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Similarities and Cultural Differences as a Basis for the Development of Mutually Beneficial Relations Between Poland and Ukraine

SUMMARY

Ukraine and Poland are the neighbor countries, the proximity of which is not only a geographical location, but also similarities in the historical development of the last century, today's political direction. The cultural affinity of the two nations is particular important as the basis for the establishment of strong, mutually beneficial relationships between entities and citizens of the two states. The authors have conducted a comparative analysis of cultures of Poland and Ukraine. The study found that the Ukrainian and Polish have similar cultural values. Both countries have middle level of power distance and slightly elevated level of the desire to avoid uncertainty. Representatives of both nations prefer collectivist principles and moderate feminism and follow middle-context communication style. Despite the overall similarity, some difference in the behavioral culture of the two nations was marked. Thus, in Poland the uneducated persons have revealed the highest level of power distance while the same social stratum in

Ukraine have demonstrated the lowest level of this indicator. Young Ukrainian behave in more individualistic way compared to older people, while in Poland, by contrast, the trend from individualism (of the older generation) to collectivism (of young) is developed.

KEYWORDS: culture, Ukraine, Poland, cultural models, Hofstede model, Hall model, power distance, femininity, masculinity, high-context, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, individualism

STRESZCZENIE

Podobieństwa i różnice kulturowe jako podstawa rozwoju wzajemnie korzystnych stosunków między Polską a Ukrainą

Autorzy niniejszego artykułu dokonali analizy porównawczej kultury Polski i Ukrainy w oparciu o cechy kultur wyodrębnione przez Geerta Hofstede i Edwarda Halla. Wyniki przeprowadzonego badania pokazują, że Ukraińcy i Polacy wykazują średni poziom dystansu władzy i nieznacznie podwyższony poziom unikania niepewności. Przedstawiciele obu krajów preferują zasady kolektywistyczne¹, umiarkowaną kobiecość² i średnio kontekstowy styl komunikacji. Niniejsza analiza pozwoliła również wskazać pewne różnice w kulturach dwóch omawianych narodów: w Polsce ludzie bez wyższego wykształcenia wykazują wysoki poziom dystansu władzy podczas gdy ta sama grupa społeczna na Ukrainie charakteryzuje się najniższym poziomem tego wskaźnika. Ukraińska młodzież zachowuje się bardziej indywidualistycznie w porównaniu do osób starszych, natomiast w Polsce sytuacja jest odwrotna; obecnie zwycięża tendencja w odejściu od indywidualizmu (charakterystycznego dla starszego pokolenia) i przejściu do kolektywizmu (młodzież).

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- 1 Zarządzanie organizacją w kulturze indywidualistycznej (w przeciwieństwie do kultur kolektywistycznych) to zarządzanie jednostkami, a wykonywanie zadań w tej kulturze jest istotniejsze od kontaktów międzyludzkich. W Polsce, jak i w krajach postkomunistycznych, kolektywizm jest kojarzony z minionym systemem politycznym. Tymczasem Hofstede przez kolektywizm rozumie jaką pozycję jednostki wyznacza przynależność do grupy. Grupa popiera swoich członków w zamian za co oni pozostają lojalni wobec grupy.
 - 2 Męskość jest rodzajem cechą kultury organizacyjnej, która odznacza się stanowczym i agresywnym sposobem zarządzania. W tego typu organizacji konflikty rozwiązywane są poprzez konfrontację. Odwrotnością tego typu organizacji jest kobiecość.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: kultura, Ukraina, Polska, modele kulturowe, model Hofstede, Edward Hall, dystans władzy, kobiecość, męskość, wysokakontekstowość, unikanie niepewności, kolektywizm, indywidualizm

Ukraine and Poland are partner countries in many ways. They are close by their geographical location, the similarity of views on the state management system, and mutual economic interest.

Today Ukraine and Poland are reliable partners in the international community. The governments of these two neighboring countries have signed a number of agreements on cooperation in science and technology, economy and commerce, education and culture. Every day, the number of people taking part in Ukrainian-Polish relations increases. Entrepreneurs seek reliable partners in the sphere of business. Ukrainian youth have opportunities and interests in obtaining education in Polish higher education institutions. Academic institutions of both countries are actively working together, carrying out important research. Cultural events taking place in both countries are very popular.³⁴

The basis of each cooperation is the ability of people to understand each other and negotiate, especially if they belong to different cultural backgrounds. It is important to study the cultural differences between the two nations and develop recommendations to build prompt and effective communication to further develop the relationship between the two countries at the level of public institutions and at the level of citizens.

Many researchers' publications are known that have studied the problems and perspectives of intercultural communication in various aspects. Yurii Petrusenko justified the hypothesis regarding the trend of increasing the efficiency of international economic relations in the direction of the growing distances of worship, namely, he proposed to shift the emphasis from the export policy of the state towards the saturation of national goods by the cultural component.⁵

3 Офіційний сайт Посольства України в Республіці Польща [Electronic resource] – Date of access: 16.04.2017. <http://poland.mfa.gov.ua/ua/ukraine-pl/culture>

4 Офіційний сайт Міністерства іноземних справ Республіки Польща [Electronic resource] – Date of access: 16.04.2017. http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/p/msz_en/Foreign_policy/eastern_policy/ukraine;jsessionid=B0E62FBE9502AEAD2428AA097F82EC3C.cmsap1p

5 Петрушенко Юрій, Вплив дистанції культур на розвиток міжнародних економічних відносин, «Економіческая теория», 2009, № 2, с. 85-95. [Electronic resource] – Date of access: 16.04.2017. <http://dspace.uabs.edu.ua/jspui/handle/123456789/12467>

Jerome Dumetz and Anna Sosnovskaya presented a description of model characteristics and communication styles, including traditional modeling, nonlinear models, verbal and nonverbal communication, negotiation and feedback.⁶

Liliya Pan and Nataliya Romanchenko say there is a link between the type of culture and the degree of economic freedom, which in turn has an impact on international commercial activity.⁷

Nataliya Meshko and Olga Bulankina studied the willingness to introduce intercultural management in enterprises that differ in scale, the field of business activity and the country of origin of the company.⁸

Alexander Stegny drew attention to the main methodological problems that arise in intercultural research.⁹

Maria and Anna Aldoshyna investigated intercultural interactions in the field of social and business communication in international tourism.¹⁰

Tetiana Blyzniuk explored the Ukrainian business culture and offered practical advice on negotiating with representatives of Ukrainian culture.¹¹

Volodymyr Shulga, together with Iryna Sikorska, based on empirical studies, compared the most important values of young people in Poland and Ukraine. The researchers found a high level of similarity between the hierarchy of personal values of students of both countries, the most important ones being “happy family life”, “health”, “love” and “the presence of close friends.”¹²

Thus, despite the fact that the culture of both countries has been studied by different researchers over the past years, such research continues to be important as the society is constantly changing, becoming more mobile and constantly bringing elements of other cultures into our lives.

6 Дюметц Жером, Сосновська Ганна, Кросс-культурная коммуникацияУправленческое консультирование. – 2013 – № 8. – С. 83-90.

7 Пан Лілія, Романченко Наталя, Вплив культури на рівень економічної свободи і міжнародну комерційну діяльністьНаукові записки НаУКМА, 2008, т. 81: Економічні науки, с. 61-66.

8 Мешко Наталя, Буланкіна Ольга, Кросс-культурний менеджмент у корпоративних стратегіях міжнародних компанійЕфективна економіка, 2012, № 7. [Electronic resource] – Date of access: 16.04.2017. <http://www.economy.nayka.com.ua/?op=1&z=1274>

9 Стегній Олександр, Методологічні складності кросс-культурних дослідженьУкраїнській соціум, 2013, № 2 (45), с. 99-111.

10 Алдошина Марія, Брусільцева Ганна, Кросс-культурні комунікації в галузі туризму в умовах глобалізаціїБізнес Інформ, 2014, № 3, с. 197-202. [Electronic resource] – Date of access: 16.04.2017. http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/binf_2014_3_32

11 Близнюк Тетяна, Кросс-культурні особливості комунікацій в Україні, Економіка розвитку, 2011, № 1 (57).

12 ШУАБГА Володимир, СІКОРСЬКА Ірина, Особливості ієрархії цінностей польських та українських студентівВища освіта України, 2014, № 2, с. 94-101.

We have conducted comparative analysis of Polish and Ukrainian cultures for which we have developed a survey based on the cultural patterns devised by the Dutch professor Geert Hofstede¹³ and the American scientist Edward Hall.¹⁴ According to these models, cultural characteristics of national groups such as collectivism/individualism, feminism/masculinity, distance of power, avoidance of uncertainty and high/low context of communication were examined.

In the study we conducted, the “collectivism/individualism” parameter was measured to determine the level of integration of individuals into a group. The “feminism/masculinity” indicator points to the way in which social roles are shared between women and men in the society. Mankind predominates in those societies where the role of women and men is different. The “distance of power” parameter is an indicator of inequalities between people of different status, which shows significant gaps in salaries, privileges, etc. The criterion of “avoiding uncertainty” shows how representatives of a culture are inclined to tolerate uncertainty about the future or ambiguous situations. The indicator of the contextuality communication indicates the importance of nonverbal, parabolic signals in communication. Representatives of high context cultures, in contrast to representatives of low context cultures, are largely relying on words that differ from the communication signals, depending on the interpretation of the cultural environment.

The survey covered about 1,000 respondents, half of whom are representatives of Poland, the other – representatives of Ukraine. The study included the respondents’ age, sex, education, and area of activity. Sample structure of the respondents is presented in Table 1. The disadvantage of the test sample is an insufficient representation of people aged over 50 years.

Table 1. Sample structure of respondents

| | Men | Women | Up to 30 years old | 30-50 years old | Above 50 years old | Higher education | Secondary education |
|------------|-----|-------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Ukrainians | 43% | 57% | 41% | 35% | 24% | 77% | 34% |
| Poles | 40% | 60% | 86% | 10% | 4% | 23% | 66% |

During the study we offered the respondents to agree or disagree with certain statements which are indicative of the cultural values of the people.

13 Hofstede GEERT, HOFSTEDE Gert Jan, Minkov MICHAEL, *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind: intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival*, Geert Hofstede BV, 2010, 576 p.

14 MEAD Richard, ANDREWS Tim G., *International management: culture and beyond*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2009, 469 p.

After processing the questionnaires we received numerical indicators of each parameter, which may range from 0 to 100.

The analysis of the data received shows that both countries have generally similar value systems.

Thus, both countries have an average level of distance of power, although in Poland it is slightly higher (41 in Ukraine vs. 56 in Poland). This means that both Ukrainians and Poles, along with esteem for their supervisors at work appreciate initiative and rational thinking in subordinate employees, although the final decision belongs to the boss. In children, parents encourage character and ability to think independently but also respect for wisdom, experience and achievements of adults.

The common denominator for both cultures is the tendency to reduce the distance of power in people with higher education compared to respondents with secondary education levels. However, it is interesting that the highest distances of power in Poland (67) was showed by persons without education, while in Ukraine the same social layer showed the lowest level of this index (33). This difference, in our opinion, is a significant influence of education on the cultural development of the Polish population, whereas in the minds of Ukrainians, slightly distorted attitudes towards education, including higher education, predominate.

In addition, in both cultures, this indicator is somewhat higher among young people under the age of 30. Gender-based analyzes in Poland and Ukraine show that men have a higher level of power distance than women, so men are mentally more obedient than women.

As for the parameter of avoiding uncertainty, the study revealed a similar, above average level of the indicator (59 in Ukraine and 57 in Poland), which shows a rather loose attitude of people to ambiguous situations and uncertainty towards the future. People are accustomed to uncertainty, which manifests itself in the absence of clear, detailed, long-standing instructions, laws, regulations and business contracts. Even if there are certain rules, their implementation is not mandatory for everyone. On the other hand, the relatively high value of the indicator indicates the presence of anxiety and stress in the feelings of people, both at work and in everyday life. Like the Ukrainian people, so too do the Poles prefer short-term agreements instead of strategic plans and relationships.

In both countries more young people show lower levels of uncertainty avoidance compared to older people, but in Ukraine such differences are more significant, so Ukrainian youth are more exposed to risks and radical changes, which is related to the political situation in the country.

Both in Poland and in Ukraine, men are more likely to accept the challenge of unusual situations than women. In addition, in both national

groups, higher education increases the confidence of people in the future, which reduces the uncertainty avoidance index.

Another common feature of Ukrainian and Polish cultures is collectivism (collectivism in Ukraine was rated at 73, and in Poland at 71). This means that the interest of other people is of great importance to the representatives of the two nations. When making decisions, people consult with friends, family and co-workers. In the workplace, in difficult situations, it is more important to keep the team and harmony inside the team even at the expense of failure to meet production goals. People gather around their group and treat members of other groups suspiciously. During business negotiations decisions are made collectively. In addition, the high level of collectivism does not allow workers to take the initiative, formulate and express their own opinions personally, if they are different from the majority's opinion. The high level of collectivism, in part, is a legacy of Soviet times, during which collectivist principles were cultivated.

We found that men in both countries were more individualistic than women. However, the modern trends are different. For example, in Ukraine, young people behave more individualistically compared to older people, whereas in Poland, by contrast, the tendency is from individualism (in the older generation) to collectivism (in youth). The situation is similar in terms of education level. Representatives with higher education in Ukraine behave more collectively than representatives with secondary education and in Poland, the situation is opposite. The highest level of individualism in Ukraine was found among respondents without education, whereas in Poland the most individualistic behaviors were declared by those with higher education. In our opinion, this situation shows that higher education gives Poles confidence in their abilities.

In the division of social roles between women and men, the representatives of both cultures respect the principle of moderate femininity (In Ukraine the index of masculinity is 39, in Poland – 40, where the index was set so that the zero value of this indicator means the maximum level of femininity and the 100 indicator – the highest level of masculinity). In everyday life and in work, femininity manifests itself in the absence of clear boundaries between “male” and “female” fields of activity. On the other hand, low levels of this indicator are related to the fact that often equality between men and women is only nominal. It is generally accepted in the society of both countries that men are more competent in engineering and science. When employing, entities mostly prefer men and men are also more likely to move up the vertical hierarchy. Naturally, Ukrainian men and Polish men have a generally higher level of masculinity (i.e., lower level of femininity) than the women. For both cultures it is also a characteristic

that masculinity increases among young people. In part, the higher level of femininity in the oldest group is the result of socialist education, which conveyed the ideals of modesty, solidarity, compassion for the unfortunate and weak, distribution of wealth on the basis of “where they are necessary” rather than “who invested work and opportunity”.

Within the cultural “femininity/masculinity” dimension we found some differences in the level of education of respondents. In Poland, respondents with higher education showed the level of masculinity in comparison to representatives with secondary and no education levels, while the highest level of this indicator among Ukrainians was shown by persons without education. We believe that the masculine behavior of well-educated people is based on courage inspired with a high level of qualifications. Unfortunately, the masculinity of people without education is largely based on aggression and physical strength.

Results of the estimation of the level of *contextuality* in communication according to the cultural patterns by Edward Hall show an average level of this indicator in both countries (in Ukraine – 56, in Poland – 49). The level of contextuality of the two countries is at the edge which separates a culture of high contextuality from a culture of low contextuality. In practice, it is manifested in the fact that both cultures are poorly developed in the ability to interpret messages, including implicit messages, including nonverbal messages, so they hardly use them when communicating, more trusting words instead. On the other hand, when concluding important business contracts, the partners are based on long-term relationships, where personal attributes, the negotiating status, the relationship history, and recommendations of third parties are decisive. Still, the influence of Soviet times is still important when personal contacts were needed with representatives of public services and institutions when solving problematic questions.

Interestingly, in Ukraine, the level of communicative context is the same for all social groups participating in the study, but in Poland it decreases with the decline in age and education of respondents.

By providing the general characteristics of certain segments of the population, it can be said that in Ukraine and in Poland people with higher education are more appreciative of democracy, independence and sense of dignity, and they are more loyal to ambiguous situations and atypical tasks. However, education in Poland gives people confidence, which motivates them to take initiative and personal responsibility for their actions. Unlike poles, educated Ukrainian people prefer collective decision-making and collective responsibility.

In both countries, young people are more independent, appreciating the egalitarian principles of social order in comparison to their older

compatriots. It is clear that young people are less conservative and count more on power and energy in solving complex issues than on moderation and wisdom.

The two neighboring societies share common features and gender divisions. So, women profess egalitarian principles and are ready to question the government more than men do. On the other hand, Ukrainian and Polish women are more dependent on the collective than the representatives of the male gender. Naturally, women in conflict resolution and decision-making are more likely to be inclined towards consensus and moderation.

Thus, the results of the study confirmed the presence of not only the geographical, but also the cultural proximity of Ukraine and Poland. The similarity of cultural values can and should serve as a basis for the development of mutually beneficial cooperation between representatives of both countries. The only significant difference that we have to take into account when establishing relations and business friendships is the tendency of Polish youth towards collectivism against the individualism of Ukrainian youth.

Despite political and economic problems today, Poland successfully implements the objectives of foreign policy of the 21st century. First of all, it is improving the country's trade balance, strengthening Poland's position in Europe, presenting Poland as a country of success that loves freedom. Ukraine is faced with a similar challenge, so in our opinion, it is good for the Ukrainians to take advantage of the experience of the neighboring state.

The similarity of the cultural features of both nations is a reliable source and an indispensable condition for mutual understanding and trust in the relations of the neighboring countries.

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