

The Impact of Cultures on Human Behaviors: a Qualitative Meta-Analysis of Cross-Cultural Studies

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Abstract - In recent years, globalization has become a topic of public interest in the social sciences, humanities, public policy, and educational fields (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). In this globalization era, many organizations are challenged to manage increasing diversity (Manning, 2003). This study examines publically available documents, peer-reviewed journals, books, and research studies that investigate the impact of cultures on human behaviors in different contexts and the methodology used in cross-cultural studies with the emphasis on educational setting. The study uses a qualitative meta-analysis design to answer two research questions. What are the impact of cultures on human behaviors and what are the methodologies used in this areas? Findings reveal two main types of culture, namely national culture and organizational culture, which influence on human behavior within educational setting.

The study finds that there are two major types of culture focused by these academic literature which are national culture and organizational culture. The two have impact on different but somehow linked human behaviors in academic setting. To conclude, national culture influences on 1) attitude, purpose, motivation, and barrier for e-learning, 2) personnel selection decision, 3) economic and environmental performance, 4) learners' interaction both among learners and with instructors, 5) users' communication technology-related behaviors, and 6) curriculum change. Organizational culture has impact on 1)

satisfaction and conflict management, 2) instructional leadership, and 3) job satisfaction. It also linked to type and size of academic institution.

The studies acquire both quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methodology method provided that quantitative and mixed-methodology having a larger sampling size. The major sampling strategy is purposeful sampling as to ensure multicultural nature of samples. It is to suggest that there are improvements can be made as the research strategies used in these studies neglect the multiple variables that may impact human behaviors.

Keywords - Cross-Cultural Management, Hofstede's National Culture Dimensions Model, Cross-Cultural Studies

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, globalization has become a topic of public interest in the social sciences, humanities, public policy, and educational fields (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). In this globalization era, many organizations are challenged to manage increasing diversity (Manning, 2003). With the attempt to understand cultural aspects, studies have been conducted to investigate the influences of culture on human behaviors. The understanding of the influences of national cultures on human behaviors is important in various organizational settings as such understanding helps researchers predict organizational behaviors. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze empirical studies that

investigate the effects of cultures on human behaviors in various contexts as well as methodological tools used to explore this areas in cross-cultural studies.

II. THE PURPOSE

This qualitative meta-analysis aims to explore the impact of cultures on human behaviors and the methodologies used in this areas with the emphasis on educational settings.

III. METHOD

The study uses a qualitative meta-analysis design to answer two research questions which are: 1) what are the impact of cultures on human behaviors? and 2) What are the methodologies used in this area?. Literate requirements included: accessible through Northeastern University online library, a cross-cultural studies, and informed the impact of culture on human behaviors. There were two steps in identifying of target literature. First, a search for peer-reviewed journals and a seminal work in the area of cultural impact on human behaviors was conducted using Northeastern University library online library search tools. Then, a list of publications references was created using RefWorks, a web-based bibliography and database manager. Second, a seminal audit research table was created. The table consists of one column and four rows that demonstrate how the model has developed over time. The first row presents the title of the article, the journal in which the article was published, and the date of the article in chronological order. The second row shows the author of the article and his or her disciplines. The third row presents a brief synopsis of the article. The last row shows the contributions of each article. Once the table was created, the author compared, contrasted, identified patterns, and eliminated irrelevant journals and books.

IV. FINDINGS

A. *Types of Culture*

Findings reveals two types of cultures that have been examined in cross cultural studies

including national culture (Bing & Ai-Ping, 2008; Cheung & Chan, 2010; Cronje, 2011; Hofstede, 1980; Jippes et al., 2013; Keller et al., 2009; Kessapidou & Varsakelis, 2003; Peng & Lin, 2009; Richards & Bilgin, 2012; Straub, 1994; Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005; Tapanes et al., 2009), and organizational culture (Choi, 2013; Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Miharty, 2013; and Sahin, 2011).

1. **National Culture:** Bing & Ai-Ping (2008) suggested that national culture includes language, behaviors, values, norms, beliefs, and practices shared by a group of people in a particular country. Literature reveals impact of national culture in various settings (Bing & Ai-Ping, 2008; Cheung & Chan, 2010; Keller et al., 2009; Kessapidou & Varsakelis, 2003; and Peng & Lin, 2009). National cultures affect attitudes, purposes, driving factors, and barriers to using e-learning at an Argentinean and a Swedish university (Keller et al., 2009); the decision to choose a managing director of 420 foreign firms (Kessapidou & Varsakelis, 2003); economic and environmental performance of 51 countries (Peng & Lin, 2009); and learners' interaction in the web-based learning environment among the learners from two distance education institutions, Shanghai TV University and Wawasan Open University (Bing & Ai-Ping, 2008). Three marketing professors from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, the University of North Florida, and Maria Curie-Skłodowska University investigate the effects of national culture on interaction between business students and professors across four countries, China, New Zealand, Poland, and the United States (Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005). Professors from information technology backgrounds like Cronje, a professor at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa; Richards and Bilgin, professors at Macquarie University; and Straub, a professor at Georgia State University, focus on the impact of culture on communication technology users' behaviors in many contexts including an internet-supported Masters' course (Cronje, 2011), a virtual team project consisting of students from Australian and Singaporean (Richards & Bilgin, 2012), and

Japanese and American firms (Straub, 1994). Professors from the College of Education at the University of South Florida examine the effects of culture on online courses (Tapanes et al., 2009), and professors from the Department of Educational Development and Research, Institute for Education, at Maastricht University in the Netherlands investigate the effects of culture in curriculum change (Jippes et al., 2013).

2. Organizational Culture: Organizational culture is investigated by many researchers (for example, Choi, 2013; Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Miharty, 2013; and Sahin, 2011). From the review, there is one study exploring organizational culture in a business context (Choi, 2013) and other three studies exploring organizational culture in educational contexts. According to his study, Choi, a professor of the Department of Counseling Psychology at Hanyang Cyber University in South Korea indicates that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and conflict management culture in the bank branches in Washington. In the educational setting, school cultures are explored in Turkey (Gümüşeli, A.I., & Eryilmaz, A., 2011; Sahin, S., 2011); and Indonesia (Miharty, 2013). In their study, the two professors from two Turkish Universities, Yildiz Technical University and Yildirim Beyazit University, indicates the relationship between the collaborative school cultures (CSC) and the “type” and “size” of schools (Gümüşeli, A.I., & Eryilmaz, A., 2011). The relationship between instructional leadership style and school culture in Turkey is examined by a professor from Dokuz Eylul University (Sahin, S. 2011). The influence of organizational culture on job satisfaction towards improving the quality of education at the University of Riau is investigated by its educational professor (Miharty, 2013).

B. Methodologies Used

A variety of methods including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods, are employed in the study of culture. The majority of the studies of the impact of culture on human behaviors use quantitative methods

(Cheung & Chan, 2010; Choi, 2013; Gogus et al., 2012; Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Hofstede, 1980; Keller et al., 2009; Kessapidou & Varsakelis, 2003; Miharty, 2013; Peng & Lin, 2009; Peretz & Fried, 2012; Richards & Bilgin, 2012; Sahin, 2011; Tapanes et al., 2009). Some acquire a qualitative approach (Bing & Ai-Ping, 2008; Cronje, 2011; Dytynshyn & Collins, 2012; Henstrand, 1993; Jippes et al., 2013), and only three research studies use mixed methods (Herguner & Reeves, 2000; Straub, 1994; Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005).

1. Quantitative Methods: Quantitative studies in the field of the impact of cultures seem to be problematic in many areas such as level of analysis, validity caused by a lack of attention to multiple influences or variables, and generalizability. Most quantitative studies that use Hofstede’s cultural dimension model as a theoretical framework do so because their level of analysis is mainly at national level. The use of this model in quantitative research studies is criticized as focusing on the homogenous elements within the whole country but ignoring national heterogeneity (McSweeney, 2002). However, a group level is evident as a level of analysis in other quantitative studies that use other models as their frameworks. These studies pay attention to subcultures such as school culture (Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Sahin, 2011), organizational culture (Choi, 2013; Miharty, 2013) and the professional culture of STEM and non-STEM educators (Gogus et al., 2012).

From the review of the studies of the impacts of national culture on human behavior, it can be seen that most studies that use quantitative methods seem to oversimplify their results and ignore other influences including language variables, which may impact behaviors of students in an online course (Tapanes et al., 2009), and the decision to choose the leaders of foreign firms (Kessapidou & Varsakelis, 2003); class diversity, which may impact class participation of students who are from the minority culture (Tapanes et al., 2009); and university’s spending on technology, which may impact

students' attitudes toward e-learning (Keller et al., 2009). Similarly, in the study of the impact of group cultures, important variables such as teachers' morale, school performance, and parental participation are missing from the study of the impact of collaborative school culture (Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Sahin, 2011). The availability of the technological infrastructure is ignored in the study of the impact professional culture of STEM and non-STEM educators on the use of technology in two regions in Turkey (Gogus et al., 2012). And other variables that impact job satisfaction such as coworkers (Garner, 1995; LaRocco, House, & French, 1980), professional competence (Ma & MacMillan, 1999), job-or-role-related characteristics (Knox & Anfara Jr., 2013), and pay (Maslow, 1954) are ignored in the study of the impact of organizational culture on job satisfaction (Miharty, 2013).

The last issue found in the reviewed quantitative research is the issue of generalizability. The generalizability problem is due to two main reasons: limited sources of data (Peng & Lin, 2009) and a small sample size (Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Richards & Bilgin, 2012; and Sahin, 2011).

2. Mixed Method: There are only three research studies that use the mixed method (Herguner & Reeves, 2000; Straub, 1994; and Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005). Similar to the quantitative studies, the mixed method studies appear to share the same weakness, which is the negligence of multiple influential factors. In the studies of the impact of culture, the mixed method research does not pay attention to multiple variables including, as one point, the access to information technology, which may impact the IT diffusion of the two cultures, Japanese and American (Straub, 1994), and as another point, the inferences of other cultures from traveling or extended stays in other countries (Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005). An issue of reliability of the data is found in Cheung & Chan's study (2010). In their longitudinal study aiming to explore cultural change through the implementation of total quality

management in a Turkish University, the teachers and the research subjects admitted that they filled in the information in the questionnaire without paying attention, and some felt that they were forced to fill in the questionnaire.

3. Sample Size: Most studies explicitly state their sample size. However, interestingly, some articles do not mention their sample size. From the review, quantitative studies use a large number of participants ranging from 45 to 116,000; 116,000 employees (Hofstede, 1980); 26 online teachers and 40 online students (Tapanes et al., 2009), 269 teachers (Keller et al., 2009); 756 school principals (Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011); 157 teachers (Sahin, 2011); 18 Australian students and 27 Singaporean students (Richards & Bilgin, 2012); 1,723 Turkish teachers (Gogus et al., 2012); 743 banker tellers (Choi, 2013); and 60 University staff (Miharty, 2013). Similar to quantitative studies, the mixed method studies use large numbers of participants including 209 Japanese workers and 711 American workers in the study of the effect of culture on IT diffusion, (Straub, 1994); and 839 business students in the study of the impact of culture in student-teacher interaction (Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005). Unlike quantitative and mixed method studies, qualitative studies use a small sample size, fewer than 20 participants: 12 graduate students and 3 teachers (Cronje, 2011); 19 adult ESL students (Dytynshyn & Collins, 2012); and 27 Australian medical students (Jippes et al., 2013).

4. Sample Strategy: The authors of most articles in this review do not state many details about their sample strategies. Their sample strategies appear to rely on purposeful and random samples. All of the qualitative studies in this review use purposeful samples (Bing & Ai-Ping, 2008; Cronje, 2011; Dytynshyn & Collins, 2012; Henstrand, 1993; and Jippes et al., 2013). Similarly, most of the quantitative research uses purposeful sample techniques (Cheung & Chan, 2010; Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Keller et al., 2009; Kessapidou & Varsakelis, 2003; Peng & Lin, 2009; and Richards & Bilgin, 2012), and some

use random sample techniques (Choi, 2013; Gogus et al., 2012; Hofstede, 1980; and Tapanes et al., 2009). One quantitative study uses a voluntary sample (Sahin, 2011), and one indicates the use of Slovin's formula to recruit samples (Miharty, 2013). Researchers who use the mixed methods approach use both random samples (Straub, 1994) and purposeful samples (Herguner & Reeves, 2000; Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005).

Most of the studies that use purposeful strategies indicate the need to select samples that represent different cultures in order to compare behaviors of participants who are from different cultural backgrounds. One limitation caused by a sample strategy is that when looking at national culture and organizational culture, researchers do not pay attention to other influential factors that might affect participants' culture. In addition, in the study of the relationship between instructional leadership and school culture, the voluntary sample may not reflect the real attitude of all the teachers (Sahin, 2011) because the participants who volunteer to participate in the survey may be those who have positive attitudes toward instructional leadership and school culture. Their positive attitudes, which make them volunteer for the survey, may result in the positive relationship between instructional leadership and school culture present in the findings.

5. Data Collection, Management, and Analysis: Questionnaires are widely used as instruments to collect data for quantitative and mixed method research in paper format (Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Hofstede, 1980; Keller et al., 2009; Sahin, 2011; Straub, 1994; and Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005), electronic format (Tapanes et al., 2009), and a combination of both formats (Gogus et al., 2012). The paper format seems to be the most popular format used by researchers. Questionnaires used in cultural studies include Values Survey recommended by Hofstede to use in a cross cultural study (Hofstede, 1980); School Culture Survey (Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011); Instructional Leadership Inventory and Inventory School Culture (Sahin, 2011); and

Job Satisfaction Survey and Conflict Management Survey (Choi, 2013). These questionnaires are a combination of 5-point Likert scales (Choi, 2013; Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Hofstede, 1980; Keller et al., 2009; Sahin, 2011; and Straub, 1994), 7-point Likert scales (Choi, 2013; Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005); open ended questions (Keller et al., 2009; Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005); and task scenarios, which were used to measure respondents' choices of technology in different situation such as scheduling, budgeting, and personal issues (Straub, 1994).

The data in the quantitative studies is analyzed using different statistical methods such as ANOVA (Gümüşeli & Eryilmaz, 2011; Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005); t-test (Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005; Tapanes et al., 2009); multiple regression (Peng & Lin, 2009; Straub, 1994); multinomial logit model (Kessapidou & Varsakelis, 2003); chi-square analysis (Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005); and correlation (Cheung & Chan, 2010; Gogus et al., 2012; Peretz & Fried, 2012). Descriptive analysis also uses percentages, means, and frequencies (Keller et al., 2009; Miharty, 2013). Most of the studies do not mention the software packages they used. However, two software packages, LISREL version 8.72 (Choi, 2013) and SPSS (Sahin, 2011; Straub, 1994) are found in three studies.

From the review, various data collection methods are used in qualitative studies including audio taping of interviews (Herguner & Reeves, 2000; Jippes et al., 2013; and Straub, 1994); open-ended questionnaires (Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005); transcription of online students' posts in discussion boards and chat sessions (Bing & Ai-Ping, 2008); collecting passages from journals, student term papers, electronic artifacts such as websites, and Powerpoint presentations (Cronje, 2011); and video recording (Dytynshyn & Collins, 2012). There are a variety of data analysis methods in the qualitative studies. The transcription of interviews, video, and other data such as online discussions and students' papers are analyzed by using different techniques including

Flanagan's critical incident technique to find patterns or themes (Swanson, Frankel, & Sagan, 2005); content analysis (Bing & Ai-Ping, 2008); using code and looking for themes (Cronje, 2011; Dytynshyn & Collins, 2012); and thematic cross-case analysis (Jippes et al., 2013).

V. CONCLUSIONS

By analyzing studies from a variety of publications, a diverse and broad perspective on the effects of culture on human behaviors topic and on the methodologies used to explore the topic is achieved. Culture is multidimensional. It involves national culture at national level and organizational culture at organizational or corporate level. This study suggests that a study of the impact of culture on human behaviors needs to consider different types of culture at different levels. In terms of methodologies use, the study reveals the limitations of cultural model used in many quantitative studies. These qualitative approach neglects multiple variables that may affect human behaviors besides culture. In term of level of analysis, quantitative studies in the field focus heavily on culture at the national level, while the mixed method seems to bridge the gap between the impact of culture at national level and group level. However, similar to quantitative studies, the mixed methods' limitation is a negligence of multiple variables. For future research on the impact of culture in cross-cultural study, this study suggests a multi-level analysis of culture and the use of mixed method for the methodological process.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study suggests that a study of the impact of culture on human behaviors needs to consider different types of culture at different levels. In terms of methodologies use, the study reveals the limitations of cultural model used in many quantitative studies. These qualitative approach neglects multiple variables that may affect human behaviors besides culture. In term of level of analysis, quantitative studies in the field focus heavily

on culture at the national level, while the mixed method seems to bridge the gap between the impact of culture at national level and group level. However, similar to quantitative studies, the mixed methods' limitation is a negligence of multiple variables. For future research on the impact of culture in cross-cultural study, this study suggests a multi-level analysis of culture and the use of mixed method for the methodological process.

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(Arranged in the order of citation in the same fashion as the case of Footnotes.)

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