

The Changes of Cultural Values: Lithuanian and Ukrainian Case

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Introduction

Culture is a complex whole associating knowledge, belief, art, morality, customs and all other abilities and habits which a human acquires as a member of the society. The concept of culture is related to a human, a group, a country, a nation, a community, time, ideology, religion, etc. Recently, culture has become the object of special interest for many sciences, especially for the researchers in sociology, economics, management, marketing, and other areas. The development of globalization and economic integration results in the need for greater attention devoted to culture, however, not because it is an obstacle for development, but rather because culture is a necessary condition for development. For this purpose, a dichotomic comparative analysis of cultural values of the students of higher educational establishments (day-time, part-time and correspondence departments) in Lithuania and Ukraine has been carried out.

The aim of the research is to determine and characterize the students' cultural indexes in different study forms and compare the results obtained in Lithuania and Ukraine.

The objectives of the research are the following:

- to study the essential aspects of cultural elements and their interrelation;
- to analyse the possibilities for the study of cultural dimensions and the main ways for identification of culture;
- to present the results of the questionnaire survey;
- to identify and compare the developed cultural values in Lithuania and Ukraine.

Research methods applied are the comparative analysis of national cultural values in Western and Central Eastern European countries based on the synthesis of official European Community (EC) publications, scientific literature and systematic statistical data analysis as well as identification of youth cultural dimensions using questionnaire in Lithuania and Ukraine.

The results of the research. Based on the five cultural indexes of G. Hofstede methodology of national cultural dimensions (i.e. power distance, individualism / collectivism, masculinity / femininity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation), the exploratory analysis of values was carried out, the cultural indexes of Lithuanian and Ukrainian students studying in different study forms (day-time, part-time and correspondence) were calculated and compared. The main cultural features in terms of the determined cultural indexes of students of different study forms were highlighted. General and specific features of different study forms were found.

The concept of Culture and its Interpretation

Culture incorporates particular acquired norms, beliefs, values inherent to each particular country; therefore, the results of economic development cannot always be explained with reference to economic models. The relations among individuals, groups and organizations are the sphere of development of every society, considerably dependent on economic and political factors as well as public institutions which, directly or indirectly, are related to culture. Debates in scientific literature are triggered not because of the effect of culture as such, but, rather, in seeking to clarify to what extent and by which ways culture affects the activity of individuals, groups and organizations (Jamieson, 1980; Aycan, 2000). In terms of economic development, it is of importance that culture encompassing values, norms of behaviour as well as material products, affects the style of life and behaviour of the consumer (Macionis, 1998; Schneider, Barsoux, 1997).

J. V. Thrill and C. L. Bovee (1991) maintain that culture is the system of common symbols, beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations, and norms of behavior. Consequently, all members of the society have or tend to have a uniform way of thinking, communication and behaviour. Culture is an integrated model of knowledge, expectations and behaviour (Nelson, 1990). A. V. Matulionis (2004) suggests that

culture is everything ever created by a human, and is a part of a human lifestyle.

G. Hofstede (1991; 1994) has created a model of cultural dimensions characteristic of its wide application. He says that culture is the collective programming of intellect originating from the family, its attitudes, education, continuous education, consumption, and which distinguishes the members of one group from another. According to G. Hofstede, the main reason underlying the differences in national cultures is the human values which are formed in the early stages of life and are the principal manifestation of culture. Basically, organizational cultures differ because of their operational practice. Practice is a superficial manifestation of culture; therefore, it is more flexible and dependent on the external influence. It is due to practice that changes in national culture can occur, and the organizational culture can change depending on “values” (Hofstede, 1997).

The analysis of scientific literature shows that culture is a system consisting of groups of people with the same creed, customs, symbols, beliefs, values which distinguish the members of one social group from others. In a wider sense, culture is understood as behaviour of humans or a shared experience of behaviour (Stimson, 1988; Schein, 1985), manifesting itself in different levels (Schneider, Barsoux, 1997; Lee, Tai, 2005): national, functional, professional, group and individual.

V. Kavolis (1996: 9–10) points out the differences in the concept of culture in different countries:

- The French concept of culture derives from the environment of the royal court and intellectuals; therefore, it is distinguished by its elegance and playfulness;
- The German concept of culture prevailed in small university towns confined to philosophical

level of cognition, at the same time, neglecting the practical side of life;

- The Lithuanian concept of culture, formed in the 19th century during the years of national rebirth, has been preserved up to now, frozen in the state of defence and constant sociability.

The Structure of Culture

Culture has not only contents, but also structure. In analysing culture, two sides of it are to be considered: visible and understandable for all and hidden, symbolic (Kluckhohn, 1951). N. Smelser (1994) highlights four interrelated elements of culture:

- concepts by means of which the accumulated human experience is managed;
- relations between the parts comprising culture which reflect the main characteristics of time and space and their importance in culture;
- values with regard to which the society seeks to implement its goals and which are the moral principles serving as the basis of the norms regulating the life of the society;
- rules.

Values are the principles of culture reflecting every aspect of life and giving a sense and direction to it. Based on the orientational values, personal goals of the individuals are formed indicating the importance of particular things to the individuals. The values depend on the society and are related to human activities. Practically, however, the incompatibility of values and conflicts are encountered because of the existing opposite values in the society or community. The cultural values and norms change over time. The main reasons of cultural changes are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The main reasons of cultural changes

Reasons	The main characteristics
Evolution	Socialization Traditions, habits and manner
Diffusion-acculturation	Cultural exchange, media Science, education, technology, continuous learning
Cultural interruption	Catastrophe of nature, epidemic Upheavals, disturbances and revolutions

Source: V. Kavolis, (1996); A. V. Matulionis, (2004), N. Smelser, (1994).

Culture fosters personalities of the members of the society, thus strongly determining their behaviour. In evaluating the impact of culture on an individual, the importance of culture, however, should not be overestimated. The ability of culture to govern the behaviour of humans is limited by a number of diffe-

rent reasons. This is determined by a biological potential of the human organism, unfavourable influence of the external environment, maintenance of social order, etc.

Scientific literature distinguishes three research methods characterizing culture and evaluating

its influence on motivation, decision-making, leadership and other aspects of development of organizations (Mockaitis, Miškinis, 2001): relative, institutional and culturalistic.

The culture of the modern world is a consumer culture in which the main values are choice, individualism, and market relations. Consumer culture is characterized by the system of consumption of goods where goods have become the tools of self-development (Černiūtė, 2006). Scientific literature (Bocock, 2001) defines consumption as a process occurring in a particular cultural and economic network, and consumer lifestyle is understood as ideology which promotes consumption. Consumer society is referred to as (Leonavičius, 2002):

- well-off society;
- society with diminishing labour and growing leisure budget;
- society with an increasingly aesthetic life;
- society in which consumption, lifestyle, acquisition of some goods are becoming the indexes of social position;
- the essential feature of consumer society is “middle class”.

It is common knowledge that consumption is both symbolic and material. It can mean the position of an individual in the society and the nucleus of its identity. Consumption tends to form identity: I am what action I perform to introduce myself by the desirable things (Černiūtė, 2006).

V. Rubavičius (2003) turns to the analysis of the consumer society performed by J. K. Galbraith and J. Baudrillard. He argues that under capitalism, consumption wishes and needs are produced together with commodities, and goods and services fulfill the demand created by culturalized economy itself. Culture becomes economic power producing needs and consolidates them as the vision of higher life standard or aspiration as well as a social means of constructing individual identity. Consumer society is such a state of society in which mass production and consumption are dominating, consumer culture is developed and understood as production of specific, consumption-oriented social values and their legitimation.

Research methodology

In the comparative study of the effect of culture, Hofstede's cultural dimensions were applied. G. Hofstede analyses cultural differences with reference to five cultural indexes:

1. Power Distance (or Hierarchy) Index (PDI) shows to what extent individuals are likely to tolerate the inequality of power distribution among individuals. Power and inequality are essential factors indicating distribution of individuals in terms of income;
2. Individualism / Collectivism Index (IDV) expresses the degree of interrelation among individuals, or how important the member of the organization is to the group he / she belongs to. Individualism and collectivism indicate two opposite trends: tendency to satisfy personal needs, and tendency to consider interests of the group;
3. Masculinity / Femininity Index (MAS) shows how gender in the society determines the role of the individual and reveals its attitude to two areas: 1) achievement, task, power; and 2) people and quality of life;
4. Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) defines the aspiration to be safe by means of rules, laws or other safety measures and avoid risk. It explains how people tolerate vague situations or uncertainty, and that both individuals and society are not willing to take risk;
5. Long-term Orientation Index (LTO) reveals that short-term decisions of the individuals are based on traditions and past events, or short-term achievements of the present. Long-term orientations are linked with such values as economy, persistence, endurance, social responsibility, reward and future evaluation, etc.

In the conducted exploratory study a structured questionnaire was used. Its questions are of dichotomic, closed and open type, the methods of evaluation and ranging scales were applied. The individuals (students of different study forms) were questioned with a view to obtain more accurate evaluation of the phenomenon under investigation. The survey was carried out in Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania) and Doneck State University (Ukraine) in March, 2007. 35 questions were asked. The questions 1–20 were meant to study the cultural attitudes, and questions 27–35 are related to demographic information.

Identification of Cultural Values

The main characteristics of the respondents of the exploratory study, with a view to identify the value orientation in Lithuania and Ukraine, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

The distribution of respondents according to gender in Lithuania and Ukraine

Respondents	Day-time studies		Correspondence studies		Part-time studies		Total	
	number	per cent	number	per cent	number	per cent	number	per cent
Lithuania								
– Female	40	75.5	52	68.4	24	70.6	116	71.2
– Male	13	24.5	24	31.6	10	29.4	47	28.8
Total	53	100.0	76	100.0	34	100.0	163	100.0
Ukraine								
– Female	50	65.0	25	56.8	...	...	75	62.0
– Male	27	35.0	19	43.2	...	...	46	28.0
Total	77	100.0	44	100.0	...	...	121	100.0

Source: calculated by authors.

The majority of respondents are women in all study forms which confirms general regularity of distribution of students in terms of gender: women constitute a bigger portion of students. In the exploratory study the distribution of respondents according to gender is the following: in Lithuania 71% are women and 28.8% are men, in Ukraine 62% and 38%, respectively. Doneck State University in Ukraine

currently does not offer part-time study form which would be of importance in the country's EU integration efforts.

By using G. Hofstede's method, the issues of questionnaire value dimensions were processed, and the values of each index for individual study form were calculated. The results obtained are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

The calculation of cultural indexes in different study forms

Study forms	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO
	Lithuania					Ukraine				
Day-time studies	10	71	55	45	45	10	38	89	63	32
Correspondence studies	41	71	10	70	41	20	58	90	50	53
Part-time studies	35	75	26	74	61	...	...	...	...	...
Average value	29	72	30	63	49	15	48	90	57	43

Source: calculated by authors.

The higher the PDI index, the bigger is the number of persons who consider themselves unequal in the area under investigation. The values from 0 to 30 indicate a small distance in the given culture, from 31 to 50 – the tendency to collectivism, from 51 to 70 – the tendency to individualism, and over 70 – considerable individualism. The calculated IDV shows that the majority of Lithuanian students in all study forms tend to individualism. MAS generalizes the relationship of the respondents' dominating values, i.e. material success or care of others. The applied range of index values varies from 0 (total femininity) to 100 (total masculinity). The values from 0 to 30 indicate considerable femininity, from 31 to 50 – tendency to femininity, from 51 to 70 – tendency to masculinity and over 70 – considerable masculinity in the given culture. The calculated MAS index is different in different study forms in Lithuania. The highest MAS index occurs in the day-time study form (MAS = 55); it reflects tendency to masculine values (ambitiousness, tenacity, attraction to strength, determina-

tives or organizations. The 0 value of the index means total collectivism, 100 means total individualism. The values from 0 to 30 show considerable collectivism, from 31 to 50 – the tendency to collectivism, from 51 to 70 – the tendency to individualism, and over 70 – considerable individualism. The calculated IDV shows that the majority of Lithuanian students in all study forms tend to individualism.

MAS generalizes the relationship of the respondents' dominating values, i.e. material success or care of others. The applied range of index values varies from 0 (total femininity) to 100 (total masculinity). The values from 0 to 30 indicate considerable femininity, from 31 to 50 – tendency to femininity, from 51 to 70 – tendency to masculinity and over 70 – considerable masculinity in the given culture.

The calculated MAS index is different in different study forms in Lithuania. The highest MAS index occurs in the day-time study form (MAS = 55); it reflects tendency to masculine values (ambitiousness, tenacity, attraction to strength, determina-

tion, competition, importance of money and material values, settling conflicts by struggling until the end without compromise, etc.) Part-time and especially correspondence students are characterized by femininity, the calculated MAS being equal, i.e. MAS = 26 and MAS = 10, respectively. Here, warm patronizing relations, care for the weak prevail, the conflicts are settled by compromise and negotiations. In Ukraine, MAS demonstrates a clear tendency to masculinity in culture.

UAI defines the need for formal rules in seeking to avoid the threat of vague and ambiguous situations. The index value 0 indicates the lowest level of uncertainty avoidance, from 0 to 30 – low level of uncertainty avoidance, from 51 to 70 – quite big uncertainty avoidance, from 70 to 100 – high level of uncertainty avoidance and over 100 – total uncertainty avoidance. UAI in Lithuania for part-time and correspondence students is considerably higher than for day-time students. It illustrates that the former are more characteristic of higher level of uncertainty avoidance, i.e. they try to avoid ambiguous situations to escape uncertainty, fear and tension in the organization. Low level of uncertainty avoidance is typical for day-time students. This leads to the formation of unconstrained manner of communication and lesser tension in the organization. In Ukraine, UAI for day-time students exceeds that of the correspondence form, i.e. uncertainty avoidance is higher.

LTO describes realistic future-oriented perspectives with regard to time factor. The 0 index value indicates short-time orientation, the values from 0 to 30 – considerable short-time orientation, from 31 to 50 – average short-time orientation, from 51 to 70 – average long-term orientation, from 70 to 100 – considerable long-term orientation, and 100 – total long-term orientation. Short-term orientation is related to the need for stability and, traditionally, to the expectation of quick results. The main features of long-term strategy are a realistic viewpoint and long-term orientation, tolerance to changes, consistent pursuit of long-term goals and economizing for future. LTO for Lithuanian part-time students compared to other study forms is the highest, which shows average long-term orientation related to such values as economy, persistence and endurance. Lithuanian day-time and correspondence students are characterized by average short-term orientation related to respect for traditions, social responsibility and aspiration to good results. In Ukraine, day-time students demonstrate average short-term orientation and correspondence students – average long-term orientation.

Conclusions

The paper identifies cultural subjects, realization forms, levels and essential elements.

Cultural values tend to change slowly. Currently, the materialistic, or consumer society is dominating accompanied by mass production and mass consumption; the formation of consumer culture is under way which is understood as development of characteristic, consumption – oriented social values. The determined cultural values (indexes: PDI, IDV, MAS, UAI and LTO) directly affect the behaviour of individual subjects, i.e. students, their groups or organizations determining their motivation and productivity.

By means of G. Hofstede's methodology of cultural dimensions, cultural indexes for different study forms (day-time and correspondence) in Lithuania and Ukraine were determined. Doneck State University (Ukraine) is going to start part-time studies. The cultural indexes calculated on the basis of the exploratory study, with a view to explore value orientation of the Lithuanian and Ukrainian students, indicate common and different features of the two countries and their study forms.

In Lithuania, both the average value and the values of different study forms (day-time and correspondence) of IDV are higher than the respective indexes in Ukraine. It shows greater tendency of Lithuanian students to individualism.

Both the average value and the values of different study forms (day-time and correspondence) of MAS indexes in Lithuania are lower than the respective indexes in Ukraine. This indicates the tendency of Ukrainian students to persistence, when the basis for motivation is achievement and acknowledgement.

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Summary

This article aims to examine the culture, its impact on changes of consumption in the context of globalization conditions. At present, globalization is the way in which national economies of the world are becoming increasingly open and related with one another in economic, political, legal, cultural, social, and information spheres. Cultural factor is going to play a strong role in global business and consumer behavior. Consumer behavior in a country on micro, macro and regional level during time perspective causes economic development (consumption as factor of economic development), and is very important for each country or country groups, including Lithuania, as a member of European Union (EU) and Ukraine, as seeking to become a member of EU among other countries in the future of economic integration.

Each country is characterized by its main socio-cultural variables: demographics, culture and subcultures, social classes and reference groups. At present, emerging market countries in Europe face many new factors in their economic development, and these factors modify cultural values in those countries. The objective of the research is

to determine and characterize the students' cultural indexes in different study forms and compare the obtained results in Lithuania and Ukraine.

An exploratory structured questionnaire is used in the research. The questions used are of dichotomic, closed and open type, the evaluation and ranging scales are used, seeking from respondents – the students of different study forms (dayl-time, part-time and correspondence) – to get more correct evaluations. The separate cultural features according to G. Hofstede described by such indexes as: power distance index (PDI); individualism / collectivism (IDV); masculinity / femininity (MAS); uncertainty avoidance (UAI); long-term orientation (LTO) are calculated to different study forms both in Lithuania and in Ukraine. The main cultural features in terms of the determined cultural indexes of students of different study forms were highlighted. General and specific features of different study forms were found in Lithuania and Ukraine.

Key words: cultural values, cultural dimensions, consumption, consumer society.