PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF INTERETHNIC AND INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS

PATTERNS OF CROSS-CULTURAL BEHAVIOUR: INDIAN OUTLOOK

Soroka I. A.

PhD in psychology, Assistant Professor,
Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences
Sonipat, Haryana, India

The aim of this paper is to introduce the results of the research done in India on cultural specifics of business behaviour. Richard R. Gesteland [2, p. 16–17] identifies four main patterns of cross-cultural business behaviour, such as: *deal focus vs. relationship focus, informal vs. formal cultures, rigid-time vs. fluid-time, emotionally expressive vs. emotionally reserved* cultures.

Deal focused cultures are task-oriented, while relationship focused are more people-oriented. In relationship focused cultures you need to develop rapport before starting business. Relationship focused people find deal focused counterparts pushy and aggressive. Indians belong to relationship focused culture according to this classification. Informality may offend high status people from hierarchical cultures. Indians are a formal culture. Conflicts may arise because rigid-time businessmen regard fluid-time partners as lazy and undisciplined. According to Gesterland's classification Indian is a fluid-time culture. Also Indians are variably expressive or reserved.

F. Trompenaars created a taxonomy (or classification) of cultures [4]. Its analysis was derived from 15 years of training of managers, and more specifically from academic research. This used minimum samples of 100 people in each of 30 countries with similar backgrounds and occupations (75 per cent managers, 25 per cent general administrative staff) from a variety of multinational companies [3].

Trompenaars identified three main categories and eight sub-categories of cultural dimension. They are as follows: 1. *Relationships with people*: (Universalism versus particularism; Individualism versus collectivism; Neutrality versus emotionalism; Specificity versus diffuseness; Achievement

versus ascription). 2. *Attitudes to time*: (Future versus past orientation; Polychronic versus monochronic time; Time as a stream or a cycle). 3. *Attitudes to the environment*.

Universalism and particularism. Particularist countries according to the researcher think that the relationship is more important than the contract and that a good deal requires no written contract – the particular people and the particular situation matter more than the universal rules.

Individualism and collectivism. Trompenaars defined this value dimension as a conflict between what each of us wants as an individual and the interests of the group we belong to. Individualism is «a prime orientation to the self»; collectivism is a «prime orientation to common goals and objectives».

Neutrality and emotionalism. This dimension is about the display of feeling, rather than the level or range of emotions experienced. Trompenaars considered that emotional display is a major difference between cultures.

Specificity and diffuseness. This distinction is based on the concept of «life spaces». People have different senses of what is in the public and private domains of life and of how separate these different domains should be. For example, Swiss and Japanese people do not readily invite business contacts to their home; North Americans are much freer in this respect.

Achieved and ascribed status. This is a matter of the importance attached to what a person has done or is doing (what they have achieved through their own efforts) versus their position resulting from external factors. Trompenaars disputed the Western view that ascription is inferior to achievement, arguing that some ascriptions, such as age and experience, education and professional qualifications make good sense in predicting business performance [3; 4].

Concepts of time. There are several ways in which concepts of time vary between cultures – time as a cycle or a sequence; past, present and future emphasis; time as a precious resource which must not be wasted. Concepts of the environment: Do we control our environment or are we controlled by it?

Our research was conducted with the Indian students of elective 3 credit course «Cross cultural business behaviour» in Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences, city Sonipat, state Haryana, India. Students are 16-21 year-old people. The questionnaire on own culture consisting of 20 questions was used, where participants had to choose their answers on the scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree [3, p. 80].

The results show that in the dimension *Universalism versus particularism* 25% of respondents consider Indian culture *moderately particularistic*, for 67 % of students the result is *indeterminate.* 58% of interviewees estimated their culture as *collectivist.* 67% in *Neutrality and*

emotionalism, 75% in *Specificity and diffuseness* and 83 % of respondents in *Achieved and ascribed status* dimensions got *indeterminate* result. 42% of students consider their Indian culture *less time-conscious* whereas 58% are *indeterminate.* 50% of participants in the dimension *concept of time* estimated their Indian culture as *future-oriented.*

In conclusion, the results of this work show that while in some aspects there is a general agreement between researchers [1-4] describing Indian culture as collectivist, fluid-time and fairly formal the other ones are not so easy to identify. This can be explained by great diversity of religions, languages, traditions and customs within India, long complicated history, influence by other cultures and globalization. It will be beneficial for future work in this field of research to involve the Indian participants of different age categories as well as produce a cross-cultural study.

References:

1. Dignen B. Communicating across cultures. Cambridge: Cambridge university press., 2011. 96 p.

2. Gesteland R. Cross-cultural business behaviour. Denmark: Copenhagen Business press school., 2003. 347 p.

3. Guirdham M. Communicating across Cultures at Work. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2005. 360 p.

4. Trompenaars F. Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing Ltd., 1996. 192 p.