



SUPPORT

Cross-Cultural approaches : The Main Models

Major frameworks that have been devised for categorizing and comparing cultures.

These frameworks have been used to understand cultural distance.

Despite being conducted at widely different times and using different methods, these frameworks have identified some very similar sets of cultural dimensions (ex. individualism and collectivism).

- > Alexander Thomas
- > Florence Kluckhohn & Fred Strodtbeck
- > Edward T. Hall
- > Edgar Schein
- > Geert Hofstede
- > Fons Trompenaars & Charles Hampden-Turner
- > The GLOBE Project
- > The Cultural Orientations Indicator (COI)

a. Alexander Thomas (1939, D)

Father of the cultural standard method which is an answer to the early defined cultural dimension.

Based on anonymous questionnaires, a qualitative research method was introduced.

Through qualitative interviews, unexpected reactions to critical situations are identified.

A cultural standard is defined when a number of individuals are reacting repeatedly to one critical situation the same way.

b. Florence Kluckhohn (-1986, USA) & Fred Strodtbeck (1919-2005, USA)

> They proposed categorizing culture in six dimensions (1961) ..

Those dimensions determine the value orientation of a group ; then define the group norms: Cultural values shared by members of a group, defining what is important and desirable to them, guide the behavior of these group members.

- The nature of people (Good / Evil / Mixed)
- The person's relationship to nature (Domination / Subjugation / Harmony)
- The person's relationship to others (Individualist / Group / Hierarchical)
- The nature of human activity (Being / Achieving / Doing)
- Temporal focus of human activity (Past / Present / Future)
- Conception of space - added later on (Private / Public / Mixed)



> Through the six dimensions (with 3 variations) it is possible to define the group norms (its culture)

c. Edward T. Hall (1914-2009, USA)

Hall proposed three concepts to describe culture.

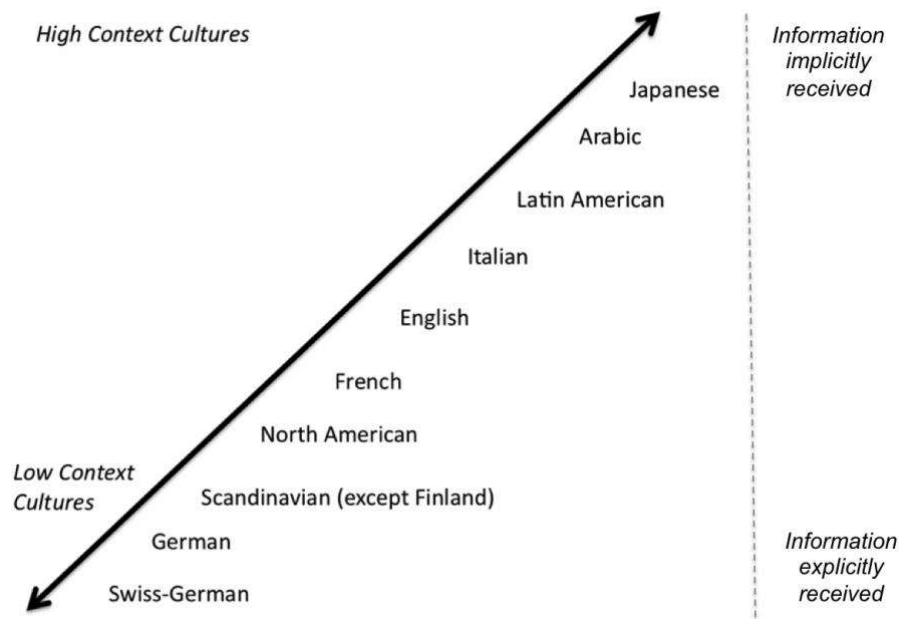
He demonstrates how people's use of them affect cross-cultural behavior.

- Space and cultural behavior (proxemics)
- Time and cultural behavior (polychronic/monochronic)
- Low context - high context culture

Cultural Matrix model (hall)

Time	Context	Space
Monochronic ✓ Do one thing at a time ✓ Schedule/structure is important ✓ Time is useful tool to prioritize ✓ Identification with work	High ✓ Messages culturally coded ✓ Read between the lines ✓ Implicit context	Close ✓ Little need for much personal space ✓ Lower territoriality
Polychronic ✓ Do many things at once ✓ Relationship top priority ✓ Deadlines are not vital ✓ Identification with family/ friends	Low ✓ Explicit, verbal messages ✓ Straight to the point ✓ Distinction content/ relational level	Far ✓ Need for bigger space bubble ✓ Higher territoriality

High and Low context cultures model (Hall)





d. Edgar Schein (1928-, USA)

Schein developed a model in 1992 according to which organizational culture is divided into three levels :

> Basic assumptions :

They represent the lowest level : the core of culture

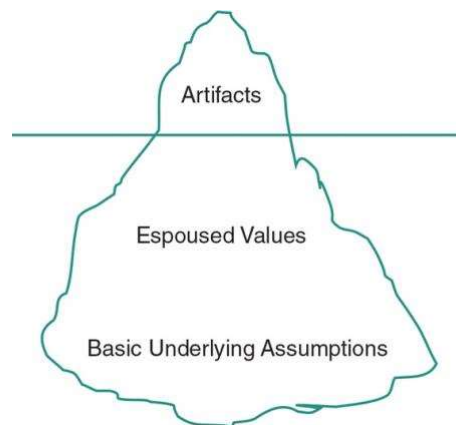
They are subconsciously fixed in our way of thinking and acting and taken for granted by every one.

> Espoused values :

They define what is important for us, leading to observable behavior and artifacts.

> Artifacts :

They include symbols, structures, procedures and rules openly visible for every one.



e. Geert Hofstede (1928-2020)

The genesis of Hofstede's work dates back to the 1960s when he led two major surveys on cross-cultural differences in different centers of the computing company IBM (surveys carried out between 1968 and 1973).

Hofstede's very extensive IBM database included 116,000 participants from 72 countries.

Hofstede developed a model among 70s identifying 04 key dimensions of national cultures (original model).

> Power distance :

It refers to the accepted degree of inequality among people with or without power.

> Individualism : (vs collectivism)

It refers to the emotional dependence of an individual with respect to groups and organizations



> Masculinity :

The extent to which the society values traditionally mal qualities more than femal one's.

Mal qualities : competition, assertiveness, ambition, concen for material possessions, ..

Femal qualities : equality, solidarity, ..

> Uncertainty avoidance index :

It refers to the degree of anxiety individuals feel when being in an unfamiliar situation.

Hofstede completed his model by adding 02 dimensions :

> Long term orientation :

Hofstede added a fifth dimension as a result of a chinese study (Hofstede and Bond 1988), which has become synonymous with the term of « Confucian dynamism »

It refers to the degree to which a society appreciates long-term values and traditions.

Hofstede and Minkov identify long-term orientation as a set of values that place low importance on service to others and high importance on thrift and perseverance.

> Indulgence vs Restraint :

In 2010, with two co-authors (Gert-Jan Hofstede - his son, and the Bulgarian academic Minkov), Hofstede included a new sixth dimension of culture

Indulgent societies have a relatively large proportion of citizens who say that they are very happy, believe that they are in control of their lives, and place a very high importance on leisure.

.High Score on indulgence :

There is relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun (Hofstede 2011).

.High Score on restraint :

There is stricter norms. In restrained societies (amongst other things) there are fewer « very happy » people, one finds proscribed attitudes to sex, there is less importance attached to leisure and one finds a higher number of police officers per head of the population.

f. Fons Trompenaars (1952-, D) & Charles Hampden-Turner (1934-, B)

They classified cultures as a mix of behavioral and value patterns and indentified seven orientations :

> Universalism vs Particularism :

This dimension seeks to discover whether one's prime allegiance is to rules and rule-bound classifications, or to exceptional, unique circumstances.

> Individualism vs Communitarianism :

It measures the extent to which managers see the individual employee and sharholder as paramount, his or her development, enrichment, fulfillment, or to what extent the cooperation, customers and the wider group should be the beneficiaries of all personal efforts.



> Specific vs Diffuse :

It refers to the extent to which individuals are willing to allow access to their inner selves to others. In specific cultures, people separate the private part of their lives from the public, whereas in diffuse cultures, these aspects of the individual overlap.

> Neutral vs Affective :

It concerns the legitimacy of showing or controlling emotions

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> Achievement vs Ascription :

Is about why status is conferred on people. Is this because they have achieved, or because of what they « are » ?

> Séquential vs Synchronous :

Time has to do with whether one sees time passing in a sequence, or coming around again and again.

Cultures think of time as a sequence or as a synchronization or coordination.

> Inner vs Outer :

It concerns the « locus of control ». Is it inside each of us, or outside in our environments to which we must adapt ?

j. The GLOBE Project (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness)

It's a research project studying leadership behavior from a cross-cultural perspective.

> Main research question (1990s) :

Researchers discussed whether and how leadership could be globally applied.

This project is guided by two principles (theory) :

- The characteristics of societal culture that distinguish cultures from each other are predictive of organizational practices.

- The leader attributes and behaviors that are most frequently enacted are considered most accepted and expected in the particular culture.

> Results :

Numerous core attributes of societal and organizational cultures were assessed on a global basis.

h. The Cultural Orientations Indicator (COI)

> The COI was developed by D. Walker, T. Walker and J. Schmitz.

> It synthesizes the work of many researchers* into 10 dimensional model of cultural variability (Through 17 cultural continua and 36 orientations)



> It is a description of general preferences restricted to work-related behaviors and situations.

> It aims to understand the cultural basis of Thinking Style, Interaction Style, and Sense of Self.

How it works ?

It's a questioning tool based 87 questions.

It's the most used models to compare an individual profile with a given culture (own or alien)

It's used by certified practitioners to develop 4 key cultural skills :

- Cultural due diligence
- Style of switching
- Cultural dialogue
- Cultural mentoring

The 10 COI dimensions :

1. Environnement :

How individual view and relate to the people, objects and issues in their sphere of influence.

2. Time :

How individuals perceive the nature of time and its use.

3. Action :

How individuals conceptualize actions and interactions.

4. Communication :

How individuals express themselves.

5. Space :

How individuals demarcate their physical and psychological space.

6. Power :

How individuals view differential power relationships.

7. Individualism :

How individual define their identity.

8. Competitiveness :

How individuals are motivated.

9. Structure :

How individuals approach change, risk, ambiguity and uncertainty.

10. Thinking :

How individuals conceptualize.

The COI Model

