

ISCTE - Business School
COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT
Written Test– January 06

You have 1 hour. Short answers will be appreciated! Good luck!

I.

How does a high score in the Power Distance Index (PDI) show itself in organizations?

II

You are about to make a business trip to Japan and Southeast Asia. You are supposed to have done your “homework” – so what are the main points you should pay attention to, when communicating and negotiating in this part of the world?

III

Choose one, A, B or C

A

“Confucian Dynamism” or “Long term orientation” is a 5th dimension added later to Hofstede’s model.

- a) what are the main differences between cultures with high and low scores in this dimension?
- b) the results obtained with the research work that lead to this dimension have been interpreted, and in a double sense, as a further proof that culture really matters. How?

B

Do you think there is some connection between the model of capitalism (anglo-saxon, continental, or whatever), which is prevalent in a given country and its national culture (as defined, for instance, by its scores in the cultural dimensions)?

C

“Masculinity/Femininity” is one of the dimensions of culture.
Do you agree with this term used by Hofstede?

IV

Read the case “How to Insult a Mexican Customer”. Can you explain what happened? How can you explain the behaviour of Jose Garcia Lopez and of Flemming?

How to Insult a Mexican Customer

Jose Garcia Lopez, a Mexican importer, had been negotiating with a Danish manufacturing company for several months when he decided to visit Copenhagen to finalize a purchase contract. The business meetings went smoothly, so on the last day of his visit Sr. Garcia confided that he looked forward to signing the contract after his return to Mexico.

That evening the Danes invited Sr. Garcia out for an evening on the town. Flemming, the 40 year-old export manager and his 21 year-old assistant Margrethe hosted an excellent dinner and then took their Mexican prospect on a tour of Copenhagen nightspots. Around midnight Flemming glanced at his watch.

"Sr. Garcia, I have a very early flight tomorrow to Tokyo. I hope you'll forgive me if I leave you now. Margrethe will make sure you get back to your hotel all right and then drive you to the airport tomorrow morning. I wish you a good flight!"

Next morning in the car on the way to the airport Jose Garcia was uncharacteristically silent. Then he turned to the young assistant: "Margrethe, would you please tell your boss I have decided not to sign that contract after all. It is not your fault of course. If you think about what happened last evening I believe you will understand why I no longer wish to do business with your company."

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COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Written Test– December 05

Short answers will be appreciated! Good luck!

I

“Masculinity/Femininity” is one of the dimensions of national cultures isolated by Hofstede.

What is it about? What are its consequences specifically for management and for organizational behaviour?

II

“Management Scientists are human” is the title of a paper by G. Hofstede, meaning that the theories and models developed by authors and researchers in Management are culture-bound. Could you indicate some examples?

III

“Cultural Relativism” is a very important concept for those who study national cultures. What does it exactly mean? Can you give examples?

IV

After reading the article from the Financial Times, explain why the differences regarding the matter in discussion are so important. What do you think is the best model for your country?

Directive turns into a battle of ideologies

By Raphael Minder in Strasbourg and George Parker in Brussels

The debate over the European Union's working-time directive legislation designed to protect the health and safety of workers - has turned into a broader ideological battle between social and liberal visions of Europe.

Several members of the European parliament who voted yesterday to scrap the British right to opt out of the 48-hour working week limit said they were concerned about preserving workers' rights in the face of rampant Anglo-Saxon economic liberalism.

Defenders of the opt-out see the working-time legislation as obsolete and as evidence of a Franco-German social model that has left the two countries' economies struggling with unemployment rates double that of the UK.

Jean-Luc Dehaene, the former Belgian prime minister who is a centre-right MEP, said: "I see this as almost a philosophical debate. Uniform rules worked well in the age of the industrial society but not in a modern information society."

The moment of truth could come if France and Germany revive their idea of a core Europe, embodying many of the ideals of a "social Europe", including harmonised taxes and more social protection.

"There seems to be an increasing divergence of opinion as to how the economy should progress," Charlie McCreevy, internal market commissioner, said yesterday.

Another European Commission official said: "That could cleave Europe in two."

According to some, the working time discussion has also been skewed by campaigning for crucial national referendums on the new EU constitution.

In France, there are widespread concerns about social dumping and the prospect of companies moving to east European countries that do not apply stringent labour standards.

Nirj Deva, a British Conservative MEP, said: "I find it appalling that we should challenge basic economic principles and vote to apply this cherished social model to the workplace just so that we can help the French perceive this constitution as a good thing."

The UK has been painted into a corner almost from the moment the directive was implemented in 1993 and it was given a general exemption that would be reviewed 10 years later.

Yesterday's vote means the British government faces an uphill struggle to keep the opt-out because the Strasbourg assembly voted with a bigger-than-expected majority in favour of abolishing the opt-out and any final deal will require the approval of MEPs.

As the discussion returns to EU ministerial level, the UK government remains confident that it can secure a blocking minority among the 25 EU member states to prevent MEPs scrapping the opt-out. Embarrassingly for Tony Blair, the UK prime minister, his efforts have been blunted by the fact that many of his Labour MEPs voted to end the opt-out.

One of them, Stephen Hughes, said yesterday: "An opt-out from a health and safety directive is wrong in principle. I am full of praise for the many great things that my party has done in government but this is one area where they have been dragging their feet."

What is certain is that the British government will continue to lobby hard to remain outside legislation that is regarded in London as a potent symbol of Brussels attempting to disrupt Britain's relatively flexible economy. According to John Monks, the head of the European Trade Union Confederation, British attempts to defend the opt-out are "the biggest diplomatic effort outside wartime". That may turn out to be not much of an exaggeration.

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COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Final Written Test – 16.DEC.03

I

“Uncertainty avoidance” is one of the dimensions of national culture isolated by Hofstede.

What is it about and what are its consequences in general, and specifically for organisational behaviour ?

II

Read the case “Baffled in Bangkok”.

How can you explain what happened?

What advice could you offer to Jane Reynolds?

III

Choose one, A, B or C

A

Even management thinkers (and the theories they produce) are, to a certain extent, dependent on national culture/origin.

Please explain the meaning of this assertion, giving two examples to illustrate your point.

B

Do you think there is any relationship between the model of capitalism (anglo-saxon, continental, or whatever) which is prevalent in a country and its national culture (as seen, for instance, in its scores in the cultural dimensions)?

C

Masculinity/Femininity is one of the dimensions of culture. Do you agree with this name used by Hofstede?

IV

Would you vote favorably the “European Constitution” that was put on hold last weekend by the European Council (summit of European Union leaders)?

Case “Baffled in Bangkok”

Jane Reynolds was the executive director of an important trade association in Singapore. An outgoing, enthusiastic American, she was successful in gaining the cooperation of the association's members.

Jane was pleased when she was asked to chair the annual meeting of a Thai women's organization in Bangkok. Although Mrs. Reynolds was an experienced speaker and discussion leader, this was the first time for her to chair a conference in Thailand. When Jane asked friends and colleagues for advice, they warned her that Thai women tended to be somewhat shy in public. They would probably be hesitant to offer their views and opinions in front of a large group.

So Jane was delighted when during the morning session first one and then two other Thai participants quietly offered useful comments and suggestions. She showed her delight in characteristic fashion: Getting up from the table with eyebrows raised and arms waving, Mrs. Reynolds exuberantly thanked the three women and praised them for their contributions, making sure to speak loudly enough that all the attendees would be able to hear.

The meeting then continued, but for some reason there was no more input from the floor. In fact the Thai women stopped responding to the chairperson's questions as well, remaining silent for the remainder of the conference.

After the meeting two of the Thai members who had spoken up approached Jane and tearfully asked, "Why were you so angry with us this morning? We don't know what we did to upset you so." Jane hastily replied that she wasn't angry or upset at all, but the two women just mumbled their goodbyes and walked sadly away.

Jane Reynolds returned to her hotel that afternoon completely baffled by the reaction of the Thai participants. She wondered why things had suddenly gone wrong at the conference after such a promising beginning...

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Final Written Test – 12.JUN.03

I.

“Mrs. Cresson, though not denying that she had employed her friends, insisted that she had done nothing wrong. Indeed, there was much muttering this week by Euro-MPs from the northern countries about the “southern way” of doing things. “There is no common European administrative culture”, laments one Dutch Euro-MP, but there are French and Italian habits, and then there are the Dutch and Scandinavian habits”.

(The Economist, January 16th 1999)

The quotation is related to the problems of the former European Commission led by Jacques Santer and specifically to the information that Euro-Commissioner Ms. Edith Cresson (a former Prime-Minister of France under Mitterrand) had employed friends in tasks for which allegedly they were not qualified and without observing the relevant rules for hiring personnel.

Could you elaborate on the comment of the Dutch Euro-MP?

II.

You are about to do a business trip to Japan and Southeast Asia. You are supposed to have done your “homework” – so what are the main points you should pay attention to?

III.

EITHER

How does a high score in the Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) show itself in organizations?

OR

“Management Scientists are human” is the title of a paper by G. Hofstede, meaning the theories and models they develop are culture-bound. Could you indicate some examples?

IV.

State some key differences between the “Anglo-Saxon” and the “Continental-European” models.

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COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Final Written Exam – 30.JAN.04

I

You are about to make a business trip to Japan and Southeast Asia. You are supposed to have done your “homework” – so what are the main points you should pay attention to when communicating and negotiating in this region of the world?

II

“Confucian Dynamism” or “Long term orientation” is a 5th dimension added later to Hofstede’s model.

- c) what are the differences between cultures with high and low scores on this dimension?
- d) the results obtained with the research work that lead to this dimension have been interpreted, and in a double sense, as a further proof that culture matters. How?

III

What are the main features opposing a monochronic to a polychronic culture?

IV

Do you think there is any relationship between the model of capitalism (anglo-saxon, continental, or whatever) which is prevalent in a country and its national culture (as measured, for instance, by its scores in the cultural dimensions)?

ISCTE Business School

COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Final Written Test – 8.JUNE.04

I

Even management thinkers (and the theories they produce) are, to a certain extent, dependent on national culture/origin.

Please explain the meaning of this assertion and give examples to illustrate your point.

II

You are about to make a business trip to Japan and Southeast Asia. You are supposed to have done your “homework” – so what are the main points you should pay attention to when communicating and negotiating in this part of the world?

III

Choose one, A, B or C

A

What are the main features opposing a monochronic to a polychronic culture?

B

Do you think there is some connection between the model of capitalism (anglo-saxon, continental, or whatever) which is prevalent in a country and its national culture (as defined, for instance, by its scores in the cultural dimensions)?

C

“Masculinity/Femininity” is one of the dimensions of culture. Do you agree with this term used by Hofstede?

IV

Read the article “Rediscovering Dutch Values”.

With reference to the last paragraph, what are the “core beliefs” of your country (or the country where you live), that should be “transmitted” in order “for integration to happen”?