

Boundaries of Possible Solutions of Management Problems Caused by Cultural Interaction

Leonas Žitkus, Algis Junevičius

*Kauno technologijos universitetas
K. Donelaičio g. 73, LT- 44029, Kaunas*

The phenomena of globalization and regional integration lead to virtually new conditions for the activity of the companies where they confront with such difficulties as the boost of competitiveness or the necessity for the products as well as the activity itself to be adapted to legal and technical requirements of other countries. Alongside with these problems there occur additional difficulties related to the fact that the companies operating in international environment face cultural differences of other countries. The problems tackled in scientific literature may be divided into two large groups: 1) how the multicultural character of business environment affects different areas of activity, actions and decisions of management and 2) how the company develops when the interests of people belonging to two or more cultural groups are confronted.

Presently, the dominating point of view that together with direct foreign investment the management style typical to that country's culture also emerges, is not absolutely true. The management style is not the thing to be implemented in the same way as new technology. Depending on the conditions and circumstances, different combinations of instruments and methods of management as well as organizational culture of the international company and its individual branches are possible. The aim of this paper is to analyze these aspects.

The analysis provided in the article leads to the conclusion that in the period of cultural interaction, certain "intercultural" equilibrium in the international company is formed. It can acquire different proportions, depending on the willingness of the "coming" culture to impose its management methods and instruments and the "receiving" culture's ability to absorb them. Scientific literature contains three possible versions: domination of one culture, coexistence of cultures and cooperation of cultures.

It is found that "coming" culture is dominating in favor of "receiving" culture when the latter is reputed as totally unacceptable (hinders to reach company's aims). In practice such cases happened at the time of transformation of planned economy countries, when organizational cultures, managing methods and instruments of old type were absolutely inadequate for market economy conditions.

It is also found that coexistence of cultures is possible in the case when the essential elements of the "coming" and "receiving" cultures do not contradict each other and can be used to achieve the goals of the company. Seeking of the compromise between partners' cultures on the basis of cultural coexistence is appropriate.

In this case the goals of the company derive from the "coming" culture, while the methods and instruments typical to the cultures of both partners are used to achieve them. The cultural coexistence also means certain type of separation when two groups of people are striving to achieve the common goal in their own way by minimizing their interrelations.

The paper states that in cultural cooperation the aim is the interrelation of cultures despite obvious differences. The prerequisite condition for cultural cooperation is the possibility to mutually influence the standpoints of the participating companies. This is the only way that cultural differences can be seen as a resource to be used for the benefit of the development of the organization rather than a barrier to be eliminated.

Keywords: *interaction of cultures, international company, diversity of equilibrium, domination coexistence, cooperation.*

Introduction

Culture, though lacking common definition, is the research object of numerous studies. In the context of organizational (enterprise) and management science, culture most often occurs as an independent variable (Kostera, 1996), i.e. a constituent part of the external environment of the company, which, together with economic, social, political, technological and other factors affects the development of the companies as well as the solutions and actions of the managers. Hofstede (1980a, 1991) in complex researches performed in as many as 52 countries distinguished four groups of cultural norms and values (cultural dimensions). Ronen (1986) in generalizing several different studies (including those of Hofstede's) distinguished nine main groups of countries with diverse cultures (more exactly, with different cultural influence on the management of the companies) : Anglosaxon, German, North European, Latin American, Middle Eastern and Arabian, the Far Eastern, Latin European and non-typical cultures.

Typologies and classifications as a rule contain a portion of subjectivity and can be easily condemned or denied (Jacob, 2005). Despite this fact, the works of these authors have clearly proved the effect of multiculturalism on the company management. On the basis of these works, the theory of management in the context of multiculturalism was developed, and practical researches were carried out. According to the study of relevant scientific literature, two problems approached by means of these

theoretical and practical studies, can be highlighted. The first can be formulated in the form of a question, e.g. how multiculturalism of business environment affects the operation areas of separate companies and the actions as well as the solutions of their managers (Adler, 1999); Ashkanazy et al., 2004; Hampden-Turner, Trompenaars, 2000; House et al., 2004; Smith et al., 1989; Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner, 1998; Alas, 2005; Chong, Park, 2003; Malaga, 2005, etc.

The scientific problem dealt with in this paper can be expressed by the question: how does the company, within which the interests of two or more cultural groups converge, manage to develop? (Hofstede, 1980b; Hampden-Turner, Trompenaars, 2000; Jackson, 2004; Xiaohua Lin, 2004).

Following the final formation of market conditions in Lithuania and being aware of the intricacy of theory and practice of management science, the researchers of our country also became interested in the problems caused by cultural differences (Marcinkevičiūtė, 2005; Mockaitis, Šalčiuvienė, 2004; Mockaitis, Vaiginienė, 2005; Stonkutė, Žukauskas, 2002; Šimanauskienė, 2003; Šliburytė, 2005, etc.).

The first question raised in Hofstede's paper (1980b) if management practice of one country can be applied in other countries, has not yet produced a single answer. The currently prevailing opinion is that together with direct foreign investment there come organizational culture and management methods and instruments of the country of the investment origin. This viewpoint, however, is a significantly simplified solution of the problem.

The ideologists of the European management model – P.de Woot, R.Calori and H.Bloom (1994) – have proved that other scenarios are also possible. This is specifically typical to the companies based in the countries of cultural groups representing continental Europe (German, North European, and Latin European) and developing into the international ones. Their branches set up in

other countries do not have the intention to impose organizational culture and management methods of the origin country. The authors mentioned have named this phenomenon as one “without aggression“. It is the feature of one of the European management models as the basis for the acknowledgement and respect of the differences in cultural environment of business of different countries (Žitkus, 2002).

All this leads to the suggestion that the issue of the organizational culture, management methods or instruments of the international company, within which the interests of the representatives of two or more cultural groups converge, is and remains to be an important scientific and practical issue. This paper deals with this **problem**.

The object of the study is the processes occurring in the international company resulting from the convergence of the interests of the representatives of different cultures.

The objective of the study is to identify the solution boundaries of the managerial problems caused by cultural interaction on the basis of scientific literature and practical examples.

The research methods are the analysis of the literature and practical examples as well as the synthesis and systematizing of the information obtained in the analysis.

Diversity of the types of intercultural equilibrium

The assumption about the possible diversity of the types of “intercultural equilibrium” formed in the international company during the cultural convergence is based on the suggestions by the “ideologists” of the European management model H.Bloom, P.de Woot (1994) on the viewpoint of American, Japanese and European managers to the management in strange cultural environments (see table 1).

Table 1

Differences in viewpoints to management in other cultural environments
(According to H. Bloom, R. Calori, P.de Woot (1994))

Viewpoint	American	Japanese	European
Management	USA team	a Japanese + Local team	Local team if possible
Management style	This is the way we do it. This is the best way. Take it or leave it.	All workers must see the advantages of the Japanese model and accept it	We must become part of the country within which the company operates. No need to change the viewpoints and thinking of the people

Though these suggestions should not be taken at their face value, they lead to the idea that the future cultural models and tools of management established within the branch of the international company will depend on two things:

- The will and ability of the representatives of the “coming” culture to impose their methods and tools.
- The will and ability of the representatives of the “receiving” culture to absorb what to their opinion is acceptable and effective.

Such assumption is confirmed by the cases of the es-

tablishment or reorganization of the branches of the international companies, the study of which is presented in this section. The analysis followed the classification of the possible versions of the results of the cultural interaction proposed by N.J.Adler (1980):

- domination of one culture,
- co-existence of cultures,
- cooperation of cultures.

It should be noted that the possible results of the interaction of cultures are not absolutely “pure“ in their

form and content. In several examples analysed, the features of domination of one culture, cultural coexistence and cooperation can be detected. The resulting versions of cultural convergence, therefore, should be regarded as specific boundaries enclosing the area of the formation of possible versions of “intercultural equilibrium (see Figure).

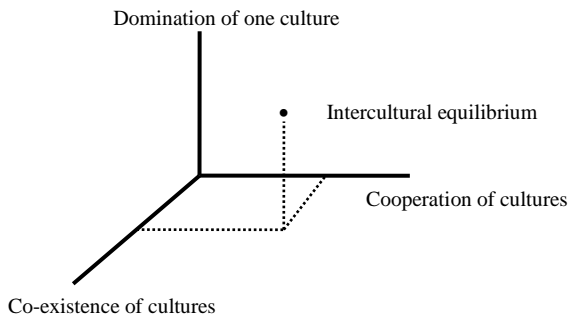


Figure. Area of interaction of cultures

Domination of one culture

This case forms a negative image at first sight. It is possible only when the “receiving“ culture is completely inappropriate for the operation of the company. In practice this situation existed in the period of planned economy during the transformation of the countries, when:

- Out of date, discredited management tools and methods of the organizational culture were absolutely inefficient under the market conditions.
- New approaches were attractive by their innovative nature and origin (everything from abroad has always been accepted unconditionally) and the achieved results.
- The innovations were associated with the hope of growing personal or community wellbeing.

A.K.Kozminski (1999) presents the comparison of features of the Swedish and Polish (typical to the planned economy) management styles (see table 2).

Table 2

Features of the management styles typical to Swedish and planned economies
(according to Kozminski, 1999)

Features of the Swedish management style	Features of the Polish management style
1. Flatness of structures	1. Multi- stage type of structures and decision-making
2. Openness of communication channels (the employee can directly contact superior managers neglecting official formalities)	2. Regulation of information and closeness of its circulation, frequently applied concept of confidentiality
3. Limitation of a number and significance of symbols indicating the management status	3. Wide scope of the variety of symbols indicating the status of managers of different levels
4. Frequency of authorizations, underlined independence and initiative of workers of all levels, management according to the set goals and providing the possibility for the employee to choose the way of fulfillment	4. Unwillingness of authorization and concentration of power in the upper levels of management
5. Consistent realization of plans and obligations	5. Tendency to change or correct plans and obligations
6. Consideration for business-like service contacts, openness, specific approach, transparency, and warm-heartedness	6. Tendency to formalize organizational life and activity imitation
7. Formation of the atmosphere of mutual goodwill, cooperation and assistance	7. Conflicting nature of organizational relations and tendency to expand personal empowering at the expense of others

The author stresses that irrespective of great differences of organizational cultures, Swedish managers did not experience much opposition to the management tools and methods applied. It is common knowledge that even though the “coming” culture dominates, the representatives of the “receiving“ culture bring over some of their own elements. In the case under consideration it was noticed that the Polish employees in the branches of international companies manage to maintain their national features, e.g. politeness, ability to improvise, somewhat careless attitude to time or maintaining a respectful distance between employers and employees (Hawsmann, 1997). In other words, domination of one culture in this case does not mean refusal or neglect of another culture.

A more radical prevalence of one culture was noticed when the American company General Electric took over the Hungarian manufacturer of electric bulbs *Tungsram* (Denton, 1993; Tully, 1990; Maney, 1990). According to the American standards, the operation of *Tungsram* was absolutely inefficient: the ratio of workers engaged in production process directly and the workers of the administrative apparatus was 2.5 : 1, respectively. The company had

as many as 12 levels of the organizational structure, the output quota was very low, no attention was paid to the economy of raw materials and other resources, etc. Therefore, alongside with dramatic technical changes, the essential changes in the methods and tools of the management style were carried out: the Americans became the managers of all levels, the output quotas were raised (e.g. the inspectors had to check 3500 car lamps in one shift instead of the earlier obligatory 2700), 2900 employees were made redundant (including as many as 200 former managers of different levels), the administrative procedures and rules were simplified. It goes without saying that the very philosophy of management was changed.

In this case the “aggressive“ nature of the American culture, mentioned in Table 1, and justified by economic considerations, makes itself evident, however, it is very strange to the established European traditions. The newly created and earlier established elements, such as the organizational structure, the procedures and rules applied, the language and style of communication, the system of obligatory values and standards, etc. were completely rejected.

Coexistence of cultures

It occurs when the elements of the “coming“ and the “receiving“ cultures are not of a contradictory nature they can be utilized to achieve the goals of the company. The basis for the coexistence is the search for compromises among the partners’ cultures (Kozminski, 1999). Most often the goals of the company derive from the representatives of the “coming“ culture, whereas the typical methods and tools of the cultures of both partners are used to achieve these goals. The coexistence of cultures in the international company also means a specific variety of separation where two groups of people seek the same goal, but in a specific way, by minimizing mutual contacts.

For example, in the early 1990s, the American concern *Motorola* made use of the power of family relations typical to the Asian cultures in organizing its operation in the Malaysian branch (Engardio, De George, 1995). By using visual aids (for example, notices “We are the family“, or “This is our company“ are addressed to self-esteem and employed by the elements of military regime typical to the political climate of Asian countries. At the same time the management methods and tools typical to the American culture were also employed, e.g. encouraging initiative, teaching new ways of work (quality control, team work), developing and encouragement of desirable behaviour, selection of workforce by using tests, etc

All this proceeded under strict division of the company into two levels – administration and production. The administrative level consisted solely of the Americans, while the managers of the lower level were chosen from the more advanced (i.e. conforming to the elements of the American culture) local workers. Director of the branch, by the way, was a Chinese, but with American background and American working experience. The production level consisted almost only of local population.

Irrespective of success of the case described, such duality of cultures has a number of disadvantages which under changed conditions are likely to be the reason of failure:

1. The people of the coexisting cultures communicate through interpreters, i.e. mediators, who interpret and explain the messages of both parties and who fail to communicate cultural context of these messages. In this environment both parties form their aspirations with but little knowledge about each other.
2. The people of different cultures, though working for the same company, perceive the elements of its strategy, i.e. mission and vision, goals of the company and the ways of their realization. This feature manifests itself in the cases similar to the one described when the people of different cultures belong to different functional groups.

Cooperation of cultures

This case is based on the assumption that the representatives of different cultural groups may influence the attitudes of one another, and that new values can emerge in the process of interaction of the two cultures. Here, cultural differences are perceived not as difficulties, but, rather, as specific “resources“. The following case is based on the assumption that the representatives are utilized for the de-

velopment of the company (Xiaohua Lin, 2004).

Kozminski (1999) describes a successful restructurization of the Polish subdivision *Polkolor* of the company *Thomson Consumer Electronics* as an example of fruitful interaction of two cultures. In this case cultural cooperation occurred in several levels. Firstly, during the first stage of restructurization the company was run by a board consisting of 7 members. With regard to the problem in question, the board was formed of the members of two nationalities, i.e. three French (of “coming culture“) and four Polish (“receiving culture“). Only one of the 4 Poles had the Polish citizenship, though.

Secondly, even though the managers of the lower and medium levels were Polish, all of them were acquainted with the elements of the French management style. The managers of the lower level were trained in the 11 days’ course, and those of the medium levels in the 3 weeks’ course of management fundamentals according to the goals of the company, in the French training centres. Of special significance is the fact that the training offered was by no means unilateral: the workers supplied feedback on the transformations in the company’s management system and their effect.

Thirdly, in creating the information and communication system, the workers were asked what information about the operation of the company was required and through which channels they were willing to get it. Interestingly, the appropriate survey showed that the workers were in favour of the traditional means of information, i.e. local radio and newsletter of the company, characteristic of the former communist system.

Fourthly, the need to adjust to the numerous procedures of the local character, workers’ assessment criteria, work description, etc. was stressed. Owing to the opinions and suggestions of the workers, the pay system was adjusted to comply with the idea of justice as perceived locally. In addition, quite a few of the guarantees and services typical to the socialist economy style, i.e. company transport, workers’ dormitories, collective rest houses, free provision of coveralls and footwear were secured (Ronach, 1994 ; Cyr, Schneider, 1994).

Conclusions

1. During the interaction of cultures, specific “inter-cultural equilibrium“ is being formed. Depending on the wish of the representatives of the “coming“ culture to impose its management tools and methods, and the ability of the representatives of the “receiving“ culture to absorb them, the equilibrium mentioned may acquire different proportions. Scientific literature gives reference to to three possible versions: prevalence of one culture, coexistence of cultures and cooperation of cultures.
2. The “coming“ culture with respect to the “receiving“ one takes the dominating position in the case when the latter is regarded as absolutely inappropriate (e.g. hinders achieving goals). In reality such cases occurred during the transformation period of the former planned economy states, when the compromised management methods and instruments of the organizational culture were in-

adequate for market economy conditions.

3. Coexistence of cultures is observed in the case when the essential elements of the “coming” and the “receiving” cultures are not contradictory to each other and can be applied to achieve goals. The basis for the coexistence is compromise between cultures. Consequently, the goals of the company derive from the partners of the “coming” culture, while the methods and instruments characteristic of cultures of both parties are used to achieve them. Coexistence of cultures also mean a specific type of separation, when two groups of people seek the common goal minimizing their mutual relations
4. Cultural cooperation aims at cultural interaction regardless of obvious differences. The necessary condition of cooperation of cultures is the possibility of their representatives to mutually influence attitudes. Only in such a case cultural differences can be seen not as a stumbling block to be removed, but, rather, as a resource to be used to the best advantage for the sake of development.

References

1. Adler, N.J.. Cross-cultural Synergy: the Management of Cross-cultural Organizations//Trends and Issues in OD: Current theory and Practice, red. W.Burke, L.D.Goodstein, San Diego, Cal.: University Associates, 1980.
2. Alas, R. Job related attitude and ethics in countries with different histories// Cross Cultural Management, 2005, Vol. 12, No 2.
3. Ashkanasy, N. Future orientation / V.Gupta, M.F.Mayfield, E.Trevor-Roberts // in House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., Gupta, V. (Eds), Culture, Leadership and Organizations: the Globe Study of 62 Societies. Saga, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2004.
4. Bloom H. Euromanagement / R.Calori, P. de Woot. Kogan Page Ltd., London: 1994.
5. Chong, J.K.S. National culture and classical principles of planning/ J.K.S.Chong, J.Park. // Cross Cultural Management, 2003, Vol. 10, Issue 1.
6. Cyr, D.J. Shneider, S.C. Creating Change Through human Resources: The Case of a French-Polish Joint Venture/ D.J.Cyr S.C.Schneider. INSEAD, Fontainbleau, 1994.
7. Denton, N. GE Recapitalises Hungarian Lighting Group// Financial Times, 17 March 1993.
8. Engardio, P., de George, G. Importing Entusiasm/ P.Engardio, G. de George // Business Week, 24 January 1995.
9. Hampden-Turner, C.M., Trompenaars, F. Building Cross-cultural Competence: How to Create Wealth from Conflicting Values/ C.M.Hampden-Turner, F.Trompenaars. Wiley, New York, N.Y., 2000.
10. Hausman, M. Splaszczona piramida//Business Magazine, 1997, No 8(77).
11. Hofstede, G. Cultural Consequences: International Differences in Work Related Values, Sage, Beverly Hills, 1980a.
12. Hofstede, G. Motivation, leadership and organization: do American theories apply abroad?// Organizational Dynamics, 1980b.
13. Hofstede G.Cultures and Organizations. Software of the Mind. London: McGraw-Hill, 1991.
14. House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., Gupta, V. (Eds), Culture, Leadership and Organizations: the Globe Study of 62 Societies/ C.M.House, P.J.Hanges, M.Javidan et all.. Saga, Thousand Oaks, CA.
15. Jackson, T. Management and Change in Africa: a Cross-cultural Prospective. London: Routledge, 2004.
16. Jacob, N. Cross-cultural investigations: emerging concepts// Journal of Organizational Change Management, Oct 2005, Vol. 18, Issue 5.
17. Kostera, M. Postmodernizm w zarzadzaniu. Warszawa: PWE, 1996
18. Kozminski, A.K. Zarzadzanie miedzynarodowe. Warszawa: PWE, 1999.
19. Lewis, R.D. Interface of cultures. Vilnius: Alma littera, 2002.
20. Malaga, S. Cross-cultural Competence. London: Routledge, 2005.
21. Maney, K. GE Brings Good Things to Tungsram// USA Today, 23 June 1990.
22. Marcinkevičiūtė, L. Theoretical and practical motivation models of workers /Organizational management: systemic studies, 2005, No 34.
23. Mockaitis, A.J., Šalčiuvienė, L. Comparative analysis of the workers' attitudes to management in East European countries/ A.J.Mockaitis, L.Šalčiuvienė // Organizational management: systemic studies, 2004, No 33.
24. Mockaitis, A.J., Vaiginienė, E. The problems of small and medium business internationalization in Middle and East/ A.J.Mockaitis, E.Vaiginienė // Organizational management: systemic studies, 2005, No 34.
25. Preston, J. International Business. London: Pitman Publishing, 1993.
26. Ronach, D. International Transfer of Technology to Poland: Case of Thomson-Polkolor// EAP 20th Anniversary.Paris: Ecole Europeene des Affaires, 1994.
27. Ronen, S. Comparative and Multinational Management. J.Wiley&Sons Inc., New York, N.Y., 1986.
28. Smith, P.B., Misumi, J., Tayeb, M.H., Peterson, M., Bond, M. On the generality of leadership styles across cultures/ P.B.Smith, J.Misumi, M.H.Tayeb et al. // Journal of Occupational Psychology, 1989, Vol 62.
29. Stonkutė, E., Žukauskas, P. The influence of globalization to the grades and universality of business culture/ E.Stonkutė, P.Žukauskas // Organizational management: systemic studies, 2002, No 22.
30. Šimauskienė, L. The impact of cross-cultural differences in the context of globalization// Organizational management: systemic studies, 2003, No 28.
31. Šliburytė, L. The impact of differences in national cultures on mergers and acquisitions// Organizational management: systemic studies, 2005, No33.
32. Trompenaars, F., Hampden-Turner, C.M. Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Global Business, 2nd ed./ F.Trompenaars, C.M.Hampden-Turner. New York, N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1998.
33. Tully, S. GE in Hungary: Let There be Light// Fortune, 22 October 1990.
34. Weiss, S.E. Creating the GM – Toyota Joint Venture. A Case in Complex Negotiation// Columbia Journal of World Business, Summer 1987.
35. Žitkus, L. The features of European management model and influence of integration processes to their formation // Social sciences, 2002, 1 (33).
36. Xiahua Lin. Determination of cultural adaptation in Chinese – US joint ventures// Cross Cultural Management, 2004, Vol. 11, Issue 1.

Leonas Žitkus, Algis Junevičius

Kultūrų sąveikos sukeltamų vadybinių problemų galimų sprendimų ribos

Santrauka

Straipsnyje teoriniu lygmeniu analizuojami ir praktiniais pavyzdžiais pagrindžiami galimi kultūrų sąveikos tarptautinėje įmonėje rezultatai.

Aktualumas. Globalizacijos ir regioninės integracijos reiškiniai sukuria iš esmės naujas įmonių veiklos sąlygas, kurios yra labai skirtingos, palyginti su atskiromis nacionalinių rinkų sąlygomis. Šias permainas galima vertinti dvejopai. Viena vertus, didelėje (integruotoje ar globalioje) rinkoje atsiveria galimybės pasireikšti masto ekonomijai, plisti pažangioms gamybos bei valdymo metodams, derinti veiksmus aplinkosaugos ir vartotojų apsaugos srityse. Kita vertus, įmonės susiduria su visai kitokio pobūdžio sunkumais, kurių nebūtų, jei jos nenorėtų pasinaudoti minėtų reiškiniių suteikiamomis galimybėmis plėsti veiklą į kitų šalių nacionalines rinkas. Tarp tokių sunkumų dažniausiai minimas konkurencijos intensyvėjimas, taip pat būtinybė prisiderinti prie kitų šalių teisinių ir techninių reikalavimų ekonominės veiklos bei tokios veiklos rezultatų (ES vidaus rinkoje pastaroji problema nėra labai aktuali).

Greta šių problemų vis didesnio mokslininkų ir praktikų dėmesio susilaukia sunkumai, atsirandantys dėl to, kad įmonės, veikdamos tarptautinėje erdvėje, peržengia vienos kultūros ribas. Tokių įmonių vadovams iškyla būtinybė atsižvelgti į kitų šalių vartotojų, tiekėjų, konkurentų ar partnerių charakterio ypatumus, sąlygotus tos šalies nacionalinės kultūros. Kitaip sakant, jiems iškyla būtinybė naudoti ypatingus vadybos instrumentus ir metodus, siekiant integruoti atskiras vertės

kūrimo grandinės grandis daugiakultūroje (angl. *cross-cultural*) aplinkoje (Adler, 1980; Kostera, 1998).

Problema. Pati kultūra, nors ir neturėdama vieno apibrėžimo (Kroeber ir Kluckhohn (1952) išskyrė ir išanalizavo daugiau kaip šimtą kultūros sąvokos apibrėžimų), yra daugybės mokslinių tyrimų objektas. Mokslo apie organizaciją (įmonę) ir vadybą kontekste kultūra gali vaidinti tokius vaidmenis (Kostera, 1996):

1. Nepriklausomo kintamojo, veikiančio kitas įmonės veiklos sritis, ypač susijusias su žmogiškuoju faktoriumi.
2. Priklausomo kintamojo, nulemiamo įmonės vidinės ir išorinės aplinkos. Šiuo atveju dažniausiai turima galvoje organizacijos kultūra.
3. Metaforos arba metaforų rinkinio, padedančio žmonėms savaip suvokti ir aiškinti tikrovę.

Dažniausiai moksliniuose tyrimuose kultūra yra nepriklausomas kintamasis, t.y. įmonės išorinės aplinkos dalis, kuri, greta su ekonominiais, socialiniais, politiniais, technologiniais ir kitais veiksniais, daro įtaką įmonių vystymuisi bei vadovų veiksmams ir sprendimams. Hofstede savo kompleksiniuose tyrimuose, atliktuose net 52 šalyse, išskyrė keturias kultūrinių normų ir vertybių (kultūrinių dimensijų) grupes. Ronen, apibendrinamas dešimties įvairių tyrimų (tarp jų ir Hofstede) išskyrė devynias pagrindines šalių, besiskiriančių savo kultūra (tiksliau – kultūros įtaka įmonių vadybai), grupes: anglosaksų, germanų, Šiaurės Europos, Lotynų Europos, Artimųjų Rytų, arabų, Tolimųjų Rytų, Lotynų Amerikos ir netipiškų kultūrų.

Panašaus pobūdžio tipologijoms ir klasifikacijoms visuomet būdingas tam tikras vertintojų ir vertinimo metodų subjektyvumas, ir jos gali būti nesunkiai sukritikuotos ar net paneigtos (Jacob, 2005). Nepaisant to, minėtų autorių darbai akivaizdžiai įrodė esant daugiakultūriškumo įtaką įmonių vadybai. Tų darbų pagrindu buvo toliau vystoma vadybos daugiakultūriškumo kontekste teorija bei atliekami praktiniai tyrimai. Kaip rodo atitinkamos srities mokslinės literatūros analizė, galima išskirti dvi problemas, kurias bandoma spręsti šiais teoriniais ir praktiniais tyrimais. Pirmąją iš jų galima suformuluoti klausimu: kaip verslo aplinkos daugakultūriškumas veikia atskiras įmonės funkcionavimo sritis ir jų vadovų veiksmus bei sprendimus?

Antrąją problemą galima išreikšti klausimu: kaip vystosi įmonė, kurioje susiduria dviem ar daugiau kultūrinių grupių priklausančių žmonių interesai?

Reikia paminėti, kad antroji problema tyrinėta žymiai mažiau. Pirminis Hofstede'o straipsnyje (1980b) iškeltas klausimas – ar vienos šalies vadybos praktika gali būti pritaikyta kitose šalyse, dar ir šiandien neturi vienareikšmiško atsakymo. Šiuo metu vyrauja nuomonė, kad kartu su tiesiogine užsienio investicija ateina investicijos kilmės šaliai būdinga organizacinė kultūra ir vadybos metodai bei instrumentai. Tačiau šis požiūris – tai gerokai supaprastintas problemos sprendimas.

Europietiškojo vadybos modelio „ideologai“ – P.de Woot, R.Calori ir H.Bloom – akivaizdžiai įrodo, kad galimi ir kitokie scenarijai. Ypač tai būdinga kontinentinei Europai atstovaujančių kultūrinių grupių (germaniškosios, Šiaurės Europos ir Lotynų Europos) šalių įmonių peraugimui į tarptautines. Jų padaliniuose, kuriuose kitose šalyse, nesistengiama primesti kilmės šaliai būdingų organizacinių kultūros ir valdymo metodų. Minėti autoriai šį reiškinį labai taikliai pavadino „be agresijos“ (angl. *without aggression*). Jis yra vieno iš europietiškojo vadybos modelio išskirtinių bruožų – įvairių šalių kultūrinės verslo aplinkos skirtumų pripažinimo ir gerbimo – pagrindu.

Visa tai leidžia teigti, kad klausimas apie tarptautinės įmonės, kurioje susiduria dviejų ar daugiau kultūrinių grupių atstovų interesai, organizacinę kultūrą, vadybos metodus ir instrumentus išlieka aktualia mokslinė ir praktinė **problema**. Ji sprendžiama šiame straipsnyje.

Tyrimo objektas yra procesai, vykstantys tarptautinėje įmonėje susidūrus dviejų ar daugiau skirtingų kultūrų atstovų interesams.

Tyrimo tikslas – remiantis mokslinė literatūra ir praktiniais pavyzdžiais, nustatyti galimas daugiakultūriškumo sukeltų problemų sprendimų ribas ir jų reikšimosi sąlygas.

Tyrimo metodai – mokslinės literatūros ir praktinių pavyzdžių analizė, analizės metu gautos informacijos sisteminimas ir sintezė.

Prielaida apie galimą kultūrų tarptautinėje įmonėje sąveikos metu susiformuojančios „tarpkultūrinės pusiausvyros“ tipų įvairovę šiame

darbe grindžiama europietiško vadybos modelio „ideologų“ H.Bloom, R.Calori, P.de Woot (1994) teiginiais apie amerikiečių, japonų ir europiečių vadybininkų požiūrį į vadybą svetimoje jiems kultūrinėje aplinkose.

Nors šių teiginių nereikėtų suabsoliutinti, jie leidžia manyti, jog tai, kuriai kultūrai būdingi valdymo metodai ir instrumentai nusistovės tarptautinės įmonės filiale, priklausys nuo dviejų dalykų:

- „ateinančios“ kultūros atstovų noro ir sugebėjimo primesti savo metodus ir instrumentus,
- „priimančios“ kultūros atstovų noro ir sugebėjimo absorbuoti tai, kas, jų manymu, yra priimtina ir naudinga.

Tokią prielaidą patvirtina tarptautinių įmonių filialų steigimo ar pertvarkymo atvejai. Juos analizuojant buvo laikomasi N.J.Adler (1980) pasiūlytos kultūrų sandūros galimų rezultatų variantų klasifikacijos:

1. Vienos kultūros dominavimas.
2. Kultūrų koegzistavimas.
3. Kultūrų bendradarbiavimas.

Vienos kultūros dominavimas iš pirmo žvilgsnio sudaro neigiamo atvejo įvaizdį. Jis įmanomas tuomet, kai „priimančioji“ kultūra yra visiškai netinkama įmonės veiklai. Praktiškai tokia situacija egzistavo buvusį planinės ekonomikos šalių transformacijos metu, kai:

- seno tipo susikompromitavę organizacinės kultūros, valdymo metodai ir instrumentai visiškai netiko rinkos ekonomikos sąlygomis;
- nauji pavyzdžiai imponavo savo novatoriškumu, kilme (viskas, kas užsienietiška, nuo seno buvo besąlygiškai laikoma gera) ar pasiektais rezultatais;
- naujovės buvo siejamos su individualios ir visuomeninės gerovės augimo viltimis.

Kultūrų koegzistavimas pastebimas tuo atveju, kai esminiai „ateinančios“ ir „priimančios“ kultūrų elementai neprieštarauja vieni kitiems ir gali būti panaudoti įmonės tikslams siekti. Kultūrų koegzistavimo pagrindas yra kompromisų tarp partnerių kultūrų paieška (Kozminski, 1999). Dažniausiai įmonės tikslus lemia „ateinančios“ kultūros atstovai, tuo tarpu jiems siekti naudojami abiejų partnerių kultūroms būdingi metodai ir instrumentai. Kultūrų koegzistavimas tarptautinėje įmonėje reiškia ir tam tikrą separacijos atmainą, kai dvi grupės žmonių savaip siekia bendro tikslo, minimizuodamos tarpusavio kontaktus.

Nors straipsnyje aprašytas atvejis buvo sėkmingas, toks kultūrų dualizmas turi nemažą trūkumą, kurie, pasikeitus sąlygoms, gali tapti nesėkmes priežastimi:

1. Koegzistuojančių kultūrų žmonės bendrauja tarpusavyje per vertėjus – savotiškus tarpininkus, kurie aiškina ir interpretuoja abiejų pusių pasisakymus, tačiau neperduoda tų pasisakymų kultūrinio konteksto. Taip dvi žmonių grupės formuoja savo lūkesčius viena kitos atžvilgiu, nedaug žinodamos viena apie kitą.
2. Skirtingų kultūrų žmonės, nors ir dirbdami toje pačioje įmonėje, nevienodai suvokia jos strategijos elementus – misiją, viziją, tikslus ar jų įgyvendinimo būdus. Šis bruožas ypač ryškus panašiais į anksčiau aprašytą *Motorolos* filialo atvejais, kai skirtingų kultūrų žmonės įmonėje priklauso skirtingoms funkcinėms grupėms.

Kultūrų bendradarbiavimas grindžiama prielaida, kad kultūrinių grupių atstovai gali veikti vieni kitų nuostatas ir kad dviejų kultūrų sandūroje gali atsirasti naujų vertybių. Šiuo atveju kultūrų skirtumai suvokiami ne kaip sunkumai, bet kaip tam tikri „išteklių“, kuriuos galima panaudoti organizacijos vystymui.

Apibendrinant pateiktą informaciją, pažymėtina, jog išanalizuoti galimi kultūrų sandūros rezultatai savo turiniu ir forma nėra „gryni“. Net ir keliuose nagrinėtuose pavyzdžiuose galima įžvelgti vienos kultūros dominavimo, kultūros koegzistavimo ir kultūrų bendradarbiavimo bruožų. Todėl šiuos kultūros sandūros rezultatų variantus reikia laikyti savotiškais sienomis, tarp kurių yra galimi įvairūs tarptautinių įmonių filialų organizacinių kultūrų bei valdymo metodų ir instrumentų vystymosi scenarijai.

Raktažodžiai: *kultūrų sandūra, tarptautinė įmonė, pusiausvyros įvairovė, dominavimas, koegzistavimas, bendradarbiavimas.*

The article has been reviewed.

Received in December, 2006; accepted in February, 2007.