of the valuations in Latvia with those in other countries may lead to the conclusion that the cultural valuations differ. Diverse cultural perceptions and attitudes towards it expressed by the nations of the world may serve as the explanation for varied valuations (Table 4).

Latvia is a country with small Power Distance (PDI = 31), similar to Sweden and the United States of America. Individualism is weakly explicit in Latvia (IDV = 44), similar to the Eastern mentality (Russia and Ukraine). Masculinity (MAS = 30) valuation is also low, like in Sweden and other Baltic States. Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI = 36) is weakly expressed in Latvia, similar situation is also observed in Sweden and the United States of America. Confucian Dynamism (CDI = 25) was evaluated only in some countries, Latvia falls under the category of weak Confucian Dynamism, similar to Sweden and the United States of America (Table 4).

Conclusions

1. The comparison of the valuation of 5 dimensions by the Latvians and Russians shows no substantial difference. Masculinity (MAS) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) are a little more important for Latvians. The author explains the similar results by the fact that the representatives of both nationalities live in the same country. At Latvian universities Russian students study in Latvian groups and have integrated themselves into Latvian society.

2. The obtained results by regions are quite similar. The largest ranges of valuation are seen in the valuations of Individualism (IDV) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). The author concludes that similar attitude of the population towards organisational culture is observed in the whole territory of Latvia.

3. The comparison of the obtained five-dimensional valuations by the residents of Latvia with the results obtained by Dutch Institute for Training in Intercultural Management in the Baltic States shows that there is no substantial difference in the valuations; thus proving similar mentality among the population of the Baltic States.

4. Latvia is a small Power Distance (PDI = 31) country, being similar to Sweden and the United States of America, which means that the hierarchy exists for the sake of convenience, and all members of the society have equal rights. Individualism is weakly explicit in Latvia (IDV = 44), which tells about the expression of collectivism that is closer to the Eastern mentality – Russia, Ukraine, and India. Masculinity (MAS = 30) valuation is also low, like in Sweden and other Baltic States, which denotes the feminine society – caring for the incapable part of the society. Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI = 36) is weakly expressed in Latvia, which shows the desire to risk and hide emotions; similar situation is also observed in Sweden, India, and the United States of America. Confucian Dynamism (CDI = 25) was valuated only in some countries, Latvia falls under the category of weak Confucian Dynamism, being similar to Sweden and the United States of America, which tells about short-term orientation and expectations of quick results.

References

3. 2nd, revised edition 2005, with Gert Jan Hofstede.
Die Forschung des Kulturmodells von 5 Dimensionen in Lettlands Regionen

Resümee

Ziel der Arbeit ist, anhand des Modells von 5 Kulturdimensionen, die Kulturdimensionen von Lettlands Einwohnern festzustellen.

Zur Erreichung des Ziels, wurden folgende Aufgaben gestellt:

- Sich mit der Information über die Organisationskultur vertraut zu machen und die zusammenzufassen;
- Die Befragung unter Lettlands Einwohnern durchzuführen
- Die ergebenen, erzielten Ergebnisse der Befragung zusammenzufassen und zu analysieren.


Zusammenfassung. Nach dem Beitrag in die Europäische Union die Kultur der Organisation war sehr wichtig, auch in Lettland. Europäischen Staaten haben unterschiedliche Traditionen. Autor verwendet Fragebogen des Instituts für berufliche Bildung im interkulturellen Management, das für Lettland angepasst wurde. 5 Dimensionen wurden angesehen - Power Distance (PDI), Individualismus (IDV), Masculinity (MAS), Unsicherheitsvermeidung (UAI), konfuzianische Dynamik (CDI).

Das Ziel der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit ist auf 5 Dimension der Kultur in den Regionen von Lettland zu untersuchen. Aufgaben der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit sind die aggregierten Daten, nicht auf den Fragebogen und die Ergebnisse analysieren.


Es gab nicht allzu viele Unterschiede zwischen den Abmessungen von 5 Lettisch und Russisch Einwohner. Ähnliche Ergebnisse werden mit der Sache, dass diese beiden Völker, die im selben Land erklärt.

Es gab nicht allzu viele Unterschiede von 5 Abmessungen nach Einwohnern Sitz, was bedeutet, dass Menschen in Lettland haben ähnliche Haltung auch in Organisationskultur.


Es ist niedrig Power Distance (PDI = 31) in Lettland, die dieser Hierarchie bedeutet, wird aus praktischen Gründen und alle haben die gleichen Rechte. Es ist niedrig Individualismus (IDV = 45) in dem Land, das zeigt, Kollektivismus – Menschen gehören in-Gruppen. Masculinity (MAS = 29) ist gering, was die herrschenden Werte in der Gesellschaft Mittel Weiblichkeit. Unsicherheitsvermeidung (UAI = 37) ist ebenfalls gering, was bedeutet, dass Menschen nicht zeigen, ihre Gefühle und sie lassen sich nicht ein Risiko. Konfuzianische Dynamik (CDI = 25) ist gering, was zeigt, dass Menschen schnelle Ergebnisse zu erwarten, und sie sind die Ausgaben für heute.


Beim Vergleichen ergebenen Bewertungen von 5 Dimensionen über Lettland mit den von Niederlands Internationalen Managements Kultur forschenden Instituts ergeben Ergebnissen über Baltische Ländern, es ist zu sehen, dass diese Bewertungen unterscheiden sich nicht besonders, das weißt darauf, dass die Mentalität der Einwohner der Baltischen Staaten ähnlich ist.


Schlüsselwörter: Organisation, Kultur, Kulturmodell von 5 Dimensionen.