

InterCultural aspects in management

People differ in **obvious** and **subtle** ways

- Food; Clothes

Less visible differences

The effect of them – **SHARED INTERPRETATION**

Shared interpretations result from culture's group assumptions including expectations how people should behave

Shared expectations are called – cultural patterns



Do you agree that.....

- If you ask a Japanese businessman to do something and he said: “It’s a little bit difficult” you would continue trying to persuade him to agree.
- If you were invited to a British person home at 8pm for dinner, you would come 15 minutes earlier.
- If you were doing business in Saud Arabia you wouldn’t speak Arabic unless you could speak it properly.
- If you were in Oman you wouldn’t start to talk about business after the second cup of coffee.
- If you were invited to go out with your counterparts in Great Britain (you are there on a short training course), each member of the group should take turns in buying everyone a drink

Do you agree that.....

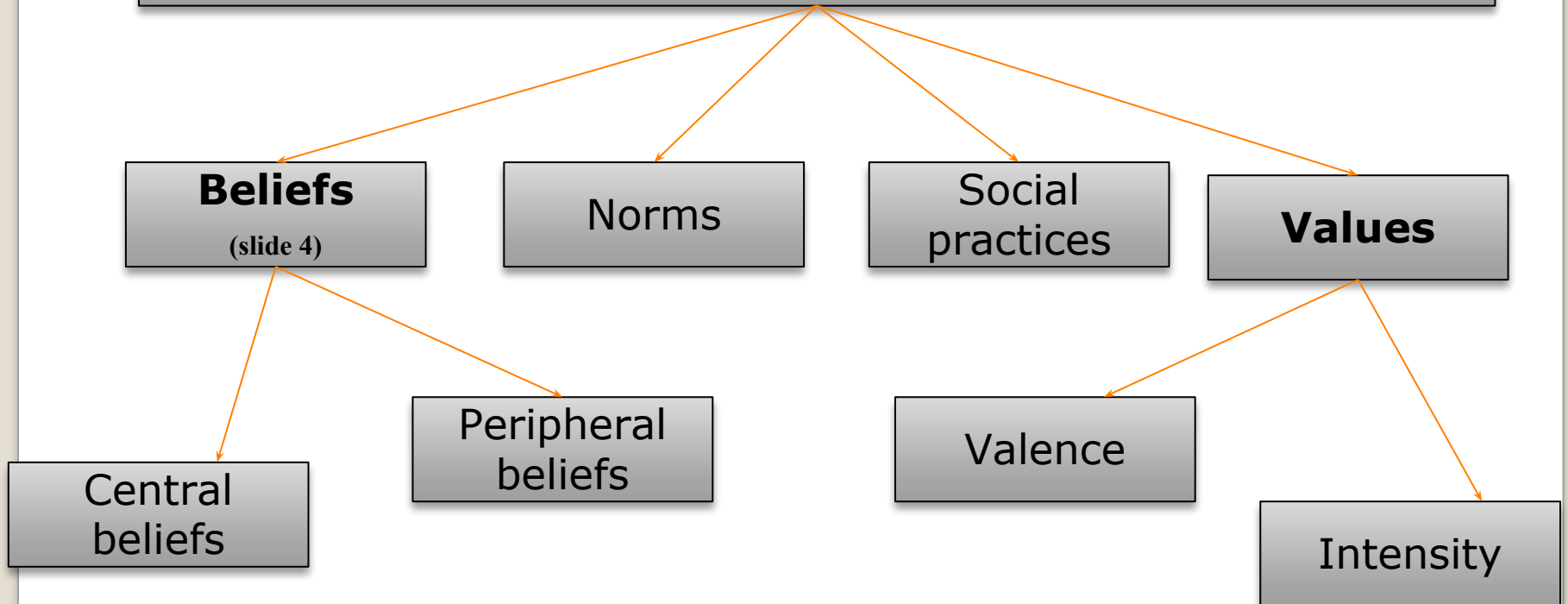
- In Great Britain you are invited home to your business partner for dinner, you would take a bottle of wine with you
- Leaving a group of colleagues after an informal evening out, you will shake everyone by the hand
- In a taxi in London the fare is 20GBP, you will pay just 20GBP without any tips.
- Being on a conference in London you will try to stand rather close to a person you talk to.
- In Bulgaria a person shakes his head responding to your offer, which means he doesn't support your idea.

Shared beliefs, values, norms, and social practices that are stable over time and that lead to roughly similar behaviors across similar situations are called **cultural patterns**.

(Lustig 78)

Lustig, Myron W., Jolene Koester. Intercultural Competence, 7th Edition. Pearson Learning Solutions, 07/2012. VitalBook file.

Components of cultural patterns



A belief is an idea that people assume to be true about the world.

Beliefs are a set of learned interpretations that form the basis for cultural members to decide what is and what is not logical and correct.

Central beliefs include the culture's fundamental teachings about what reality is and expectations about how the world works.

Less central are beliefs based on derived from the teachings of those regarded as authorities. Parents, teachers, and other important elders transmit the culture's assumptions about the nature of the physical and interpersonal world

Peripheral beliefs refer to matters of personal taste. They contribute to each person's unique configuration of ideas and expectations within the larger cultural matrix.

Values involve what a culture regards as good or bad, right or wrong, fair or unfair, just or unjust, beautiful or ugly, clean or dirty, valuable or worthless, appropriate or inappropriate, and kind or cruel.

Valence refers to whether the value is seen as positive or negative.

Intensity indicates the strength or importance of the value, or the degree to which the culture identifies the value as significant.

(Lustig 81)

Lustig, Myron W., Jolene Koester. Intercultural Competence, 7th Edition. Pearson Learning Solutions, 07/2012. VitalBook file.

Norms are the socially shared expectations of appropriate behaviors. When a person's behaviors violate the culture's norms, social sanctions are usually imposed.

Like values, norms can vary within a culture in terms of their importance and intensity.

Unlike values, however, norms may change over a period of time, whereas beliefs and values tend to be much more enduring.

(Lustig 81)

Lustig, Myron W., Jolene Koester. Intercultural Competence, 7th Edition. Pearson Learning Solutions, 07/2012. VitalBook file.

Social practices are the predictable behavior patterns that members of a culture typically follow.

Thus, social practices are the outward manifestations of beliefs, values, and norms.

(Lustig 82)

Lustig, Myron W., Jolene Koester. Intercultural Competence, 7th Edition. Pearson Learning Solutions, 07/2012. VitalBook file.

Example:

DO YOU AGREE THAT:

1. In the USA lunch usually is over by noon.
2. In the USA gifts usually are opened in front of guests.
3. in the USA children usually sleep alone or with other children
4. In Italy lunch starts after 1.30pm.
5. In Malaysia gifts are to be opened in front of guests.
6. In Asian families children usually share beds with adult relatives

SOCIAL PRACTICES on the example of having negotiations

| Country | Role of presents | Answering the questions | Interaction | Members of the delegation and decision making |
|---------|---|--|--|---|
| China | To the delegation | General answers | Informal relations are important | Experts of different fields; Opinion of the whole delegation |
| Japan | To the delegation (not expensive and should not be unpacked) | Direct NO is not used | Previous recommendations | Experts of different fields |
| UAE | To the delegation (mainly the national ones) | No direct answers/ especially negative | E-mails are not official | The opinion of the head of the delegation is important |
| Ukraine | To the delegation and to the head of the delegation | No direct answers on the first meeting | E-mails are not official; mainly letters or faxes. | Usually a head, an assistant and one expert. Opinion only of the head of the delegation |

| Country | Behavioral aspects | Before the negotiations | Structuring the negotiations | Role of interacting in a group |
|---------|--|---|--|---|
| China | No hugs, touching. Personal space is important | Previous gathering the information about the delegation | A few stages of negotiations: introduction preliminary understanding the terms and conditions; their discussion, and final stage | Observing the interacting in the delegation (cooperative manner is desirable) |
| Japan | No touching, no jokes. Personal space is important. Unemotional, low calm voice | Previous gathering the information about the delegation (reputation of the company, role on the market, professional experience of the members) | Recommendations/ general discussion/ detail discussion | Observing the interacting in the delegation (cooperative manner is desirable) |
| Ukraine | A lot of jokes Hugs, touching is people are known; mainly no personal space. Very emotional manner of speaking | Do not gather information | A lot of stages: Introduction the topic/ direct presentations of expectations/ways of getting more benefit/final stage | Dominant manner of interacting |

FUNCTIONS OF CULTURAL PATTERNS

Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodbeck explaining cultural-level and individual-level differences, offered four **conclusions** about the functions of cultural patterns that apply to all cultures:

1. People in all cultures face common human problems for which they must find solutions.
2. The range of alternative solutions to a culture's problems is limited.
3. Within a given culture, there will be preferred solutions, which most people within the culture will select, but there will also be people who will choose other solutions.
4. Over time, the preferred solutions shape the culture's basic assumptions about beliefs, values, norms, and social practices—the cultural patterns.

(Lustig 83)

Lustig, Myron W., Jolene Koester. *Intercultural Competence, 7th Edition*. Pearson Learning Solutions, 07/2012. VitalBook file.

People in all cultures face common human problems for which they must find solutions.

1. What is the human orientation to activity?
2. What is the relationship of humans to each other?
3. What is the nature of human beings?
4. What is the relationship of humans to the natural world?
5. What is the orientation of humans to time?

(Lustig 83)

Lustig, Myron W., Jolene Koester. *Intercultural Competence, 7th Edition*. Pearson Learning Solutions, 07/2012. VitalBook file.

ORIENTATIONS OF CULTURAL PATTERNS

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graph TD; A[ORIENTATIONS OF CULTURAL PATTERNS] --> B[Activity orientation]; A --> C[World-orientation]; A --> D[Self-orientation]; C --> E[Social relations orientation]; C --> F[Time-orientation];
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Activity
orientation

World-
orientation

Self-orientati
on

Social
relations
orientation

Time-
orientation

An activity orientation defines how the people of a culture view human actions and the expression of self through activities.

- Is it important to be engaged in activities in order to be a “good” member of one’s culture?
- Can and should people change the circumstances of their lives?
- Is work very different from play?
- Which is more important, work or play?
- Is life a series of problems to be solved or simply a collection of events to be experienced?

(Lustig 85)

An activity orientation

being-becoming-doing continuum

Being

Becoming

Doing

Values inaction
and an acceptance
of the status quo

Sees humans as
evolving and
changing (change
yourself and the
world will be changed)

Rarely question the
assumption that is
important to get
things done

The **social relations orientation** describes how the people in a culture organize themselves and relate to one another.

- To what extent are some people in the culture considered better or superior to others?
- Can social superiority be obtained through birth, age, good deeds, or material achievement and success?
- Are formal interaction sequences expected?
- In what ways does the culture's language require people to make social distinctions?
- What responsibilities and obligations do people have to their extended families, their neighbors, their employers or employees, and others?

(Lustig 88)

Lustig, Myron W., Jolene Koester. Intercultural Competence, 7th Edition. Pearson Learning Solutions, 07/2012. VitalBook file.

A culture's social relations orientation affects the *style of interpersonal communication* that is most preferred.

Cultures may emphasize indirectness and ambiguity (typical pattern for most Eastern European cultures) or they may emphasize directness and confrontation (typical European American pattern).

For European Americans, good interpersonal communication skills include stating directly one's personal needs and reactions to the behaviors of others.

In Asian cultures (Japan, Korea, Thailand, and China) saving face and maintaining interpersonal harmony are so highly valued that it would be catastrophic to confront another person directly and verbally express anger.

Self-orientation describes how people's identities are formed, whether the culture views the self as changeable, what motivates individual actions, and the kinds of people who are valued and respected.

- Do people believe they have their own unique identities that separate them from others?
- Does the self reside in the individual or in the groups to which the individual belongs?
- What responsibilities does the individual have to others?
- What motivates people to behave as they do?
- Is it possible to respect a person who is judged “bad” in one part of life but is successful in another part of life?

(Lustig 90)

Cultural patterns also tell people how to locate themselves in relation to the spiritual world, nature, and other living things which is a **world orientation**.

- Are human beings good or evil?
- Are humans different from other animals and plants?
- Are people in control of, subjugated by, or living in harmony with the forces of nature?
- Do spirits of the dead inhabit and affect the human world?

(Lustig 93)

Lustig, Myron W., Jolene Koester. *Intercultural Competence, 7th Edition*. Pearson Learning Solutions, 07/2012. VitalBook file.

Time orientation concerns how people conceptualize time.

- How should time be valued and understood?
- Is time a scarce resource, or is it unlimited?
- Is the desirable pace of life fast or slow?
- Is time linear or cyclical?

(Lustig 94)

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SUMMARY

Cultural patterns are invisible differences that characterize cultures. Beliefs, values, norms, and social practices are the ingredients of cultural patterns.

Beliefs are ideas that people assume to be true about the world.

Values are the desired characteristics of a culture.

Norms are socially shared expectations of appropriate behaviors.

Social practices, the final component of cultural patterns, are the predictable behavior patterns that people typically follow.

Cultural patterns are shared among a group of people, and they form the foundation for the maintenance of cultures. They are stable over relatively long periods of time, and they lead most members of a culture to behave in roughly similar ways when they encounter similar situations.

Cultural patterns focus on the way cultures orient themselves to activities, social relations, the self, the world, and time.

The activity orientation defines how people express themselves through activities and locate themselves on the being–becoming–doing continuum.

The social relations orientation describes the preferred forms of interpersonal relationships within a culture.

The self-orientation indicates the culture’s conception of how people understand who they are in relation to others.

The world orientation locates a culture in the physical and spiritual worlds.

The time orientation directs a culture to value the past, present, or future.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. How might individuals from *doing, being, and becoming* cultures engage in conflict in the workplace, in school, or in interpersonal relationships?
2. One person comes from a culture that believes “We’re all humans, aren’t we?” Another person comes from a culture that says, “Status is everything.” What might occur as these two individuals try to communicate with each other?
3. *Truth or lie, just or unjust, right or wrong, and good or bad are all common human judgments of the actions of others.* How does your awareness of cultural patterns affect your understanding of each of these sets of terms?
4. Using the five dimensions of cultural patterns described in this chapter, describe how you think each is displayed in your own culture.



**THANK YOU
FOR
YOUR ATTENTION**