

PART **II**

SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE ON THE CONCEPT OF COMPETENCY

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2.1. THE OUTSET AND REASONS FOR RESEARCH ON COMPETENCY

Francis Galton, who in late 1860s analysed the correlation between one generation of leaders and geniuses, is considered to be one of the pioneers of scientific research on the development of competencies. He argued that extraordinary intelligence is an exceptional feature of the leader and that this feature cannot be developed, but only inherited. Galton (1869) suggested conducting the selection of leaders by pairing individuals whose descendants should have the best qualities.

Later, empirical studies were conducted to determine whether features such as eloquence, prudence or courage characterise leaders and distinguish them from other people. Unfortunately, these early studies did not confirm that certain leadership features are a prerequisite for effective leadership. Stogdill et al. (1971) analysed the results of 124 studies which focused on leaders' features from 1904 to 1948 and drew the conclusion, which has often been quoted since, that a person does not become a leader just because they have a combination of some qualities. In 1974, having enriched his research methodology, Stogdill reviewed 163 studies on leaders' features from 1949 to 1974, and this time he stated that the possession of certain qualities increases the likelihood that a person with such qualities can become an effective leader. The importance of a feature is determined by the particular situation in which the leader works. Stogdill distinguished the features and abilities that are often associated with effective leadership. The most promising results of the research on the features characteristic of a leader were obtained from research on the selection of managers. By the mid-1960s, attempts to predict the effectiveness of a leader by defining and measuring their personal characteristics or abilities were unsuccessful. The research of that period was based mainly on written tasks, which had to determine the potential of a leader. However, the statistically valid dependence between the established personal characteristics, features, and abilities and the effectiveness of the leader's performance varied greatly and was random. Regardless of pessimistic reviews of research in this area, the methodologies used for the selection of leaders underwent major changes and significantly improved.

David C. McClelland (1973) notes that the fact that the level of traditional academic knowledge and high examination results do not project a person's future success, career, or performance encouraged him to look for factors that could reliably help predict the effectiveness of human activity. Until the middle of the last century, studies of features characteristic of leaders could not be considered too successful as they were largely focused on attempts to link the performance of leaders with their personal characteristics or abilities. However, despite sceptical attitudes towards research conducted in this area, methodologies

applied for the selection of managers, after undergoing serious modification, were used as the basis for research of the problem areas of management of human resources: employee competency management. Employee competencies have transformed the approach to human resource management, which is increasingly referred to as competence-based human resource management. Competency models are widely used in all areas of human resource management – from employee recruitment to performance evaluation, they are important for the development of modern leaders who operate in a multicultural environment.

2.2. WHAT ARE COMPETENCIES?

It should be emphasised that there is no consensus among different authors who discuss this problem on a one-size-fits-all universal competency model, as even the most widely described competencies cannot be universal in all cultures, professions and services (Bonder, 2011; Hurd, 2005; Sudnickas & Kratavičiūtė-Ališauskienė, 2011). Likewise, there is no generally accepted definition of competency. Furthermore, the discussion on whether the term *competency* (or *competencies*) and the term *competence* (or *competences*) have the same meaning is still in progress. In some dictionaries both words represent the same meaning, while other dictionaries highlight differences between the two terms. Proponents of the first variant argue that the term *competency* focuses more on how people behave, while *competence* refers to what they do. Other authors (Sanghi, 2007) highlight that *competency* relates to aspects of an individual's behaviour, and *competence* is more related with skills. The term *competency* is also often used to emphasize the level of an individual, while *competence* accentuates the level of the organisation. However, it should be noted that the linguistic definition of both terms does not allow them to be clearly distinguished from each other. For this reason, in this chapter of the book, in order to avoid ambiguity, the term *competency* will be related to the individual's behaviour.

The modern concept of competency has become popular since 1973, when David C. McClelland published the article "Testing for Competence Rather than for Intelligence" in the scientific journal *American Psychologist*, where the author highlighted the importance of competencies for predicting the success of future activities. At the same time, he criticised traditional examinations and IQ tests specifically as inadequate measures for predicting success. The term *skill* was replaced by the term *competency* as a broader concept that includes both the behavioural and technical capabilities of an individual (McClelland, 1973).

D. C. McClelland's ideas were largely realized by McBer's advisory group, which

included another famous expert and researcher of competency Richard Boyatzis. The McBer competency dictionary is currently one of the most widely used dictionaries in practice. R. Boyatzis (1982) defined the competencies which distinguish the most successful managers from less successful ones. He emphasized the idea that performance could be increased by developing the necessary competencies, and defined competency as “an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job” (p. 97). A very similar definition of competency is presented in Signe M. Spencer and Lyle M. Spencer’s (1993) book *Competence at Work*, favoured by human resources management practitioners: “an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation” (p. 9).

The essential characteristics of an individual (and their competencies) are viewed as long-term personal qualities that allow predicting their behaviour in the future.

Activity defined by criteria means that competencies predict good or poor performance, or that it can be measured by using specific criteria or standards.

The authors distinguish five different types of competencies:

1. Motives, i.e., something that a person constantly thinks about and wants. This is what determines the actions of an individual. Motives direct human behaviour in order to achieve goals.
2. Qualities and features – physical characteristics, reactions to various situations, and emotional reactions. For example, high emotional intelligence could help a migration officer to understand adequately what foreigners feel and what problems they experience, especially those who come from countries where their lives are threatened.
3. Personal attitudes and self-perception – for example, self-confidence and the belief that you can be effective in almost all situations are an integral part of self-perception. This category includes the system of personal values of an individual.
4. Knowledge – information about a particular field of activity. For example, awareness of the manager of an international company of the cultural differences of the employees. Knowledge is a rather complex competency. Knowledge tests allow one to determine whether a person has chosen the correct answer, but they do not reveal whether a person can act based on their own knowledge. Knowledge predicts what a person can do, rather than what they are most likely to do.
5. Skills – the ability to perform mental or physical tasks. For example, the translator’s ability to accurately convey the idea into the target language.

Anntoinette D. Lucia and Richard Lepsinger (1999) use a very similar definition of

competency: “A cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affects a major part of one’s job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development”. R. Boyatzis (2008) defines competency as an ability or a possibility, i.e., a set of different patterns of behaviour, based on a construct that we could conditionally refer to as intention or intent. Most researchers view competencies as something more than just knowledge, skills or abilities. Prahalad and Hamel (1990) use the term *core competence* in their resource-based theory of strategic management, and transfer it from the individual to the organisational level.

Core competence analysis should be conducted at the level of whole organisation, and A. Clardy (2008) proposes four questions which should be asked in order to evaluate the organisational core competence: “Does the organisation have a competitive advantage? To what extent is performance attributable to those competitive capabilities? Where are those capabilities located? How, specifically, do the core competences operate? Does a competitor have core competences, and what are they?”

J. L. De Coi et al. (2007) define a competence as a competency, proficiency level and context combined together. In their example “Fluent Business English”, “English” is competency, “Fluent” is proficiency level and “Business” is context

At present, the competencies used to evaluate the performance of individuals are very popular both in practical work and in academic research. As can be seen from the definitions of competencies presented by many different authors, competencies are understood as long-term personal attributes that allow predicting the future behaviour of individuals. A specific set of competencies which describes a particular area of activity, job, or group is called a competency model. A competency model is considered to be a tie between human resources management and organisational strategies, which links “individual competencies with the desired organisational competencies, through competency modelling” (Naquin & Holton, 2006). Competency models have become the cornerstone of human resources management and have gradually replaced the existing traditional job descriptions and official instructions, as they provide for greater stability among other benefits, since sets of competencies necessary for an activity change considerably slower than job descriptions (Dubois & Richmond, 2003).

2.3. COMPETENCY DICTIONARIES AND MODELS

Richard Boyatzis, who analysed the results of the assessment of competencies of managers in a variety of areas, found that managers with excellent performance in organisations exhibit

the same set of competencies. This provided the basis for creation of so-called competency dictionaries. Such dictionaries are composed of three to six different competency groups or clusters, which consist of two to five different competencies. Each competency is briefly described and complemented with three to nine behavioural indicators that describe different aspects of behaviour through which this competency is expressed. In most cases, each behavioural indicator is illustrated by specific examples taken from interviews with the best performing staff in the area of activity. The scale of behavioural indicators is graded in ascending order according to the level of the demonstrated behaviour through which the competency is expressed. As a rule, it starts with zero, which reflects the neutral or the lowest level of expression of the competency, whereas the highest level of expression of the competency is marked by the highest number. Sometimes the level of competency may also be marked by a negative number, which shows that the competency reflects a destructive behaviour.

S. M. Spencer and L. M. Spencer (1993) distinguished 360 common behavioural indicators and even more specific behavioural indicators, which were described in a dictionary composed of 20 different competencies. This dictionary covered around 85% of various competencies found in different models.

Currently, some large companies such as McBer and Company, Philip Morris, Aon Consulting and others have developed their own competency dictionaries that are widely used in their daily activities and relied by human resource management of these companies. The Society for Human Resource Management (2012) has proposed its own competency dictionary, also known as the full SHRM Competency Model (Sudnickas, 2009).

Public sector organisations have also developed competency dictionaries: for example, the Tuning Competency Dictionary, used in the field of EU education and science (Loghoff et al., 2010). The Saskatchewan Administration District in Canada uses the Saskatchewan competency dictionary of civil services (Government of Saskatchewan, 2015), NASA has a workforce competency dictionary (NASA Office of Human Capital Management, 2008), and South Africa has developed a middle management competency dictionary.

Richard S. Mansfield (1996) analyses the two most common ways of developing a competency model: a single-job competency model and a one-size-fits-all competency model. Development of a model based on the first approach relies on the focus group method, where the focus group of the best employees in a specific position allows for the collecting of all of the information about the specifics of this activity. The obtained knowledge is summarised with the results of interviews with clients, and after analysis the competency model is formed, which, as a rule, consists of 10–20 competencies which reflect personal

characteristics. This method is widely used as it can be applied to create a competency model that is quite precise for the targeted position, and it allows employees to be involved in the process of model development, thereby encouraging their dedication to work and allowing them to feel responsible for the results to be achieved. However, considerable time and effort is needed to create such a model. On average, the process of creating such a competency model takes several months.

The process of creating a one-size-fits-all competency model is much faster, as it can be applied to a larger number of employees at a time. In this case, instead of collecting information from the best-experienced specialists in a specific area, information is derived from existing models of a specific position and analysis of scientific and practical literature on the activities in this area. In order to be in line with the organisation's mission and values, the final version of the model is reviewed by the organisation's leaders, who provide feedback and insights. The main disadvantage of the competency model developed in this way is that it does not fully reflect the narrow and specific requirements for a specific position. In order to avoid the disadvantages of each of the methods discussed, R. Mansfield proposed another way, which allows organisations to take advantage of methods tailored for a specific position. Most researchers agree unanimously that, in any case, the development of a competency model must be closely linked to the organisation's strategy (Naquin & Holton, 2006; Markus et al., 2005; Mansfield, 1996). Starting a competency model from a detailed and thorough analysis of job description would allow this to be implemented in practice.

2.4. MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCY

There is disagreement not only about the terms *competency* and *competence*, but also about what *multicultural competency* (a term used by all authors of this book) actually is. For instance, Darla K. Deardorff (2011) notes that there is no consensus amongst researchers on this issue. Terms which describe this concept to a large extent depend on the field of research: for example, research on social work often uses the term *cultural competency*; the field of engineering refers to it as *global competence*; in addition, there are terms such as *multicultural competency*, *intercultural maturity* or *multiculturalism*, *intercultural sensitivity*, *cultural intelligence*, *international communication*, *transcultural communication*, and a whole range of other descriptions. However, despite the variety of terms describing this phenomenon, Arthur L. Whaley and King E. Davis (2007) emphasize the fact that there is agreement that intercultural competence relates to the individual's ability to function effectively in different cultures. Kwok Leung, Soon Ang, and Mei Ling Tan (2014, p. 490) provide other similar

definitions that are found in scientific literature: Hammer defines intercultural competence as “the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways”; Johnson refers to it as “an individual’s effectiveness in drawing upon a set of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural backgrounds at home or abroad”. The latter definition is quite close to the definition of competency provided by Signe M. Spencer and Lyle M. Spencer (1993); however, in this case it applies to a narrower area of communication between people of different cultural backgrounds.

One of the first studies (Deardorff, 2011) aimed at documenting the consent of the key intercultural experts, mainly from the United States, on what intercultural competency is was conducted via the Delphi method. Aspects that were agreed upon by the experts were divided into separate categories and used to create a model, the main purpose of which was to make this concept more structuralized and look at it as a process. The model of the multicultural competency process focuses on internal and external outcomes that are based on specific attitudes, knowledge and skills. Desired external outcomes are defined as appropriate and effective communication in an intercultural context, whereas knowledge is viewed as cultural self-perception, intercultural knowledge, cultural awareness, and sociolinguistic awareness. Meanwhile, in this context skills are understood as the ability to listen, observe, evaluate, interpret and compare. Attitudes are defined as respect, evaluation of other cultures, openness, lack of prejudice, curiosity, and desire to learn new things. Desired internal outcomes are understood as flexibility, adaptability, ethno-relative attitude, and empathy. The process begins with attitudes, which are reflected the individual level; then, the transition is made through knowledge and skills to the level of interaction, which reflects desired internal outcomes, and finally the desired external outcomes are achieved. The level of multicultural competency depends on the level of acquired attitudes, knowledge and skills. Gražulis (2016) summarised the approaches of D. L. Adams, M. De Merode, M. London, V. I. Sessa, N. J. Adler, D. K. Deardorff and other researchers on multiculturalism in Table 7.

Table 7. Diverse definitions of multiculturalism and multicultural competency

Authors/ sources	Description of multiculturalism
Diane L. Adams. (1995). <i>Health issues for women of color: A cultural diversity perspective</i> . Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.	Knowledge of another ethnic group’s cultural characteristic features, history, values, belief system and the ability to adequately deal with its members; conscious understanding and sensitivity to another ethnic group, including openness and flexibility towards the relevant changes when it comes to other attitudes and values.

<p>M. De Merode (1997), cited in Mary L. Connerley & Paul B. Pedersen. (2005). <i>Leadership in a Diverse and Multicultural Environment: Developing Awareness, Knowledge, Skills</i>. SAGE Publications, p. 72.</p> <p>http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/4965_Connerley_I_Proof_3_Chapter_5.pdf</p>	<p>The ability to motivate the creation of intercultural teams, the ability to lead intercultural negotiations, the ability to select personnel and evaluate employees in different cultural environments, awareness of how to build good relations between different cultural groups.</p>
<p>Manuel London & Valerie I. Sessa. (1999). <i>Selection of international executives: An introduction and annotated bibliography</i>. Monograph. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.</p>	<p>The ability to positively evaluate other cultures, awareness of cultural differences, empathy for other cultures, recognition of cultural differences, liberalism, sharing cultural differences with others.</p>
<p>Nancy J. Adler (2002), cited in Mary L. Connerley & Paul B. Pedersen. (2005). <i>Leadership in a Diverse and Multicultural Environment: Developing Awareness, Knowledge, Skills</i>. SAGE Publications, p. 72.</p> <p>http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/4965_Connerley_I_Proof_3_Chapter_5.pdf</p>	<p>The ability to facilitate cultural sensitivity, the ability to solve intercultural problems synergistically, the ability to negotiate in the diverse cultural environment.</p>
<p>Darla K. Deardorff. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. <i>Journal of Studies in International Education</i>, 10, 241–266; The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence (2009). Thousand Oaks: Sage.</p>	<p>Effective and appropriate behaviour when communicating in an intercultural environment, where effective and appropriate behaviour and the consequences of the effectiveness of communication are assessed by another person; behavioural suitability directly related to cultural sensitivity and regarded as the cultural norm for this person.</p>
<p>Sarah Song. (2010). Multiculturalism. In Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <i>The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i>. Last modified on 9 September 2020. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/multiculturalism/</p>	<p>A body of thought in political philosophy about the proper way to respond to cultural and religious diversity, which recognizes that mere toleration of group differences is not enough; there must be legally enacted norms of such a group of people, on an equal footing as the rights of local people.</p>
<p>Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz. (2013). <i>Intercultural Competences: Conceptual and Operational Framework</i>. Paris: UNESCO, p. 12.</p> <p>http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002197/219768e.pdf</p>	<p>Merger of two or more different cultural groups that interact or affect each other, and when all group relations develop into a subculture or cooperating cultures.</p>

<p>Community Toolbox. (n.d.). <i>Cultural Competence and Spirituality in Community Building</i>. Section 7: Building Culturally Competent Organizations. http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/culture/cultural-competence/culturally-competent-organisations/main</p>	<p>The interaction of two or more entities (individual people, a group) who represent different cultures, orientations, attitudes of life, customs, etc., or organisations which declare the objectives and missions oriented to people from different cultures.</p>
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Source: compiled by the author, based on Gražulis (2016, p. 65).

The analysis of conceptions of multiculturalism and personal multicultural competency provided in Table 7 reveals the following features:

- knowledge of the cultural characteristics, history, values, belief systems of an ethnic group, tolerance towards people of another culture;
- conscious awareness, openness, flexibility and empathy for other ethnic groups;
- the ability to encourage and work in a multicultural environment;
- understanding of how to create positive relationships between different cultural groups;
- the ability to address multicultural issues in a synergistic way (Gražulis, 2016).

Despite the wide diversity of models of multicultural competency, as Leung et al. (2014) note, reviews of recent studies indicate around 30 different models and more than 300 derivative constructs based on them. Most distinguish three main dimensions: intercultural characteristics, intercultural attitudes, and intercultural skills.

Intercultural characteristics of an individual include such attributes as tolerance, flexibility, openness to variety, curiosity, inclination towards adventure, impartiality, etc. They determine a particular individual's behaviour in intercultural communication.

Intercultural attitudes show how individuals perceive and accept other cultures and information, which is external for the perception of their culture. Attitudes can be either positive or negative; some are characterised by a global or cosmopolitan attitude towards the world, while others adhere to an ethnocentric approach. This division could be illustrated by the attitude of political forces in Europe towards refugees: some support their admission, while others strongly oppose it, viewing it as a threat to the national identity of the country.

Intercultural skills determine what a person can do to ensure effective intercultural interaction. Researchers distinguish such skills as knowledge of foreign languages, knowledge of the history and culture of other countries, and so on.

Some authors, such as Deardorff (2011), in addition to the three mentioned dimensions, also emphasize the importance of the dimension of knowledge and understanding. They expand the dimension of knowledge and understanding by adding such aspects as cultural awareness and sociolinguistic perception. They also distinguish the dimension of skills as a

separate unit, which includes the ability to listen, observe, evaluate, analyse, interpret, and relate.

2.5. THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL CULTURES IN MULTICULTURALISM STUDIES

2.5.1. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory

The Dutch scholar Geert Hofstede proposed a different approach to the analysis of competency. Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions can be considered a system of intercultural communication. Hofstede developed his original model by using factor analysis to explore the results of a global survey of employee values conducted by IBM in the 1970s and 1980s. This theory was the first to be expressed quantitatively and was used to explain the observed cultural differences. To some extent, Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions can be seen as part of the case study under the theory of competency models, where this dimension correlates with one of the types of competencies defined by Spencer, i.e., "personal attitudes, self-perception".

Hofstede proposed four aspects that could be used to analyse cultural values: "individualism-collectivism", "uncertainty avoidance", "power distance" (strength of social hierarchy) and "masculinity-femininity" (task orientation versus person-orientation). Later, Hofstede expanded the initial paradigm and added a fifth dimension, i.e., "long-term orientation", based on his independent research in Hong Kong. In 2010, Hofstede, together with another author, Michael Minkov, added a sixth dimension – indulgence versus restraint.

The dimensions of national cultures are as follows (Hofstede, 1983, 1984):

- Power distance – an index of which was established on the basis of the results of a survey in different countries according to three elements of a questionnaire:
 - (1) percentage of subordinates who understand that their manager applies an autocratic or paternalistic (persuasive) way in decision-making;
 - (2) perception of subordinates that, collectively, the employees themselves and their colleagues are afraid to disagree with the superior's opinion;
 - (3) percentage of subordinates who prefer their superior to make decisions autocratically or paternalistically or a superior who makes decisions that are supported by the majority, and subordinates who do not want to give priority to a superior who makes decisions in a consultative manner.
- Individualism versus collectivism:

Individualistic societies emphasize individual performance and rights. Individuals

are expected to defend themselves and their families and act according to their personal choices. On the contrary, in collectivist societies, individuals act as members of a long-term and harmonious group or organisation. Hofstede observes that, from this point of view, the word collectivism does not have a political meaning: it is understood in the context of a group rather than a state. People feel they are a part of a big family, when in exchange for unconditional loyalty they receive protection. Individualism shows that greater relative importance in personal time is given to aspects of work, freedom and challenges. Preference is also given to the relative absence of training, skills, physical conditions and benefits. Thus, the emphasis is placed on the goals which make the person be active, and not on those whose pursuit is more dependent on the organisation (training in the organisation, skills, working conditions and benefits).

- Uncertainty avoidance: “A society’s tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity”.

This reflects the extent to which members of the society try to deal with anxiety by reducing the uncertainty of the situation and, at the same time, their own uncertainty. Individuals in cultures with a significant degree of uncertainty avoidance are usually more emotional – they strive to reduce the number of unknown and unusual circumstances and do this with caution, systematically planning their activities and setting and implementing various regulations, laws and rules. On the contrary, cultures with low degrees of uncertainty avoidance easily adapt to and feel well in uncertain situations or rapidly changing environments in order to minimize the number of different rules and restrictions. Individuals in these cultures are often more pragmatic and more flexible. An uncertainty avoidance index was compiled on the basis of three elements of a questionnaire:

(1) How often do you feel nervousness and tension at work?

(2) The rules of the organisation should not be violated, even if employees consider this to be in their best interests.

(3) How long do you think you will continue to work for this organisation?

- Masculinity versus femininity: “The distribution of emotional roles between the genders”. Masculine cultures are characterised by such values as competitiveness, the absence of fear of expressing one’s opinion, power, ambition, and materialism, while feminine cultures focus on such values as relationships and quality of life. Gender roles in masculine cultures differ more dramatically than in feminine cultures, in which men and women have a similar system of values, emphasize modesty and care for others. Due to a sexuality taboo in some cultures, especially in masculine ones, researchers sometimes rename this aspect based on Hofstede’s work into Quantity of Life versus Quality of Life. Masculinity refers to the relative importance of pay, recognition, progress

and challenge in the country, as well as the relative importance of the relationship with the manager, cooperation, a desirable place of residence and employment guarantees.

- Long-term orientation versus short-term orientation: the first is referred to as “Confucian dynamism”, and describes the time horizon of the society. Long-term orientation societies pay more attention to the future. They promote a pragmatic approach oriented towards reward, perseverance in seeking results, savings, and adaptability. Short-term orientation societies promote values related to the past and present, including stability, respect for traditions, external dignity, reciprocity and fulfilment of social obligations.
- Indulgence versus restraint:

Indulgence versus restraint shows to what extent members of the society try to control their desires, cravings and impulses. While indulgent societies are inclined to allow almost unrestricted satisfaction of the basic and natural human desires associated with life and entertainment, restraint societies are convinced that such desires must be limited and regulated by strict norms. Hofstede agrees that cultural dimensions of culture and values are theoretical constructs – they are means for practical application. Generalisations of one country’s culture are useful, but they should only be considered as guidelines for a better understanding of that culture. They are generalised and aggregated aspects which describe major national trends, but should not be applied to all of the society. Hofstede’s cultural aspects allow consumers to distinguish countries from each other, but they are not related to differences between members of the society – they do not necessarily define the characteristics of an individual. Evaluation at the national level should never be interpreted as the evaluation of an individual of that nation. A particular Japanese person can easily adapt to a changing situation, but on average the Japanese are characterised by high uncertainty avoidance. Hofstede’s theory on the individual level has successfully replaced the theory of traditional personal traits or personality competencies, which during evaluation focus on the individual.

2.5.2. Trompenaars’ model of national culture differences

Trompenaars’ model of national cultural differences, developed by Charles Hampden-Turner and Fons Trompenaars (2011) is the theoretical basis of intercultural communication applied in business and management. This model, similar to Hofstede’s model of cultural dimensions, could also be related to one of the types of competencies distinguished by Signe M. Spencer and Lyle M. Spencer (1993), i.e., “personal attitudes, self-perception”. Cultures, according to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, differ in solutions that are adopted in the face of various problems that arise as dilemmas. The authors divided these problems into three groups: those related to interaction between people, occurring in time, and related to the environment. Trompenaar and Hampden-Turner distinguish seven essential cultural

dimensions, depending on the choices made by different cultures, the first five of which relate to interaction between people, while the sixth and seventh relate to time and environment.

This model of national culture differences is comprised of seven dimensions.

1. Universalism versus particularism – What is more important – rules or relationships?

Universalism implies that rules, norms, values, or anything that can be defined and applied, are more important than specific human relations. Particularism focuses more on special and unique circumstances, with less attention to the general norms of society.

2. Individualism versus collectivism (communitarianism) – Do we function in a group or as individuals?

This determines whether it is more important to focus on personality and to influence the society through an individual or to treat the society as the primary and major link, since it is made up of many individuals.

3. Neutral versus affective – Do we display our emotions?

Should our communication be neutral and objective, and is the display of emotions acceptable?

4. Specific versus diffuse – How separate do we keep our private and working lives?

In business contacts, relationships between people sometimes go from those that are defined in a signed contract to a real personal relationship, without which in some cultures business becomes simply impossible.

5. Achievement versus ascription – Do we have to prove ourselves to receive status or is it given to us?

The dimension of achievement determines that a person is judged according to what they have achieved or performed, meanwhile the dimension of ascription determines the status of a person according to gender, origin, age or contacts.

6. Sequential versus synchronic – Do we do things one at a time or several things at once?

Cultures also differ in terms of time, as some of them do not take into consideration what the person had achieved before, and more attention is paid to future plans; in other cultures, previous achievements are more valued more recent ones. In some cultures, time is perceived as monochronic, when all events can be presented as one line; in others, it is perceived as a polychronic that can be depicted as a circle, where the past is more closely tied to future plans. Such diversity of attitudes results in significant differences in planning, strategy development, and the concept of punctuality.

7. Internal versus external control – Do we control our environment or are we controlled by it?

Some cultures consider the inner factors of a person as the most important element which influences their life, others consider external circumstances to be dominant in life.

2.5.3. Criticism of approaches of Hofstede and Trompenaars

Most researchers who analyse business culture consider Hofstede's model as the most comprehensive system of national cultural values; this author is one of the most quoted scholars in the world, however, the validity of his model remains quite widely criticized. Brendan McSweeney, Donna Brown and Stavroula Iliopoulos (2016) express probably the most sceptical approach to Geert Hofstede's research: "Overall, what insights about social actions do Hofstede's generalizations discussed here provide? At best they provide none. Indeed, they may misdirect". As an example, they discuss the connection between the degree of masculinity and business relationships. If you invest in a "masculine" country, such as Ireland, your business could be characterised by more frequent business conflicts, and if you invest in a "feminine" country, such as Denmark, business contacts can be characterised as more often meeting consensus. However, these assumptions do not completely relate to the historical reality not only at the individual level, but also in the country as a whole. These critics of Hofstede's theory doubt the existence of such a phenomenon as a long-term, causal, common "national culture". Although Hofstede claims that he used national cultural aspects to rank countries hierarchically, the critics of this researcher argue that he should prove usefulness of his theory and methodology by explaining and predicting behaviour, at least in the case of business relationships.

Meanwhile, Hofstede (Hofstede, 1996) claims that Trompenaars obviously confuses conceptual categories with dimensions, and doubts the quality of his research. The research sample, according to Hofstede, was not sufficient, and the limited number of analysed countries, i.e., only nine, is statistically insufficient to create a multi-dimensional model. The empirical model generated by Trompenaars is the simplest possible, and on the basis of seven aspects distinguishes cultures into two categories, i.e., left and right brain hemispheres. However, according to Hofstede, the scope of the study does not make it possible to create a more comprehensive model that allows a deeper understanding of cultural differences.

2.6. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Some research (D. Deardorff, A. Whales, K. Davis et al.) in the area of multicultural competency could be distinguished as a separate, narrower component of research on general competencies, extensively studied by D. McClelland, R. Boyatzis, L. Spencer, S. Spencer and

many others. Other scholars, such as Hofstede or Trompenaars, who analysed a similar phenomenon, take somewhat different position and search for general concepts, called dimensions, which reflect the whole culture rather than concepts that reflect the individual level. However, it is possible to view Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory as an individual case of general theory of competencies, where dimension correlates with one the types of competencies defined by L. Spencer and S. Spencer as "Personal attitudes, self-perception", which is applicable at a higher level – state or nation. In any case, some research results, despite their limitations, do not contradict others. The dynamics of individual competencies, including intercultural ones, can be represented as re-evaluations of competencies, which is a common practice in many organisations. However, Hofstede and Trompenaars's models of general competencies for all cultures, otherwise referred to as dimensions, represent only a static aspect of cultural dimensions. The addition of dynamic aspects to these researchers' models, such as the dimension of development vector and pace, would provide a lot of useful information on the direction in which different cultures evolve, how their dimensions change, and what factors influence these processes.

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