

Personality value orientations of students in Austria and Ukraine: Implications for Leadership

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify cross-cultural value orientations of individuals in different national cultures. To this end, a survey was conducted in Austria and Ukraine using the Rokeach Values Survey (RVS) (Rokeach 1973). This instrument uses lists of terminal and instrumental values that must be ranked by the survey respondents.

137 Ukrainian and 49 Austrian individuals participated in the study. The survey procedure included the ranking of the importance of terminal and instrumental values for individuals of both countries. Structures of value orientations were identified and analyzed. The results were examined for differences in the importance of terminal and instrumental values between representatives of the two cultures studied (cross-cultural). Main conclusions of the analysis include: value orientations of respondents in Ukraine and Austria show differences related to national characteristics of these groups of respondents (cf e.g., Hofstede 2011). These structural comparisons enable the identification of universal values in national and international environments. From this, recommendations for action can be derived for leadership work both within a culture and in an intercultural context.

1 INTRODUCTION

The internationalization processes of markets production and globalization have led to the need to study problems in personnel management with all its cultural and national contradictions. In periods of unstable development of the world economy, the problem of leadership in personnel management attracts particular attention at the intersection of different cultures. The culture of each country has its own leading values, determining the behavior of the bearers of these values. Thus, the leadership in each country has its own cultural validity and different understanding of the power and hierarchy essence in leadership.

Leadership is a specific type of interaction, effectively combining different sources of power and encouraging people to achieve common goals. One of the effective personnel management components is the influence of cultural factors on the staff of the company, which operates in the interaction of national cultures.

The culture of each country has its own basic values, determining behavior of the bearers of these values; therefore, leadership in each country has its own cultural nature. In order to lead a multicultural team, a leader should assess the cultural characteristics and culturally determined needs of his subordinates, since they have to meet the expectations of their subordinates. At the same time, leaders have to assess the characteristics of their national leadership style. Therefore, one of the main tasks of leaders in such companies is to identify these cross-cultural differences, to understand them, considering them in their practical activities. This will make it possible to form a cross-cultural approach to personnel management in

the company. The results of cross-cultural studies, conducted by A. Laurent (1983), indicate that there are huge differences between the leadership styles in different national cultures. Therefore, a leader who wants to work as efficiently as possible cannot apply one leadership style throughout his or her career.

2 PERSONALITY VALUES

Personality's values have been the object of various studies since the 50s of the 20th century. Now the value-oriented approach is one of the main approaches in cross-cultural management. So Almond et al. (1971) (1960), C. Kluckhohn (2013) and M. Rokeach (2008) used value survey to understand social behavior. Scientists (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992) understood values as deeply rooted abstract motives that guide, justify, and explain attitudes, norms, opinions, and actions. At the same time, values do not exist separately, they constitute an integral system, and each society or group of people has its own value structure typical for most of this society (or group).

Woodward and Saffakat (2016) noted that each personality has their own unique system of values in the form of hierarchy. Each personality has different value priorities and therefore the prevailing value accents in societies are different. Values have predictive and explanatory potential at the personal, organizational and social levels. In addition, values can reflect major social changes in society and even around the world.

In 1973, M. Rokeach created the Value Survey (Rokeach 1973), which is still used as a research tool in sociology, psychology and cross-cultural management. According to M. Rokeach value is "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence". This value system works as a general plan for resolving conflicts and making decisions. Two types of values represent two separate yet functionally interconnected systems wherein all the values concerning modes of behavior are instrumental to the attainment of all the values concerning end-states (Tuulik et al. 2016). Rokeach Values Survey (RVS) is based on the direct ranking of value lists (Rokeach 2008):

- (1) terminal values are belief that an end goal of individual existence is worth craving from personal and societal point of view (18 values);
- (2) instrumental values are belief that a way of action is the best in any situation from personal and societal point of view (18 values).

Terminal values are achieved due to instrumental values in the priorities that were determined by the respondent at the certain stage of the reflection of the life situation and himself (herself). Respondents determine for each of the value its place in their lives: from 1 to 18 (1 – most important value; 18 – least important value). Terminal values are evaluated first, followed by instrumental values. Many scientists have made various modifications to RVS. Therefore, V. Braithwaite and H. Law (1985) changed the original lists of values of RVS from a rank order task into a rating procedure. M. Tepeci (2001) proved the correspondence of personal values presented in RVS to the values of the organizational level in such a way that the analysis is allowed assessing the correspondence of a personality to an organization. Debats and Bartelds (1996) noted in their paper that personal values cluster in some coherent fashion to values domains with more specific meanings.

3 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES OF AUSTRIA AND UKRAINE

Historically, Austria and (at least the western part of nowadays) Ukraine had some commonalities, but the societies have developed very differently since that time. There is large evidence that culture has an influence on how children are raised, educated, and prepared to their professional future. Manikutty et al. (2007) relate Hofstede's cultural dimensions to teaching and learning approaches. They discuss positive, negative or neutral relationships of learning categories with power distance, collectivism vs. individualism, uncertainty avoidance, short term vs. long-term orientation, and masculinity vs. femininity. Apfelthaler et al. (2007), in a cross-cultural study, reports differences between Western and Eastern cultures in the role of the teacher as a career adviser, in teaching styles, in power distance between teachers and students, and in learning behind the required scope. With respect to education and students' later career, Akosah-Twumasi et al. (2018) discuss various intrinsic and extrinsic factors related to culture which play a role in students' career choice. According to them, teachers' and educators' cultural background plays a significant role in the process of youth's career decision-making. Lee (2001) analysed outcome expectations and professional development opportunities of young people and found that career maturity, confidence, and outcome expectations were culturally based.

4 METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this analysis was to apply descriptive analytics by studying differences in the ranked importance of both instrumental and terminal values of Austrian and Ukrainian respondents and to derive conclusions for management and leadership in both countries. The instrument used, the Rokeach Value Survey, is based on comparative ranking scales of different instrumental and terminal values. The research was conducted among students of the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria and Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics during 2021. An online questionnaire was used, and respondents ranked eighteen items each for terminal and instrumental values according to their own preferences as well as according to what they expect from their leaders. Completed responses from 137 Ukrainian and 49 Austrian respondents were included in the analysis.

In order to obtain comparable rankings, first of all, for each value at each position in the ranking, its relative frequency was calculated (number of mentions compared to all mentions). Then, all values were weighted in descending order according to their position in the ranking list, with first place receiving a weighting of 18, second place a weighting of 17, and so on. The last place was given a weighting of 1. This procedure ensured that both frequency of mention and position in the rankings were included in the analysis. Finally, the weighted results for each value were summed across all ranking positions to produce an overall position for each value. These rankings were compared for both countries. The results are discussed below.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Exhibit 1 displays the comparison of terminal and instrumental value for both countries ranked top-down from most important to least important. To visualize differences, arrows indicate whether a certain value is more important in Ukraine (red) or more important in Austria (green). For terminal values, health (physical and physiological) is ranked as most important for both, Ukraine and Austria. Happy family life, "Knowledge (ability to further education, personal enrichment, general culture, intellectual development, and happiness of others)" and "Happiness of others (well-being, development of other people, the whole nation and humanity)" are more important for Austrian than for Ukrainian respondents, while "Active and interesting life (abundant and emotional life)" is more important for Ukrainians.

From a cultural perspective, the findings are interesting. Terminal values (this term encompasses the goals that a person wants to achieve in the course of his or her life) may be different for different groups of people in different cultures (Tuulik et al. 2016). Accordingly, some (but few) differences between countries were found in our study. Those refer mostly to the larger importance of happiness for oneself and others and the possibility to get further education, both being more important in Austria. From a cultural perspective, this can be explained by economic differences between the two countries, where in Austria the immediate need to acquire a certain standard of living through education is not present to the same extent as in Ukraine. Ukrainian respondents (students) are striving to sustain themselves healthy and emotionally stable, trying to develop themselves and create freedom and independence. The smaller importance of happiness for oneself and others for Ukrainian students is result of influence of such a feature of the mentality as hutorianstvo (farming) (Lepeyko et al. 2010), means elimination from participation in solving social problems, lives on the principle: "none of my business".

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Figure 1. Comparison of terminal and instrumental value rankings.

With respect to instrumental values, "intelligence and education (wide knowledge)" was much less important for Austrian respondents than for Ukrainian ones. The same holds for "self-control", "rationalism", and "accuracy (ability to keep order in things and affairs)". "Buoyancy (sense of humor and luck)", "Tolerance (tolerant attitude to views and ideas of others, ability to forgive the mistakes of others)" and "Courage (in views and opinions)" was much more important to Austrian respondents. Instrumental values can be seen as preferable modes of behaviour and the means of achieving the terminal values. Through the lens of culture, the results are much more in accordance with assumptions from cultural research. Ukrainian students have an understanding that straightforward education, compared with self-discipline, rationalism and accuracy are main instrumental values through which terminal value aspirations can be achieved. Austrians, in contrast, bet on humour, luck, tolerance and courage to achieve their terminal values. These findings can be explained by different educational systems as well as by a generally more individualistic, less power-distant, and less uncertainty-

avoidant cultural perception in Austria, where the individual sees him/herself free of external constraints, as it were, and trusts in himself, his luck and his courage.

6 IMPLICATIONS

For cross-cultural research, this study contributes to a better understanding of the Rokeach Value Inventory in a cross-cultural context. Terminal and instrumental values are ranked in different ways by representatives of different cultures. Both confirming and contradictory findings have been obtained. For leadership research, the study shows that value-based leadership must take into account a cross-cultural context.

For managers and future leaders, this study contains suggestions for leadership work with different cultures. Employees from different cultural backgrounds have to be guided by different values. Some values are similar, but instrumental values in particular - those used to fulfill terminal values - are very different among representatives of different cultural groups.

7 LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This cross-cultural study is not without limitations. First, sample sizes, especially in Austria, were small, which might reduce reliability. Replicating the study with larger samples and comparing the results would increase the robustness of this research. Secondly, the study was conducted in a "COVID"-year. This was an extraordinary situation which can only be compared to a limited extent with years without such a direct and immediate threat. Different values (e.g., the value of health) may have been overly expressed in the study. Finally, replicating this study in different countries with different cultural dimensions would help to better isolate the contribution of culture to terminal and instrumental values of future employees.

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