

# The sum total of the equipment of the human individual

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Culture in ancient times was defined as "the sum total of the equipment of the human individual, which enables him to be attuned to his immediate environment on the historical past on the other". It reflects in effect what humans have added to Nature. It comprises the spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society and includes, in addition to the arts and letters, the value systems, traditions, modes of life and beliefs of the society. It also absorbs from other cultures and undergoes changes with time, sometimes beneficial, sometimes regressive. (Barlas, 15).

Culture shock is a severe psychological reaction that results from adjusting to the realities of a society radically different from one's own. The actual degree of culture shock may vary depending on the differences and similarities between the society studied and the person's own society. The symptoms may range from mild irritation to surprise or disgust. (Scupin, 124). Usually after the person experiencing culture shock learns the norms, beliefs, and practices of the community, the psychological disorientation of culture shock begins to diminish.

This paper will be based upon culture shock and international business.

There are three areas where culture shock could affect you:

1. Emotions-you have to cope with the stress of international work and keeping an emotional balance in order to perform in a business.
2. Thinking style- you have to understand how your counterparts think and be able to develop culturally effective solutions.

3. Social skills and social identity- you need effective social skills to establish new business relationships. (Marx, 25).

This differs from manager to manager, some managers seem to adapt in an almost chameleon -like way to different countries, whereas others cling desperately to their habits and their national approaches. Working in a new culture can produce a variety of reactions, such as;

Inappropriate social behavior

Inability to get close to your business partner and clinch the deal

All of the above are possible reactions to culture shock, the shock we experience when we are confronted with the unknown the " foreign". The term culture shock was coined by the anthropologists Oberg, who explained both the symptoms and the process of adapting to a different culture. The experience of a new culture is seen as an unpleasant surprise or shock- a shock that occur when expectations do not coincide with reality. (Marx, 5). In his original article, Oberg lists six main aspects of culture shock:

1. Strain caused by the effort to adapt.
2. Sense of loss and feelings of deprivation in relation to friends, status, profession and possessions.
3. Feeling rejected by or rejecting members of the new culture.
4. Confusion in role, values and self-identity.
5. Anxiety and even disgust/anger about foreign practices.

6. Feelings of helplessness, not being able to cope with the new environment.

Culture shock in all its diverse form is completely normal and is part of a successful process of adaptation. Oberg also developed a model of adaptation that suggests that going abroad or working internationally put you through or cycle of distinct phases on the way to final adaptations.

The first stage is the honeymoon phase, where all encounters in a new place are seen as exciting, positive and stimulating. The new life is viewed as providing endless opportunities and the manager is usually in a state of exhilaration. There is openness and curiosity, combined with a readiness to accept whatever comes. Most importantly, at this stage judgment is reserved and even minor irritations are suppressed in favor of concentrating on the nice things about the job, the country, the colleagues, the food, etc.

In the second phase, culture shock sets in- the manager realizes that something is not quite right. This experience of foreignness can start with a creeping awareness of disorientation and a feeling of not quite knowing what is going on. It can also include very negative symptoms, such as stress (being unable to sleep or eat), irritability, and a negative view of the job, the country and colleagues. This phase is characterized by a general unease that can involve being uncomfortable with the new situation but can border on hating everything foreign.

The main reason for these symptoms is an uncertainty about our surroundings our future and ourselves. The usual signs of orientation and

belonging do not exist, we don't quite know who we are without the familiar social context, and the way our foreign colleagues behave seems all wrong. How individual managers deal with this particular phase and its emotions, thinking and expectations are essential for their overall adaptation in the long run.

The ideal approach is to use the symptoms and the unpleasantness as a clear indicator that it is time to change our approach and to engage in some form of self-development both in dealing with our emotions and in understanding ourselves and others. The worst type of approach is to ignore the symptoms, to resort to superficial solutions or to adopt a rigid stance of believing that only our methods are correct and forcing these methods/management techniques on foreign colleagues.

The third phase of recovery usually starts with accepting that we have a problem and that we have to work on it. Both recovery and the final adjustment phase usually involve a compromise between the feeling and thinking of the honeymoon phase and the culture shock phase. This compromise is between our exaggerated expectations and reality. In the final, adjustment stage managers are able to work effectively, know the limitations ways of doing things and most importantly, are able to be more flexible. (Marx, 8).