Time and Management from a Cross-Cultural Perspective
Time and Management
from a Cross-Cultural Perspective
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Время и менеджмент:
межкультурная перспектива

Под редакцией
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Dear Readers!

The materials presented in this volume are based primarily on the international symposium “Time and management in Germany and Russia” held at our university from September 16th to 18th, 2009. The symposium focused on the use of time as a prominent example for the antagonism between cultural diversity and global standards of economic development. Three issues guided the contributions and discussions. The first focused on similarities and differences between Germany and Russia, taking into account the scope of other European, American, and Asian countries. The second considered individual differences due to different organizational cultures, different branches of trade and industry, changing cultural values, and different personalities. The third issue concerned implications and applications of the reported findings in terms of general strategies and concrete training programs aimed at improving intercultural cooperation.

The symposium was associated with a very significant occasion for our university. In 2011, the International Institute of Economics, Law and Management of NNGASU celebrated its 15th anniversary. The Institute was established and supported by the EU program Tempus within the framework of Russian-German-Dutch universities’ partnership. Initially, the idea of the project was to achieve a deeper integration of our university into the world’s educational space. In recent years, our University has also consistently developed close relationships to various universities of other countries. The representatives of some of these universities have taken part in the work of the symposium.

Many participants did not visit us for the first time. For this symposium, we worked in particularly close cooperation with the Cologne University of Applied Sciences (Germany) and the Chemnitz University of Technology (Germany).

We also want to convey words of gratitude to our colleagues from other Russian universities, especially the Moscow State University of Economics, Finance and Statistics, the Volgo-Viatksy Public Administration Academy, and the Volga State Academy of Water
Transportation. We are glad to share the joy of our success with our colleagues.

Putting together the different perspectives expressed by the various contributors to the book, an important step on the way towards a unified view of time management has been achieved. This can help to bridge the gap between different countries as well as between different disciplines.

Special thanks go to the editors of the book for organizing the symposium and preparing the concluding materials. We hope that our cooperation will be successfully continued.

Professor Dr. Evgeny V. Koposov
Rector of the Nizhny Novgorod State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering (NNGASU)
Уважаемые читатели!

Представленные в настоящем издании материалы в основном отражают содержание международного симпозиума "Время и менеджмент в Германии и России", прошедшего в нашем университете. В центре внимания на нём находились вопросы использования времени как яркий пример антагонизма между культурным разнообразием и глобальными стандартами экономического развития. Три темы явились предметом докладов и дискуссий. Во-первых, это сходства и различия между Германией и Россией с учётом и других европейских, американских и азиатских стран. Во-вторых, индивидуальные различия, вытекающие из разных организационных культур, различных отраслей промышленности и торговли, изменяющихся культурных ценностей и различных личностных качеств. В-третьих, возможность применения полученных результатов в общих стратегиях и конкретных обучающих программах, направленных на улучшение межкультурного сотрудничества.

Симпозиум связан со знаменательным для нашего университета событием. В 2011 г. исполнилось 15 лет работы Международного института экономики, права и менеджмента ННГАСУ (МИЭПМ ННГАСУ), который создан и поддержан программой Темпус Европейского Союза в рамках российско-немецко-голландского университетского партнёрства. Изначально идея этого проекта состояла в том, чтобы сделать конкретный шаг в сторону более тесной интеграции нашего университета в мировое образовательное пространство. На протяжении последних лет наш университет последовательно развивал отношения и с университетами других стран. Представители некоторых из этих университетов приняли участие в работе симпозиума.

Многие участники были у нас не в первый раз. На этом симпозиуме мы особенно тесно работали с Кёльнским университетом прикладных наук (Германия), Техническим университетом г. Хемница (Германия).
Отдельную благодарность хотелось бы выразить также нашим коллегам из других российских университетов, особенно из Московского государственного университета экономики, статистики и информатики, Волго-Вятской академии государственной службы, Волжской государственной академии водного транспорта. Мы рады разделить со всеми коллегами радость успеха.

Объединяя различные мнения, представленные в докладах авторов сборника, можно сказать, что сделан очередной важный шаг на пути к единому пониманию управления временем. Это может помочь в сближении разных стран и разных дисциплин.

Особая благодарность издателям сборника за организацию работы и подготовку итоговых материалов. Мы надеемся, что наше сотрудничество будет успешно продолжаться.

Профессор, д.т.н. Евгений В. Копосов,
ректор Нижегородского государственного архитектурно-строительного университета (ННГАСУ)
A word of thanks

The book at hand is a result of several preparatory steps. A first initiation was marked by the international symposium “Time and management in Germany and Russia”. We are very grateful to Professor Dr. h.c. Adam W. Klein who encouraged the idea of a symposium and especially to the Karl-Vossloh Foundation which supported this symposium by a generous grant.

The symposium was held at the Nizhny Novgorod State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering (NNGASU) in Russia from September 16th to 18th, 2009. The university constituted an ideal surrounding for this purpose. The symposium greatly benefited from the competent and highly professional support of the Rector of the university, Professor Dr. E. V. Koposov. We are honored to express our deep sense of appreciation for this gift.

An event like this symposium required intensive planning and a bird’s eye for details. We have been fortunate enough to be backed by a team of very engaged and dedicated colleagues of NNGASU. Thanks to all those who assisted in the preparation and implementation of the symposium.

Especially we wish to express our gratitude to all participants who made valuable contributions and encouraged inspiring discussions. It was their productive suggestions that created the idea for this book.

The primary purpose of this symposium was to display and reflect theoretical, methodological, and practical advances in the use of time as a prominent example for the antagonism between cultural diversity and global standards of economic development. It focused on similarities and differences between Germany and Russia, taking into account the scope of other European, American and Asian countries.

The thematically suitable presentations given at the symposium have now been revised and integrated, and some additional contributions have been collected, too, for this volume. We would like to express our gratitude to all the authors for their contributions and their close cooperation.
Finally, special thanks go to Daniel Kleimenhagen for designing the cover based on an illustration by Hassan Al-Hakim.

The chapters received a brush-up in English. Nevertheless, the reader should realize that most of the authors are not native English speakers and be tolerant with their international English. The content of the book should count.

August 2012

Hede Helfrich
Erich Hölter
Igor V. Arzhenovskiy
In economic history, the notion of time has increased in importance with a progressing division of labor. Beyond that, global competition seems to accelerate the pace of time: Time has become an important factor of competitive success. Various concepts to improve on time use have been suggested: Time Based Management, Speed Management, Quick Response Management, and Fast Cycle Management (see Fink & Meyerevert, 2004). Closer inspection of these time concepts shows that they mirror the norms and values of Western industrialization. John Hassard (1966) calls this view the “linear time metaphor.” It is characterized by the principle of rationalization based on a technological perspective.

However, optimization in line with the linear time metaphor sometimes meets strong resistance. Numerous joint ventures have failed to succeed due to culturally different attitudes towards time management. Time concepts, time attitudes, and time behaviors seem to be embedded in the historic and cultural context of societies. So it is hard to simply transfer a time management practice from one culture to another. A study by Fink and Meyerevert (2004), based on interviews, revealed that more than half of the conflicts occurring between Western European and Russian managers were related to issues of time. Apparently, the use of time follows unwritten rules that cause friction if violated. According to the anthropologist Edward Hall, the use of time forms a “silent language” that affects everyday life and especially work habits (Hall, 1959; Hall & Hall, 1990). Thus, the use of time provides a prominent example for the antagonism between cultural diversity and global standards of economic development.

Although, in all cultures, work is organized according to temporal patterns, there are considerable differences in the way in which this is accomplished. Cultures differ in the importance they put on the
perception of time, the flow of time, and the significance of time in personal and organizational contexts. Effective insight into the role of such differences is of significant value for understanding the functioning of multinational and global organizations in dissimilar nations and cultures of the world.

Two dimensions of cultural diversity have been found to be strongly correlated with differences in the use of time: *individualism–collectivism* and *power distance* (Hofstede, 2001). Individualist cultures foster the needs, wishes, and desires of individuals. As such, they encourage autonomy and separateness, and appreciate orientation towards tasks higher than orientation towards persons. Collectivist cultures foster the needs, wishes, and desires of in-groups over individuals; and work gets done through webs of relationships. These cultures encourage values such as social harmony, cohesion, cooperation, and conformity. Cultures with high power distance (“vertical” cultures) stress status differences and workplace hierarchies, whereas cultures with low power distance (“horizontal” cultures) take hierarchies less seriously.

With respect to time attitudes and time behaviors, the time pattern of horizontal-individualistic cultures is characterized by outcome-orientated behavior, exact time scheduling, and high speed of decisions. In contrast, a vertical-collectivist time pattern is characterized by a process-orientated behavior, flexible time scheduling, and low speed of decisions.

One may ask whether all cultures should adopt the horizontal-individualist time pattern to be more effective in global competition and to avoid friction in intercultural management. The fact that countries showing this time pattern rank high in economic productivity as measured by the per capita gross national product index (GNP) or gross domestic product (GDP) seems to support such a suggestion (see Brislin & Kim, 2003). The reasons for this might include a concern that the efficient use of time would have implications for such business issues as attentiveness to customers’ schedules, stock market opening and closing times around the world, and effective scheduling of decision making meetings in the workplace. However, there are some major difficulties that threaten workers in countries with a linear time pattern. First of all, it has been shown that, at least in the USA, a fast pace of life is associated with a very high frequency of coronary heart disease (Levine, 1996, 2005). Second, the linear time
concept seems to be challenged even in Western societies due to increasing economic uncertainty. In this vein, it has been realized that preset time schedules and a time horizon characterized by distant goals and outcome-orientated behavior are too inflexible to cope with rapid economic changes. Third, new technologies are currently changing our temporal practices. Instead of trying to save time by speeding up, many business people have found that they can achieve more by doing several tasks at once to best utilize precious time (see Brislin & Kim, 2003). From these findings we may conclude that there does not exist one specific time management concept that ensures long-term organizational success, job satisfaction, and personal health.

The aim of the present book is to shed light on the role of cultural variations in the perception and management of time and temporal orientation processes in work organizations in the USA, Germany, Russia, India, Australia, and France.

Empirical experiences with use of time are reported and analyzed from the perspective of researchers and practitioners with different cultural backgrounds. Time use refers to organizational process sequences (e.g., workflows in manufacturing) as well as to the development of the enterprise as a whole. Two issues guide the contributions. One focuses on similarities and differences between different European, American, and Asian countries. The other issue takes into account individual differences due to varying organizational cultures, different branches of trade and industry, changing cultural values, and different personalities.

The contributions presented in this book are based on the international symposium “Time and management in Germany and Russia” held at the Nizhny Novgorod State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering (NNGASU) in Russia from September 16th to 18th, 2009. The symposium was supported by the Karl-Vossloh Foundation.

References


Chapter 1
Managing time or timing management?

GEERT HOFSTEDE

Abstract

Management in general and management of time in particular are culturally constrained. A distinction is made between national cultures and organizational cultures. National cultures differ mainly on the level of fundamental values; five dimensions of values are distinguished, with particular reference to Germany and Russia. For each of these, likely consequences for the management of time are specified. In addition, each organization grows its own organizational culture; organizational cultures differ mainly on the more superficial level of practices. Effective organizations have developed cultures that build on the strengths and compensate for the weaknesses of the national cultural background in fulfilling the organization’s tasks.

Управление временем или временное управление?

ГЕЕРТ ХОФСТЕДЕ

Резюме

Управление, в целом, и управление временем, в частности, напрямую связано с уровнем культуры. В статье даётся различие между национальной культурой и культурой организации.
National cultures and organizational cultures

*Culture* in general has been defined as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 4). In the case of national culture, the category is the nation. In the case of organizational cultures, the category is the organization as opposed to other organizations – other things such as nationality being equal. Next to national and organization, one can distinguish occupational cultures, business cultures, gender cultures, age group cultures (such as youth culture), and so on. However, the use of the word *culture* for all these categories does not mean that they are identical phenomena. For different kinds of social systems, their “cultures” may well be of a different nature. This is particularly the case for organizational cultures versus national cultures, if only because membership of an organization is usually partial and more or less voluntary, while “membership” of a nation is permanent and established at birth.

Culture as collective programming of the mind manifests itself in several ways. From the many terms used to describe manifestations of culture, the following four together cover the total concept rather neatly: symbols, heroes, rituals, and values. These can be imagined as the skins of an onion, with symbols representing the most superficial and values the deepest manifestations of culture, with heroes and rituals in between (Figure 1.1).
Symbols are words, gestures, pictures, or objects which carry a particular meaning only recognized as such by those who share the culture. The words in a language or jargon belong to this category, as do dress, hairdos, brands such as Coca-Cola, flags, and status symbols. New symbols are easily developed, and old ones disappear; symbols from one cultural group are regularly copied by others. This is why symbols represent the outer, most superficial layer of culture.

Heroes are persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics which are highly prized in a culture, and thus serve as models for behavior. Founders of companies often become cultural heroes. In this age of television, outward appearances have become more important in the choice of heroes than they were before.

Rituals are collective activities, technically superfluous to reach desired ends, but which within a culture are considered as socially
essential: They are therefore carried out for their own sake. Ways of
greeting and paying respect to others, and social and religious cere-
monies are examples. Business and political meetings organized for
seemingly rational reasons often serve mainly ritual purposes, such as
allowing the leaders to assert themselves.

Symbols, heroes, and rituals together can be labeled “practices.”
As such they are visible to an outside observer; their cultural meaning,
however, is invisible and lies in the way these practices are interpreted
by the insiders.

The core of culture is formed by values. Values are broad tenden-
cies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. Values are feelings
with an arrow to it: a plus and a minus side. They deal with:

- evil versus good
- dirty versus clean
- ugly versus beautiful
- unnatural versus natural
- abnormal versus normal
- paradoxical versus logical
- irrational versus rational
- immoral versus moral

Values are among the first things children learn – not consciously,
but implicitly. Development psychologists believe that by the age of
10, most children have their basic value system firmly in place, and af-
ter that age, changes are difficult to obtain. Because they were ac-
quired so early in our lives, many values remain unconscious to those
who hold them. Therefore they can only rarely be discussed, or di-
rectly observed by outsiders. They can only be inferred from the way
people act under various circumstances.

Two large research projects, one into national and one into organ-
izational culture differences (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 1990)
showed that national cultures differ mostly at the level of values,
while organizational cultures differ mostly at the level of the more su-
perficial practices: symbols, heroes, and rituals.

Figure 1.2 illustrates when and where our mental programs are ac-
cquired. Values are acquired in one’s early youth, mainly in the family
and in the neighborhood, and later at school. The two characteristics
present at birth are gender and nationality. By the time children are
10 years old, most of their basic values have been programmed into
their minds. The school as a socializing place relates to the student’s future occupation. Organizational cultures are learned through socialization in the workplace, which most people enter as adults – that is, with most of their basic values firmly in place. A business culture level (such as the culture of banking or of tourism) is placed somewhere between occupation and organization.

![Figure 1.2. Acquiring mental programs.](image-url)

The fact that organizational cultures are mainly composed of practices rather than values makes them somewhat manageable: They can be managed by changing the practices. The values of employees, once hired, can hardly be changed by an employer, because they were acquired when the employees were children.

**Dimensions of national cultures**

Speculations about national cultures are as old as the nations themselves. For example, Tolstoy in *War and Peace* wrote the following famous classification:

A Frenchman is self-assured because he regards himself personally, both in mind and body, as irresistibly attractive to men and women. An Englishman is self-assured, as being a citizen of the best-organized state in the world, and therefore as an Englishman always knows what he should do and knows that all he does as an Englishman is undoubtedly correct. An Italian is self-assured because he is
excitable and easily forgets himself and other people. A Russian is self-assured just because he knows nothing and does not want to know anything, since he does not believe that anything can be known. The German’s self-assurance is worst of all, stronger and more repulsive than any other, because he imagines that he knows the truth – science – which he himself has invented but which is for him the absolute truth. (Tolstoy, 1869, Book 3, Chapter 10)

This of course is very entertaining, but hardly helpful. It tells more about the author than about the subjects. Typical of the early statements about differences between nations is that they try to describe a “national character,” a kind of average or typical individual – who does not exist.

In the mid-20th century a series of empirical cross-cultural studies started, benefiting from the availability of systematic data collection, mathematical statistics, and computers. These studies did not search for differences between typical individuals, but measured psychological, sociological, and anthropological differences between national societies which each contain a variety of individuals, institutions, and organizations.

My own cross-cultural research used a large database of employee value statements collected in subsidiaries of a multinational corporation (IBM) in 40 countries (Hofstede, 1980, 2001). Subsequent studies and extensions (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) expanded the number of countries to 76, and the number of dimensions to five, to wit:

1. Power distance – that is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (such as the family) tend to accept, and expect that, power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society’s level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society, and anybody with some international experience will be aware that “all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others.”

2. Individualism on the one side versus its opposite, collectivism – that is the degree to which individuals in a society tend to be integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find societies in which the
ties between individuals are loose: Everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts, and grandparents) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. The word *collectivism* in this sense has no political meaning: It refers to the group, not to the state. Again, the issue addressed by this dimension is an extremely fundamental one, regarding all societies in the world.

3. *Uncertainty avoidance* deals with a society’s tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man’s search for Truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, different from usual. Uncertainty-avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations, by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level, by a belief in absolute truth: “there can only be one truth and we have it.” People in uncertainty-avoiding countries also tend to be more emotional, and motivated by inner nervous energy. The opposite type, uncertainty-accepting cultures, are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible, and on the philosophical and religious level they are relativist and allow many currents to flow side by side. People within these cultures tend to be more phlegmatic and contemplative, and not expected by their environment to express emotions.

4. *Masculinity* versus its opposite, *femininity*, refers to the distribution of roles between the sexes, which is another fundamental issue for any society, and to which a range of solutions are possible. The IBM studies revealed that (a) women’s values differed less among societies than men’s values; and (b) men’s values from one country to another contained a dimension from very assertive and competitive and maximally different from women’s values on the one side, to modest and caring and similar to women’s values on the other. The assertive pole has been called “masculine” and the modest, caring pole “feminine.” The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat
assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men’s values and women’s values.

5. Long-term versus short-term orientation: This fifth dimension was found in a study among students in 23 countries around the world, using a questionnaire designed by Chinese scholars (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). It can be said to deal with virtue regardless of truth. Values associated with long-term orientation are thrift, adaptation, and perseverance; values associated with short-term orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one’s “face.” The positively rated values of this dimension are found in the teachings of Confucius, the most influential Chinese philosopher who lived around 500 BC; however, the dimension also applies to countries without a Confucian heritage. Minkov (2007) found a similar dimension in the World Values Survey (WVS), a large and continuous worldwide database; in Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), the dimension was reconstructed from recent WVS data, allowing an extension of the number of countries covered to 93.

The country scores on the five dimensions are statistically correlated with a multitude of other data about the countries. For example, power distance is correlated with the use of violence in domestic politics and with income inequality in a country. Individualism is correlated with national wealth (per capita gross national income, GNI) and with mobility between social classes from one generation to the next. Uncertainty avoidance is associated with xenophobia and with the legal obligation in developed countries for citizens to carry identity cards. Masculinity is correlated negatively with the percentage of women in elected political positions, and with the share of their GNI that governments and private citizens of wealthy countries spend on development assistance to the poorer part of the world. Long-term orientation is correlated with national economic growth, at least as long as countries are poor, with savings rates, and with school results of children, especially in mathematics.
National cultures and the management of time in Germany and Russia

Clocks work the same way all around the world, but the meaning for management of the time they indicate differs in important aspects between national cultures. Figures 1.3 through 1.7 show, for each of the five dimensions of national culture described above, the relative positions of Germany and Russia, with some suggestions as to what these may mean for the management of time.

Figure 1.3. Power distance positions for Germany and Russia.
Russia and Germany among 76 countries and regions

Dimension Individualism—Collectivism

![Diagram showing Individualism–collectivism positions for Germany and Russia.](image)

*Figure 1.4. Individualism–collectivism positions for Germany and Russia.*

Germany and Russia among 76 countries and regions

Dimension Uncertainty Avoidance

![Diagram showing Uncertainty avoidance positions for Germany and Russia.](image)

*Figure 1.5. Uncertainty avoidance positions for Germany and Russia.*
Managing time or timing management?

Russia and Germany among 76 countries and regions

Dimension Masculinity – Femininity

RUS
feminine cultures
relation oriented, caring

GER
masculine cultures
performance oriented, ambitious

Figure 1.6. Masculinity–femininity positions for Germany and Russia.

Russia and Germany among 93 countries and regions

Dimension Long – Short term orientation

RUS
short term oriented
tradition, status spending, fads

GER
long term oriented
adaptation, saving, persistence

Figure 1.7. Long- versus short-term orientation positions for Germany and Russia.
In societies with larger power distances, like Russia, the time of people of higher rank has priority over the time of the lower ranks. Superiors arrive last so they do not have to wait; subordinates are accustomed to waiting. In societies with smaller power distances, like Germany, subordinates more often expect respect for their own agendas, and to be consulted and negotiated with about what to do when.

In more individualist societies, like Germany, managers try more often to deal with one person and one problem at a time. In more collectivist societies, like Russia, managers are better accustomed to dealing with complex social situations in which many people act and many things happen at the same time.

In societies with a larger uncertainty avoidance, to which both Germany and Russia belong, time is money; both managers and subordinates feel an inner need to be busy, even if the task does not require it. In societies with a smaller uncertainty avoidance, time is rather felt as a framework for orientation; whether time pressure is felt depends on the task.

In more masculine societies, like Germany, people’s work agendas are supposed to have priority over their family and leisure agendas. In more feminine societies, like Russia, it is generally accepted that there is more to life than work, and people will adapt their agendas to that if they can.

In our new measurements of countries’ position on the long-versus short-term orientation dimension, both Germany and Russia belong to the longer term oriented societies. Both are aware that to achieve something takes time and perseverance. To cite again Tolstoy in *War and Peace*: “The strongest of all warriors are these two: time and patience.” The USA is an example of a short-term oriented society, in which, for example, managers’ compensation can be based on quarterly results, leading to neglect of longer term goals.

The role of organizational cultures

In spite of their relatively superficial nature compared with national cultures, organizational cultures are hard to change, because they have grown into collective habits. Changing them is a top management task which cannot be delegated. A complication is that different parts of the organization may have different subcultures which need different approaches. Top management’s major strategic choice is