Cross-cultural Pragmatics. Cultural Orientations I & II. Handout


Chapter 2 (Cultural Differences in a Marketing Context: Value Dimensions) and Chapter 3 (Cultural Differences in a Marketing Context: Further Value Dimensions).

Websites
See also: [http://www.allbusiness.com/specialty-businesses/416564-1.html](http://www.allbusiness.com/specialty-businesses/416564-1.html)
[http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+Seven+ Cultures+of+Capitalism.-a019016009](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+Seven+Cultures+of+Capitalism.-a019016009)

**Culture - Hofstede (1991/2003)**

* Strong patterns of socialisation (not ethnic or civilisational clashes) – “Culture is learned, not inherited” (1991/2003:5). But these patterns are difficult to unlearn. Referring to the Austrian watchmaker in *Twelve Angry Men*: “After many years in his new home country, he still behaves the way he was raised. He carries within himself an indelible pattern of behaviour” (1991/2003:3).

Culture as mental programming: “As soon as certain patterns of thinking, feeling and acting have established themselves within a person’s mind, (s)he must unlearn these before being able to learn something different, and unlearning is more difficult than learning for the first time” (1991/2003:4). “A person’s behaviour is only partially predetermined by her or his mental programs: (s)he has a basic ability to deviate from them, and to react in ways which are new, creative, destructive, or unexpected” (*ibid.*).
Human nature/culture/personality (Hofstede 1991/2003:6):

Layers of culture – the ‘onion diagram’ (Hofstede 1991/2003:9):

**Symbols, Heroes and Rituals** (subsumed under Practices). **Values** are the core of cultures.

*Symbols*: “words, gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning which is only recognized by those who share the culture” (1991/2003:7). *Heroes*: “persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics which are highly prized in a culture, and who serve as models for behaviour” *(ibid.)*. *Rituals*: “collective activities, technically superfluous in reaching desired ends, but which, within a culture, are considered as socially essential: they are therefore carried out for their own sake” *(ibid.)*.

**Values**: “broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. … feelings with an arrow to it: they have a plus and a minus side” *(ibid.)*. They deal with the following *(ibid.)*: evil vs. good; dirty vs. clean; ugly vs. beautiful; unnatural vs. natural; abnormal vs. normal; paradoxical vs. logical; irrational vs. rational.

Value Dimensions (Jan Hofstede et al. 2002:40):
Five basic ‘problems’ of social life (Jan Hofstede et al. 2002, Chapter 2): Identity, Hierarchy, Gender, Truth, Virtue (also referred to as value dimensions)

Identity – the relationship between the individual and the group: “Collectivism can be seen as an adaptation to poverty and limited resources, and individualism, to wealth and ample resources” (2002:35).

Hierarchy – degree of inequality considered natural or acceptable in a society: “Large power distance is easier to maintain in a situation of poverty and limited resources” (2002:36).

Gender – gender roles and control of aggression: “An unequal role distribution between men and women coincides with a tougher society in which there is more emphasis on achievement and fighting than on caring and compromise” (2002:37). “If men and women are more equal, the result is more ‘feminine’ qualities within society as a whole. This is the reason why we call an equal role distribution between the genders in a culture Feminine and an unequal distribution, Masculine. Alternative names are care-oriented versus achievement-oriented. These names have the advantage of not being confused with male versus female, but they are less vivid” (2002:37).

Truth – uncertainty avoidance as opposed to uncertainty tolerance: “The basic problem is how people in a culture cope with the unpredictable and the ambiguous. It has to do with anxiety as a basic human feeling, or in other words with fear of the unknown” (2002:38).

Virtue – Long-term orientation vs. Short-term orientation; choice between future and present virtue: “Where Europeans and Americans are more concerned with truth, Asians are more concerned with virtue. Thus, to some extent the issues of truth and virtue are complementary in societies. Both are related to a society’s attitude toward time and traditions” (2002:39).

Synthetic cultures are “extreme manifestations of the value orientations of both ends of each dimension” (Jan Hofstede et al. 2002:91), giving rise to ten profiles.

Ten synthetic culture profiles (Jan Hofstede et al. 2002, chapter 3):

(1) Extreme individualism: Core value: individual freedom; Core distinction: me/others. Frequent use of I, making eye contact freely; measure the importance of others in terms of how useful they are. Both men and women are supposed to be adventurous. Words with positive connotation include I, me, pleasure, adventure, guilt, privacy, individual dignity, self-respect. Words with negative connotation include harmony, face, obligation, sacrifice, tradition, duty, shame, loyalty.

(2) Extreme collectivism: Core value: group harmony; Core distinction: ingroup/outgroup. Direct confrontation avoided. Relationships are more important than tasks to be performed (much time spent on greeting and farewell rituals). Trespassing leads to shame and loss of face for entire ingroup. Use of discreet non-verbal cues, such as tone and pauses. Words with positive connotation include me, harmony, face, obligation, sacrifice, tradition, honour, shame. Words with negative connotation include self, friendship, self-interest, self-respect, litigation, I, me, pleasure, adventure, guilt, privacy. Gender roles likely to be well defined. Couples part of wider family groups.

(3) Extremely high power distance: Core value: respect for status; Core distinction: powerful/dependent. Usually very verbal but soft-spoken and polite; restrained and formal in non-verbal behaviour. Power, status and privileges go together. Style of speech is formal and acknowledges hierarchical positions. Words with positive connotation include: respect, father
(as title), wisdom, protect, obey, orders, master, servant. Words with negative connotation include rights, complain, negotiate, codetermination, question, criticize.

(4) Extremely low power distance: Core value: equality between people; Core distinction: responsible/not responsible for task X. Privileges and status symbols are frowned upon; decentralisation is favoured; in conversation anyone can take the lead at any time; powerful people try to appear less powerful than they are. Informal and unceremonious in non-verbal behaviour. Words with positive connotation include: rights, complain, negotiate, codetermination, question, criticize. Words with negative connotation include father (as title), wisdom, favour, protect, obey, orders, master, servant.

(5) Extreme masculinity: Core value: winning; Core distinction: man/woman. Material success and progress are dominant values; bigger and faster are better; men should be assertive, ambitious and tough; women should be subservient and tender Attractive women can use their beauty to achieve their ends; conflicts are resolved by arguing or fighting them out. Like physical contact, direct eye contact and animated gestures. Words with positive connotation include: career, competition, fight, success, winner, deserve, excel, power, action. Words with negative connotation include caring, solidarity, modesty, compromise, slow.

(6) Extreme femininity: Core value: caring for others, especially the weak; Core distinction: caring/needling care. Material Dominant values in society are caring for the weak and preservation (for example, of the environment); small and slow are beautiful; both men and women should be modest and empathetic; personal achievements are played down; conflicts are resolved through compromise and negotiation. Don’t take much room physically and are warm and friendly in conversation. Words with positive connotation include: caring, solidarity, modesty, compromise, slow, small, tender. Words with negative connotation include career, competition, fight, success, winner, deserve, excel, power, action, aggressive, action.

(7) Extreme uncertainty avoidance: Core value: certainty; Core distinction: true/false. What is different is dangerous; rules are important, even if they never work; ambiguous situations and unfamiliar risks are feared; time is money; there is only one truth and we have it; experts and specialisation are valued. Animated in using hands but are uncomfortable with physical contact. Words with positive connotation include: structure, duty, truth, law, order, certain, safe, predictable. Words with negative connotation include maybe, creative, conflict, tolerant, experiment, spontaneous, relativity, insight, flexible.

(8) Extreme uncertainty tolerance: Core value: exploration; Core distinction: urgent/can wait. What is different causes curiosity; rules should be limited to those that are absolutely necessary; ambiguous situations and unfamiliar risks cause no discomfort; deviant and innovative ideas and behaviour are tolerated; generalists are valued, as is common sense. Animated in using hands but are uncomfortable with physical contact. Words with positive connotation include: maybe, creative, conflict, tolerant, experiment, spontaneous, relativity, insight, flexible. Words with negative connotation include structure, duty, truth, law, order, certain, safe, predictable.

(9) Extreme long-term orientation: Core value: long-term benefits; Core distinction: does/does not serve a purpose. Working very hard is good; thrift and saving are good; never give up, even if results are disappointing; people may devote their lives to lofty, remote ideals; traditions can be adapted to modern context; past and future generations are important. Non-verbal behaviour is restrained and unceremonious. Words with positive connotation include: work, save, moderation, endurance, duty, permanent, future, virtue, invest, effort. Words with negative connotation include gift, today, yesterday, truth, quick, spend, tradition, image, the bottom line.
(10) **Extreme short-term orientation**: Core value: saving face; Core distinction: proper/improper. Never lose face; there is social pressure to keep up with others, even if it means overspending; quick results are expected; social demands are met regardless of cost; saving is not popular; personal stability is much valued. Non-verbal behaviour is restrained and unceremonious. Words with positive connotation include: gift, today, yesterday, truth, quick, spend, tradition, grand, image, the bottom line. Words with negative connotation include work, save, moderation, endurance, duty, goal, permanent, future, virtue, invest, effort.

Misattributions of Culture-Based Behaviors (Jan Hofstede et al. 2002:43)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listener who is culturally more …</th>
<th>… can misperceive culture-based behaviour of foreigners as …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collectivist</td>
<td>insulting, stressed, heartless, rude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualist</td>
<td>dishonest, corrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Power Distance Oriented</td>
<td>disrespectful, improper, rude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Power Distance Oriented</td>
<td>bossy, rigid (of high-status persons); servile, cowardly (of low-status persons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>aggressive, showing off (of men); playing ‘baby doll’ (of women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>Weak (of men); unfeminine (of women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Uncertainty Avoiding</td>
<td>unprincipled, amoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Uncertainty Avoiding</td>
<td>rigid, paranoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term Oriented</td>
<td>irresponsible, throwing away money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term Oriented</td>
<td>stingy, cold</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Mona Baker  
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