

Anglia Ruskin University

Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn.

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A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
Anglia Ruskin University for the degree of PhD

Submitted March 2019.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Greg O'Shea, for his support and guidance over the years that I have been working on this research project. Our meetings and Skype discussions certainly helped keep me on the right track focusing on the core areas rather than wandering off at a tangent when I found some fascinating new area that I wished to explore. I would also like to thank the many people who found themselves under the spotlight as I interrogated them trying to get an understanding of the fuzzy area of culture. I would like to give a special mention to Gordon Stewart, who gave up time to read the thesis and brought to my attention any errors or omissions he saw. Finally, I would like to thank my family for supporting me as I spent all the hours' locked away writing up this thesis. Yes dear, we can go on holiday now!!!!

Abstract

“Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn”.

The research was initiated to provide me with valuable knowledge as I expanded my company into a new market, that of the Far East. The thesis commences with the background rationale for investigating the area of culture. It builds upon existing ‘difference’ research to help provide a better understanding of overseas culture focusing upon Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

At an early stage in the research it became apparent I was moving my methodological shift towards self-ethnography, using my own experiences to reflect upon and use the knowledge gained to refine my way of operating when communicating with business colleagues located in the Far Eastern countries. The writings of Hall, Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner and Hofstede, produced information which enabled me to compare my empirical research with existing research and help me make sense of my findings. Learning models promulgated by Honey and Mumford and Kolb are explored, together with sense-making. The thesis takes a qualitative stance with the author at the core of the project. The research, completed in Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the UK produced valuable data which is presented in the vignettes.

Individual acculturation using reflection via incidences is recorded in the vignettes and used to expand cultural intelligence. The acquiring of Cultural intelligence (CQ) is explored via ‘The Conscious Competence Learning Model’, which explains the stages by which we learn and ultimately acquire a new skill and was used to help the author as he moved through the learning stages of the matrix.

This longitudinal research of over six years reflected on the findings reported in the vignettes, and introduced new knowledge and new ideas to the author, which was useful as he developed his business and contributed to the general and his knowledge bank. During this longitudinal, self-ethnographic research, it must be acknowledged that there is a difficulty in producing knowledge through writing about the self, but during the exercise this was constantly monitored as I reflected upon events. It produced some rich text that supported me as a way to introduce cultural nuances into myself which would help me develop closer relations with my overseas business associates.

Finally, a conceptual framework is developed that centres the self-reflective learning on sensemaking around cultural difference incidents, intercultural communication/ acculturation and learning theory (to develop this sensemaking ability) and ultimately the gaining of cultural intelligence (CQ) through an ongoing mixing of these three theory sets. In this way this thesis contributes to the literature by Hall, Trompenaars, Hampden- Turner, Hofstede, and other eminent researchers.

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Chapter 1

1.1.1 My research context and problem.

1.1.2 Introduction.

My journey into the world of exporting started a few years ago. This was a new business venture and at the time I did not realise what a huge step I was taking. Although I glibly talked about overseas culture, I had not experienced it and therefore was not ready for the surprises that exporting was to bring. I needed to close this knowledge gap, and this led to the development of this research document.

Reflecting over the years, my career has focused on UK organisations which transact their business in the UK. My academic qualifications highlight the fact that my focus has been on the British economy, and for me overseas commerce did not come into the commercial equation. Towards the end of my working life redundancy appeared on the horizon, and I had the choice of taking retirement or investigating a business opportunity that would take me into a new adventure which would involve mainly trading outside the UK. I have always felt passionate about the world of commerce and when this new challenge presented itself it did not take me long to decide that further exploratory talks should take place. As the dialogue progressed, I became convinced the challenge was right for me, so I formed a company, together with a colleague, and we started to trade. I was now entering the education sector and I would be talking to universities, agents, and students from around the globe, but my target market would be the Far East (Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam). My co-director had quite a few years' experience of student recruitment and we therefore had a good understanding of the arena we were entering. We had completed research into the marketplace and although there was a lot of competition we considered with our exceptionally low overheads and established contacts we would be able to generate revenue to make the venture viable. Our market research revealed there was in the region of 750,000 students who came to the UK to study each year in higher and further education and independent and language schools (Manning A, 2018). My co-director already had strong links with China and Bangladesh so it was agreed I would focus on developing the business in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

Like many micro company owners, it can be a lonely existence. Blackburn (2010) supports this statement when he says "For many SME owner-managers, especially those of micro-firms,

Their business life is often lonely and isolated" (Blackburn, 2010:5). In my case I had my office at home and my colleague based himself at his home, with a lot of overseas travel. As a result, I found myself

in my office experiencing new experiences without anyone to talk to, and therefore help to unravel unusual experiences. The days went by and, as the company grew, I started to realise that I needed to form a better understanding of what was happening. The normal UK way of operating was not bringing the expected results; something was not right. Unknowingly I had stumbled into the 'overseas culture' environment and I wished to gain an appreciation of what was happening. I felt this needed to be researched in a structured way rather than like a butterfly dancing around in the breeze flitting from plant to plant. As I started my research, I uncovered papers written by eminent academics such as Hall, Hofstede and Trompenaars and this led me to the idea of completing the research under the umbrella of a part time PhD. Phillips and Pugh (2000) state that students completing a PhD "will not be traversing a set course laid out by others" (Phillips and Pugh, 2000:2) which in the very early stages of the research made the whole project very attractive – a trip into the unknown! As the research commenced, I found that the pool of information available grew rather than shrinking, as I followed references/links contained in the different research instruments. In effect, the research has taken over a large part of my life and when looking at the television, newspapers, internet etc. I quite often find myself looking at events which have / could have some cultural implication.

This chapter introduces the author in the context of his organisation and outlines the research problem, the problem which developed when I agreed to form a new company trading overseas.

1.1.3 The problem

This document is about my journey into the world of culture and the differences that exist, mainly focusing on Asia where our target market was identified. I was really concerned as to why good working relationships with businesspeople primarily from Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, etc., were not developing. As a senior player in our company I did not wish to let my business colleagues down, so my journey into culture commenced. Fortunately, I was able to weave my research into my business and family life. My son was working in the Far East, living a rather nomadic existence as his employer moved him from country to country to manage different projects. Just the mention of a trip to see him brought a positive response from my wife, and for me a chance to meet my overseas business colleagues and at the same time absorb that country's culture. This gave me the opportunity to try to understand what was occurring by "telling a convincing story using the language of community members and by weaving observations and insights about culture and practices into the text" (Cunliffe, 2010:228).

Practically speaking I needed to be part of the research into culture, even become one of the actors in transactions and dialogues, to get a better understanding of how people interacted with each other. Van Mannan (2010) continues this theme when he states "ethnography maintains an almost obsessive

focus on the 'empirical', the witnessing ideal with its intense reliance on personalized seeing, hearing, experiencing in specific social settings" (Van Maanen, 2010:22). Chang (2008) explores this area further when he states "In embracing personal thoughts, feelings, stories, and observations as a way of understanding the social context they are studying, auto ethnographers are also shedding light on their total interaction with that setting by making their every emotion and thought visible to the reader" (Chang, 2008:2). A further complication appeared as the research developed, that of acculturation, an area which explains "what happens to individuals, who have developed in one cultural context, when they attempt to live in a new cultural context" (Luedicke, 2011:2).

When we first started trading, my knowledge on how UK small business (SME's) operated was considerable and, although it was based on UK SME's, I thought it would hold me in good stead in my new business venture. However, reality caught up with me within a few days of the launch date of the business. I was already getting frustrated that events were not developing as expected, and at this early stage was becoming aware that something needed to be done. I felt a need to explore more deeply what I had now established was something called 'culture'. My decision to undertake a part-time PhD whilst developing a fledgling business was not taken lightly. Greenfield (2000) refers to this area when she states "Part-timers, on the other hand, often have no choice but to plough through the relevant texts by themselves. Elements they do not understand can remain blurry until their next supervision meeting"(Greenfield, 2000:3).

The initial plan I developed allowed me to run the business, but at the same time provided a structured research instrument which would hold my hand (metaphorically speaking) with me at the centre. Practically speaking I had to be the pivotal part of the research. Van Maanen (2010) describes the role of the ethnographer, stating "One becomes an ethnographer by going out and doing it (and writing it up)" (Van Maanen, 2010:6). As the research developed, I wove it into my business and home life, which at times proved quite challenging.

At an early stage realisation struck me that I was the only person within our organisation taking an active stance in reviewing the area of culture especially relating to the business world. Although no one objected to me completing the research, it did seem the importance had been overlooked by many within our network. So why did it matter to me? I needed to find out and contribute and communicate my findings to my close business partners if we were to develop a good business model. The literature and models of practice around culture did not address many of the situations I found myself having to address and I was keen to find out why. Trompenaars and Berg (2016) consider organisations that deal with overseas organisations "need to adapt their management practices to the national cultures" (Trompenaars & Berg, 2016: 272) something we would have to explore.

1.1.4 Research Context.

My company had introduced me to a new area that of overseas culture and I was very keen to find out how things were different in the Far East compared to the UK. Initially I was keen to explore everything and the initial proposal was to “research culture”. However very soon after the commencement of the research, it became apparent that would be a lifetime project. I had to bear in mind my goal was to run a growing business, complete this research and I had a family to consider. My desk research revealed that there were many aspects to culture, some such as language I realised, would have to be outside the remit of this document. As I continued to research the topic of culture, I became aware I would have to concentrate on a small area that would have a positive impact on the development of the business. I also had to consider the practical aspect. The company was in its early days and funds available were limited so to be able to combine overseas business meetings with pleasure visits helped. It was while overseas that I was able to observe the mannerisms of my overseas business colleagues and look for differences. As the research evolved and my knowledge on the topic expanded from both desk research and physical visits to the Far East the proposal title changed eventually morphing to “Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn”. The fact that the research and the development of the business was running parallel, the research and the company growing at the same time enabled me to use the knowledge gained from both to enrich the empirical research presented as vignettes later in this document. As the research progressed, I found myself at times in information overload as I became aware of something new which had a direct impact on how I should conduct myself when communicating with my Far Eastern business colleagues. This learning curve continued during the whole of this research project.

1.2.1 Introduction to Culture

Every day we wake up and breathe the air. We take it for granted it will be there as it was yesterday and will be tomorrow. As we take the air for granted, people around the globe also accept the way they have been programmed and accept automatically what is right and what is wrong, depending upon the culture in which they have grown up.

Today Singapore is a very progressive successful economically growing country. It broke away from Malaysia in 1965 to become an independent nation. “From a survey conducted in Singapore Tsang (2004) reports evidence that 63.8% of the companies had used the services of feng shui experts” (Torgler B, 2007). While completing my desk research for this research I have not seen one mention

of this service being used in the UK. Just one of the many different beliefs/cultural traits between the UK and Singapore.

The above example alludes to differences in country culture. McDonald's, the fast-food restaurant company, could be considered to have a micro-culture of its own. When you enter a McDonald's restaurant you look for the counter where you place your order and then prepare to join a queue; while waiting to be served you scan the colourful menu attached to the wall close to the order counter. Once the order is placed you pay with cash or credit card and then wait for the food to arrive. While waiting, a quick scan of the restaurant takes place to find somewhere to sit (assuming you are eating in the restaurant). After consuming the meal, the remnants left on the tray (paper cups, packaging serviettes etc.) are tossed into the waste bins. A similar process occurs around the globe as I observed in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and airport terminals worldwide. The menu may be adapted to meet local customs, but the process is the McDonald's culture: enter – queue – choose – pay – eat – waste into bins - leave. There are no rules written down; people just accept the unwritten rules when they enter the restaurant. This approach can be expanded to other business transactions. Bucking the accepted unwritten rules can lead to adverse comments from fellow customers/businessmen and the expected outcome does not happen. Murdocks (2015) states "despite their differences, researchers have found that all societies have certain common practices and beliefs, or cultural universals". George Murdock's list of cultural universals include athletic sports, cooking, funeral ceremonies, medicine, and sexual restrictions. Cultural universals aren't necessarily the same everywhere - what Murdocks was pointing out is that each culture has its own way of cooking, burying, celebrating, procreating, etc. (Murdocks, 2015).

The McDonald's approach can be considered a company culture which it has introduced in its premises wherever they are located. However, this does not necessarily apply to business transactions carried out in different countries. There are many similar business transactions completed each day, and the way the activities are processed can be different from country to country; it is these differences which can cause major problems to the unaware. Enron, when it was trading as a pipeline company, lost a major contract due to its failure to understand the people it was dealing with. It was an American company, in negotiations with an Indian company. To an American company like Enron the 'time is money' approach applies, whereas to an Indian company the slower the negotiations the better, as it gives the people involved a chance to build up trust (Salacuse, 2004).

Circumstances were forcing the author into early retirement, something he was not ready to accept at this stage of his life. He therefore looked at other opportunities, identified an area and formed a company. It was this company that brought him into contact with people who were not programmed to the UK way of working. As the company developed, he became aware that his approach, how he

was thinking and communicating with overseas businesspeople, was changing. He was beginning to realise that people operated in different ways. As Ready and Burton (2010) state “you also realise that not everyone thinks like you do about even the most mundane everyday events, which seem so clear and obvious to you” (Ready and Burton 2010:91). This is compounded when you examine the workings of the mind. Bekoff et al. (2017) give the following example: “take this book in front of your eyes. Right now, you are presumably having a conscious experience of seeing the paper (or screen), the words and the pictures. The way you see the page is unique to you, and no one else can know exactly what it is like for you” (Bekoff et al, 2017:4).

This research was instigated to examine some of the differences in cultures between the UK and overseas countries, eventually focusing on the Far East. It commences by discussing cultures around the globe, before converging to focus on the activities of the author as he tries to raise his appreciation of the way the business community operates in the Far East, and also the ways in which he will have to revise his way of working to accommodate the differences between the UK and Far Eastern cultures, in order to ensure that positive working relationships can be developed.

During the author’s international travels over recent years, he has found that ‘one size fits all’ does not apply when talking about culture. Inglehart looks at the impact culture has on economics and considers” people of different societies are characterized by enduring differences in basic attitudes, values, and skills. In other words, they have different cultures” (Inglehart 1990). Recently I was listening to two Americans talking on the radio, one of whom was located on the East Coast and the other on the West Coast of the USA. During the conversation he wondered if they were, in fact, both Americans as from time to time one would say something which would surprise the other. Nakata (2009) confirms this when she states “Cultural meanings are not typically shared uniformly by an entire society, and they are not shared precisely. Any two individuals from a given culture may hold slightly different meanings” (Nakata, 2009:23). However, perhaps this is the exception to the total picture, and to work with people in different countries one needs to have an understanding of how that country operates its culture! Consideration also must be given to the mobilised global population that move around the world, taking some of their traits with them which may impact on the local culture. Piller, (2011) states “Culture is not something that exists outside of and precedes intercultural communication. Instead, intercultural communication is one domain where ‘culture’ as concerned with the specific – and different – ways of life of different national and ethnic groups is constructed” (Piller, 2011:16).

It is envisaged that the findings of the research will enable the author to understand the reason actions happen – is ‘yes’ a ‘yes’ or a ‘maybe’?

1.2.2 Background

If we accept that the world is becoming a global village, in the sense that the technological advancements of this modern time (internet, VOIP, emails, mobile telephone) have brought people closer together (metaphorically speaking), this also means that people from various parts of the world with different cultural backgrounds are working and communicating together. However, this advancement introduces some new challenges. House et al (2004) state “clearly we are living in an increasingly interconnected and complex world” (House et al., 2004:4). This closer relationship will necessitate dealing with people from different cultures and therefore require knowledge of cultural diversities; for instance, the way we deal with them, what we say and do, what we should avoid saying, how to communicate and an awareness of the cultural taboos - because what is accepted in one culture might not be acceptable in another. For example, in some parts of the world such as Brazil, Greece and Germany a gesture such as the ring gesture (thumb and forefinger touching) can be considered sexually insulting. So, whereas you may think you are saying OK, to some people you may actually be insulting them. Sillintowe and Susanto (2018) suggest “the slightest cultural differences may have the potential to create a noise or communication interference and later may reduce communication effectivity for both parties” (Sillintowe and Susanto 2018:138).

Everyone has a view of the world from their perspective. Archee et al. (2012) state that “All of us have a world view. This is our perspective on how we stand in relation to everyone else. For example, Australians seldom ask ‘Who am I as an Australian’ or ‘where do I stand as an Australian with respect to other races’” (Archee, 2012:88). The latter question resonates with my rationale for this research. As an English person I wish to know where I stand in respect to my Far Eastern colleagues so that I can make sense of what happens when communicating with them. Why does the expected outcome not always occur using UK logic? Nishimura et al. (2008) continue this thread when they say “It is generally acknowledged that people from different countries tend to communicate in slightly different ways. We argue that these differences are more related to different communication cultures than other differences. Being aware of these differences usually leads to better comprehension, fewer misunderstandings and to mutual respect” (Nishimura et al, 2008:783). A definition of culture “is that culture are shared beliefs and assumptions by groups of individuals which sets up a variety of rules and methods to deal with a problem” (Broeke 2016:2).

It is expected that the new knowledge gained during the research project will help to establish a greater understanding of this fuzzy word ‘culture’ and therefore enable closer relations with my business colleagues in the Far East to be developed. In order to get an understanding of inter-cultural communications Hofstede considers that it is essential to take three steps:

1. Awareness of the existence of cultural differences
2. Knowledge about the cultures involved, including one's own
3. Skills in communicating with people holding different values, though developing shared practices.

(Hofstede 2015:12)

In the past, when differences occurred between countries, they may have turned to their war machines. Today, in many instances when a difference of opinion takes place resolution methods have changed to dialogue, but even here issues still arise when East meets West or when one country starts to talk/work with another. Hofstede et al.'s (2010) cultural theories show that geographically-close neighbours such as France and the United Kingdom have a different way of approaching day-to-day challenges which is reflected in the results of their research. The first, Power Distance Index, shows that there is a flatter management style in the UK (ranked 35) where power is shared and well-dispersed. France (ranked 68) appears to accept a higher level of unequal distribution of power, with people understanding their place in the system. The individualism index shows a much closer correlation but shows that people in the UK operate at the individualist end of the scale compared to France (UK ranked 89 and France 71). In countries with high scores there is a lack of interpersonal connection and little sharing of responsibility. The finding of this uncertainty/avoidance index reveals quite a difference. The French score was high (ranked 86) which would indicate that France would try to avoid ambiguous situations whereas the United Kingdom score (ranked 35) shows that it enjoys novel events and values difference. There are few rules and people are encouraged to find their own truth. If we look at France and the United Kingdom, we can see that when two people meet and start to negotiate their inbuilt system, the internal programming that they have grown up, both in and with, is different. Perhaps this is one of the reasons the French and the British have a love-hate relationship. Miall and Milsted (2013) state that the French and the British have been sparring partners for so long that the British "have developed a kind of love-hate relationship with them" (Miall and Milsted, 2013:7).

In his book *Humour across Frontiers*, Lewis takes this 'love-hate' relationship one step further when he talks about the French being quite merciless in nationality jokes, leaving no sympathy for the victim:

Questioner:	Do you know how to save an Englishman from drowning
Respondent:	No
Questioner:	Good

(Lewis, 2005:75).

In the international arena, Germany and Japan stand out as being countries who consider humour quite out of place in a business environment, whereas in America it is considered a tool for breaking a deadlock. “In Britain it is a multi-faceted weapon to confuse, placate or to stimulate one’s interlocutor” (Lewis, 2005:151).

My current employment role requires me to interact with Chinese executives. Over the years I have learnt that, for the Chinese, ‘saving face’ is an especially important factor. Lewis gives a good example which, although reported in the form of a joke, highlights the importance of ‘saving face’:

Two Chinese were playing chess. One of them, very conceited, considered that he was virtually unbeatable. However, he was beaten in three straight games by his opponent. When he was asked by his friends how he had fared, he was in great danger of ‘losing face’.

Question: How many games did you play?

Answer: Three

Question: Who won?

Answer: I didn’t win the first game. He didn’t lose the second game. In the third game I asked for a draw and he refused.

(Lewis, 2005:161)

The gentleman who co-ordinates the agenda of the visiting Chinese executives, my contact in the UK, is a person of Chinese extraction who has lived in the UK for many years. Recently, we had a problem with some invoicing so an email giving the full breakdown asking for his help was sent so that an investigation could be instigated to find the error. Nothing was said but the outstanding funds appeared in the bank account and we carried on as if nothing had happened.

An article appearing in the Phnom Penh Post touched on the area of saving face. The article was in connection with the development at Siem Reap Airport and the comment was made by Yim Nola, a senior minister of the Cambodian government. The article said, “until now we still have not heard anything from Cambodia Airports”. He then went on to say “they might need more time to study their proposal for the compensation amount” (Gaudemar and Sokhorng, 2017). In effect this let Cambodia Airports know the Government needed an answer but at the same time gave them a reason for the delay in responding – saving face.

Bernard Alphonso, creator of Optical Performance Consulting, has been operating in Cambodia for many years. Over the years that he has been working in the country he has been able to identify why some conflicts have occurred, especially when a senior manager in charge has originated from a western country. He reasons that “in France or the West generally, if you repeat an instruction two or three times, the recipient might be insulted by an implication that they were stupid. In Cambodia, however, if you repeat an instruction several times, employees are happier generally. This is because

they feel more secure in their understanding of the instruction” (B2B Cambodia, 2015). Bernard then gives another example using the word ‘yes’. He states that the word is very ambiguous because the Khmer translation of ‘yes’ is ‘baht’ which actually means ‘yes I hear what you say’ (B2B Cambodia, 2015). He gives further examples of a different approach to dealing with the different challenges that manager’s face, including disciplinary actions which he suggests should be dealt with privately. He also states that motivational issues should be developed via groups, to encourage group involvement rather than imposition of a target which the manager has developed over the weekend and imposed on the Monday.

It would appear that extant literature relating to intercultural issues in cross-border transactions are fragmented across many of the different disciplines such as strategy, learning styles and the interpretation of the English language; does ‘yes’ mean ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’? Continuing this theme Mobbs (2010) discusses the way people learn through discovery and experience.

Kolb’s book on Experiential Learning Theory provides a holistic model of the learning process and is a multi-linear model of adult development, both of which are consistent with what we know about how we naturally learn, grow, and develop. The theory is called ‘Experiential Learning’ to emphasize the central role that experience plays in the learning process (Mobbs, 2010a).

Kolb and Honey and Mumford look at the areas of learning. They examine how a person learns, then this has to be reviewed to see how it fits in with the society the person is living in at that time. Culture and the programming of that person will play a major factor. Le Brack in his article talks about culture shock. He suggests that “one of the most powerful, practical and productive concepts in the field of international educational exchange is that of ‘culture shock’, described as the physical, psychological and behavioural reactions that often occur when individuals are attempting to live, work or study in unfamiliar cultural contexts” (Le Brack, 2008:1) .

1.2.3 Rationale

The arrival of the global economy over recent years has generated a lot of interest within the UK. Today there is a considerable amount of dialogue relating to exports, and suggestions that companies should look at opportunities overseas. Managing my own SME for 15 years, we built up a large network within the UK which enabled us to observe first-hand the different ways that business was conducted. At the end of the 15 years the company was sold and after the sale was completed my career took me to a department of the UK government. I remained with this department for 16 years, during which time part of my job role required visiting companies and promoting the different government support that was available to them. During this time, I had researched and written about companies operating

within the UK (Stewart and Wilkinson, 2009; Wilkinson, 2010; Wilkinson and Abbott, 2008; Wilkinson and Fraser, 2007a; Wilkinson and Fraser, 2007b). My knowledge about company development and growth plans grew over those 15 years, and one element discussed when visiting companies was exports. At that time in my working life I had rather naively overlooked the fact that just because someone from overseas spoke English and smiled at the right moment, there could be any difference in the way they conducted their way of doing business. Enlightenment was on the horizon and an introduction to a fuzzy substance called culture was to occur.

With the change of the UK Government in 2010, and the introduction of new strategies/policies, the closure of the government department in which I was employed became imminent. An opportunity to start my own business appeared and I decided to explore this new opportunity. It involved forming a new company in the UK, but what I did not fully appreciate was that my customers would be based overseas, all around the world, and my approach to business was about to get a surprise – yes, many spoke English but did ‘yes’ mean ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’?

My arrival into the world happened in Worthing, Sussex and since then my education (programming) had been in Britain and, until a ‘eureka’ moment occurred, I was rather a stereotypical English person. According to Miall and Milsted (2013) “The attitude of the English towards other nations is not so much xenophobia (fear of foreigners) as xenopili (pity for foreigners for having the misfortune to be, well, not English)” (Miall and Milsted, 2013:1). This stance to outsiders (not English) can be traced back many years, and a Venetian Ambassador visiting London in 1497 is quoted as saying “they do not believe that there are any other people than themselves, or any other world than England: and whenever they see some handsome foreigner, they say ‘He looks like an Englishman,’ or, ‘what a pity he is not English’” (Miall and Milsted, 2013:2). Later references to a similar approach to foreigners (non-English) were highlighted in a recent television show which referred to Thomas Babington Macaulay, a gentleman who lived in the 19th century and spent time working in India. He regarded the British culture as inherently superior to the Indian one, and as a result was a prime mover in introducing the English language as the medium of instruction.

Sumner looked at the habit of judging other cultures based on how it compares to one’s own. Such attitudes are an example of ethnocentrism or evaluating and judging another culture according to how it compares to one’s own cultural norms. According to Bizumic (2014) “It is widely assumed that Sumner coined the concept of ethnocentrism in 1906” (Bizumic, 2014:3). Recent developments in communications, such as email, VoIP, and the ease with which people can move around the globe, have helped to change some people’s attitudes, but the lack of understanding between different countries and how they function internally still exists today. This was highlighted in the early days of my company when an email arrived from a person living in India which commenced: ‘Dear Mr

Nicholas' and then proceeded to talk about India before arriving at the important part of the email, an answer to the question posed. Reflecting back, it was fortunate that at this early time in the development of the company recognition that different cultures existed had been established. A response to the email was drafted and sent in a similar vein. The content started with a preamble about the English weather and slowly led to the main section of the email. The response that arrived back indicated our carefully drafted email had been successful and, from then on, we appeared to have had a good working relationship. Sidorcuka & Nigmatullaeva (2018) research provided evidence that differences exist between countries. The conclusions in their report which looked at France and China highlighted cultural differences "The results of this research as the key problems experienced by the interns found their roots in the difference cultural values between Chinese and French cultures" (Sidorcuka and Nigmatullaeva 2018:433).

My son had just announced his engagement to a young Malaysian lady when we received a letter addressed to her at our UK address. At first, we wondered who it was for, but further investigation revealed it was for Miss Romainor, our son's fiancée. Wikipedia states that "a Malays name consists of a personal name which is used to address them in all cases, almost always followed by a patronym". So, in this case Nur Sabrina Binti Romainor, when broken down, indicated that Binti means 'daughter of', in this case 'daughter of Romainor'. Where the title Nur is included (for a female) it would seem to have been developed in response to the use of popular Muslim names (Wikipedia Malaysian). Initial research indicates a female may not wish to take the male's surname (family name) when married. Since starting to write this thesis time has moved on and my son has now married Sabrina. At the wedding held in Malaysia there were well over 100 people in attendance. Some people had adopted a nickname which they were known by. One of my son's wife's friends was known by the name 'Baby'. She was nearly 18 years old, and to call an 18-year-old person Baby seemed strange, but as everyone called her Baby we conformed. Backman (2005) talks about the use of nicknames in the Far East and makes reference to the Philippines. He states nicknames are prevalent in this country and states that "the name Baby for example is a common nickname for many Filipino women" (Backman, 2005:9).

The use of surnames (family names) was introduced into the UK in the eleventh century by the government, so that the recording of taxes from the local population could be made easier. However, in 1849 in the Far East the Spanish Governor General in the Philippines took a decision to only allow a small number of surnames. Today this has created an issue within the country as "many law-abiding Filipinos unwittingly share their names with criminals and so carry certificates from the National Bureau of Investigation to prove they are not wanted for some criminal act" (Backman, 2005:9). This lack of variety of names also impacts on people when they try to obtain credit cards. Korea also is short of surnames which have only been introduced in the last 100 years. Backman states that "the world's 75 million ethnic Koreans share just 270 surnames, but most Koreans opted for names that

were associated with the aristocracy" (Backman, 2005:10). In Laos, until 1943 the family name was not used. They have now adopted the Western practice of using their family name last. To add to the confusion the Indonesian president in 2004 had three names Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Backman explains that "the president's children use Yudhoyono but neither of his parents does. Close friends call him Bambang. The Indonesian media call him either Mr Yudhoyono or Mr Susilo and, more commonly, simply SBY" (Backman, 2005:11). In Thailand, names can be associated with luck which can result in someone changing their name because events are going against them at the time. "Top businessmen who have financial troubles sometimes shed their names along with their debts" (Backman, 2005:11). So, who is related to whom and does a 'yes' mean 'yes' or a 'maybe'? There was still a lot to explore, in effect a project in its own right and outside the terms of this research.

The difference in approach between East and West was highlighted on the international stage when Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, met with the South Korean president, Park Geun-Hye. Bill Gates was shown as smiling with his hand in his pocket; two people meeting are smiling at each other, indicating a friendly approach. However, to a South Korean the picture sends the wrong message. To a South Korean, one hand in your pocket means you are hiding something and the handshake with a grin set off accusations that one of the richest men in the world was plain rude. "Thus, engaging with a country requires at very least an effort to understand the culture and a recognition that one's own culture is not universal" (Rutherford 2018:3) as I was beginning to find out. "Different cultures have different meaning systems" Erickson and Murphy cited in Pieterse (2015:11)

The United States of America is a large country, with the distance between the east and west coasts being around 3000 miles. The previously-mentioned example of two people from the United States talking on the radio, one living on the east coast and the other on the west coast, asking questions of each other as if they lived in a different country and sometimes responding in amazement that certain events actually took place, poses a question: If this happens within one country, what happens when you cross country boundaries or travel from the West to the East or, as in this research, from the UK to the Far East?

Acculturation explains the process of cultural and psychological change that happens when a meeting occurs between people from different cultures. This may be within one large country (such as the USA) or from different countries around the world. Bourhis et al. (1997) discussed the different ways people can integrate (or not) into a new culture (country). Variations in clothing and food would be one of the main differences between countries - some as a result of different climates. Who would wish to wear a heavy pullover in Singapore where the temperature can reach a high of +31c and go down to a low of +23c in the period that some locals consider the cool period?

Berry (1997) stated that “the central aim of the field of cross-cultural psychology has been to demonstrate the influence that cultural factors have on the development and display of individual human behaviour”(Berry, 1997:6). Berry continues by discussing “what happens to individuals who have developed in one cultural context, when they attempt to live in a new cultural context” (Berry, 1997:6). This area was one of the main driving forces for this research, as to understand this ‘new cultural context’ was of major importance if the company were to prosper.

People can even move from one culture to another adopting one strategy while at work and then another when they return home at night. One of the criticisms of this method of categorising people is they do not often fall into a neat category, although it does give a framework when a comparison is required.

1.3.0 Research Question

1.3.1 Objectives

Having entered into the global economy, which has many different approaches to commerce, it soon became apparent that in order to operate successfully overseas the company would have to gain an understanding of how others operated if it was to build good business relationships and prosper.

The research was developed to enable me to understand how to operate when dealing with different cultures. Unfortunately, at my time of life learning different languages is not an option but trying to understand the different nuances from the different countries/people will support the company’s development.

1.3.2 Research questions: How and Why?

The title of this thesis is ‘Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn.

The research will review the following areas:

- Identify and explore the elements of culture and how they impact upon my way of operating
- Explore global and regional cultural differences focusing on the Far East
- Acculturation (assimilation to a different culture)

During the early stages of the research the following set of primary research questions was posed:

1. Why was the company not developing strong working relations with people from the Far East?
What intercultural issues existed?
2. Is there a pattern or thematic areas which will help to understand how you should adapt your way of working?
3. How does the work of Hofstede, Hall, Trompenaars and other respected researchers offer any enlightenment into the culture of the Far East?
4. How does the cultural difference/understanding impact upon communications when using the verbal and none verb communication in English?
5. As the thesis developed the question evolved to portray the core issue of a learning journey and moved to the final question “Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn”.

1.3.3 Research Problem and Hypothesis

The past thirty years have seen increasingly rapid advances in the field of electronics and air travel, which has made the world an easier place in which to conduct commerce. However, what is quite often overlooked is that although overseas countries may use English as their language, the interpretation may have a different meaning and the result may not be as expected. In British English, pants mean underpants or, informally, nonsense. In American English, pants mean trousers.

Morrison and Conaway (2006) state that “Indonesians show great deference to a superior” (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:234). They go on to say that supervisors are often told what they want to hear. In recent months, the Japanese car giant Toyota experienced a major problem with their cars, with thousands having to be recalled for modifications to be made. One of the reasons promulgated for the error occurring in the first place was that the people on the production-line would not tell their superiors that there was a potential fault.

Japan, although not quite so hierarchical as Indonesia, still has a high respect for supervisors as Hofstede’s research indicates (Hofstede et al., 2010:58). So, when someone wishes a message to go up the line in Indonesia it is conveyed in private, what we may refer to as ‘on the grapevine’ here in the UK. By adopting this method, it helps the next level up to ‘save face’. In Indonesia this trait is called ‘asal bapak senang’, which translates as ‘keeping father happy’ (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:234). This approach to life culture is the environment into which the children are indoctrinated.

Today English is spoken all around the globe, however there are many different forms of English. So even though people from different countries speak English the meanings may not be the same. Meyer discusses this further when she talks about communications styles of the cultures that use a language.

She discusses Japanese and Hindi (as spoken in New Delhi) and states that words can be interpreted in multiple ways, based on how and when they are used. In Japanese, for instance, “the word ‘ashi’ means both ‘leg’ and ‘foot’ depending on context” (Meyer, 2014:37). She goes on to give another example: the word ‘kal’ means both tomorrow and yesterday, therefore, to understand any message which uses this word you must read the whole sentence.

We also must consider low context and high context messages. In the case of low context dialogue, communications are precise, simple, and clear. Repetition may be used if it helps clarify the situation. However, in the case of high context, good communications are sophisticated and layered. High context countries, such as Japan, tend to have long histories. This means people are programmed to know and accept certain things – there is no need to mention them in any communication. However, in low culture countries where there is a short history, and perhaps immigration has occurred on a large scale over the years, there has not been the opportunity for people to have become programmed to have the same beliefs. Meyer states “Americans learned quickly that if they wanted to pass a message, they had to make it as explicit and clear as possible, with little room for ambiguity and misunderstanding” (Meyer, 2014:40).

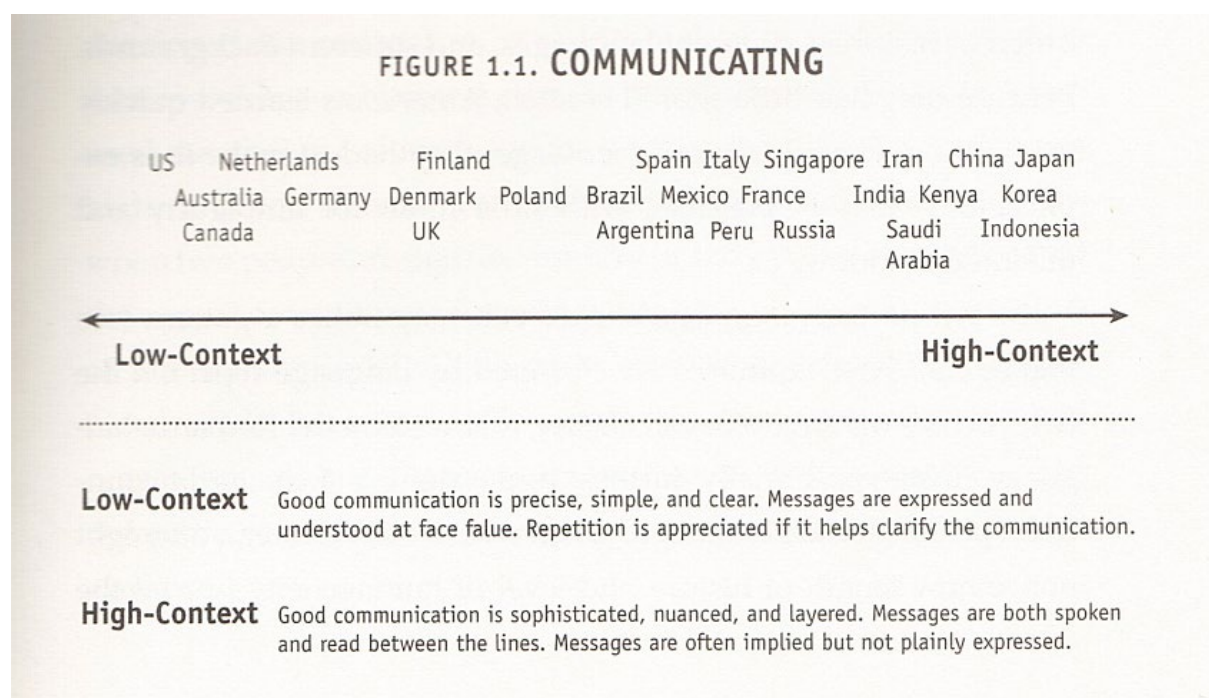


Figure 1: Communicating

(Meyer, 2014:39)

The implication of the Meyers diagram (figure 1) would be that just because someone speaks English it does not necessarily follow that what you hoped they understood is what they did in fact understand. For example, a trunk in the UK is an old fashion suitcase whereas to an American the

trunk is the boot of a car. Meyer's diagram would suggest that when communicating with an American it would be advantageous to explain what was being communicated in full and not leave any areas of ambiguity. However, in Indonesia, we would have to realise there is a strong possibility that any communication from them would be shorter as they are considered to be a high context culture (the programming of the population means people accept certain values). Majid et al (2019) research looked at web design and the impact of high/low context web sites. They comment "Edward T Hall has categorized this type of communication into two parts, namely low and high context. Hall observes that meaning and context are closely tied to one another. Low context tends to be more complex with text-based" (Majid (2019:3).

An important event of the 1960s in the cultural arena was the arrival of Geert Hofstede and his research into the different dimensions of national cultures. His research, based on the international company IBM, produced some interesting findings, and helped to establish why some of the international divisions of the company were successful and others not. It produced findings on the way the management operated in several countries around the globe. The first area discussed in his book was the power distance index, which relates to some people being more equal than others. He then went on to look at individualism: Did the people in the country put themselves first or the team they worked with? Next, he considered masculinity and the way males and females looked at work goals. The next aspect he looked at was the uncertainty avoidance index which looks at how people deal with looking at the future and is related to the degree of anxiety that members of a society feel in uncertain or unknown situations. The final area Hofstede looked at was long-term orientation, which refers to how much society values long-standing as opposed to short-term. This dimension Hofstede added in the 1990's (Hofstede et al., 2010). Hofstede's research highlighted the fact that Asian countries with a strong link to Confucian philosophy acted differently from Western society.

So far, the research has focused on the way people operate and look at the world, but culture must also include timekeeping or maybe the lack of time discipline as accepted in the UK. I attended a function at the Indonesian Embassy in London along with a select number of delegates from different international organisations located in London. On the day, although I rushed to arrive at the Embassy at the time stated on the invitation nothing seemed to be happening. It would appear the West places a much greater importance on specific times; if we say we will meet at 12.00 it means 12.00. In Levine's (2006) study, of the 31 countries included "Mexico, Brazil and Indonesia were the slowest of all" (Levine, 2006:17). He also looked at clock accuracy and his findings ranked England in 13th position with Switzerland, home of the cuckoo clock, ranked in first position. Clock time can be taken to an extreme as implemented by Malawi's life president Kamuzu Banda who had practised medicine in Scotland for 30 years before returning home and entering politics. "He ruled the country absolutely and is a stickler for punctuality. Back in the 1970's he made it illegal for public clocks to display

inaccurate times. Broken clocks were supposed to be removed or covered with a shroud” (Levine, 2006:15).

Culture plays an important role when communicating with people around the world. This factor is overlooked on occasions, with possible disastrous outcomes. Earley and Ang (2003) discuss an incident in which a Chinese and an American plane collided, and the Chinese pilot was reported as dead. The Chinese found and held the American pilots for quite some time, the reason given being that China was waiting for an apology. During the time this diplomatic incident was happening Earley had been introduced to an exchange student from Hong Kong and, while discussing the incident with the student, he expressed disappointment in the American unwillingness to admit their wrong-doing even if they were not ‘wrong’. “He said that, for the ‘sake of face’, the United States should admit responsibility because they clearly have more mianzi or social status. As a result, he explained the Americans have a burden to admit wrong-doing and, in doing so, they would gain even more mianzi in the eyes of the Chinese. Whether or not this is the case, our point is that many Americans would view that admitting mistakes is a sign of weakness” (Earley and Ang, 2003:22).

1.4.0 What is Culture?

Minkov et al (2012) states “defining culture has proven to be one of the most difficult and controversial tasks for all those involved in its study” (Minkov, Blagoev Hofstede 2012:1). If we accept that humans are social creatures living together, people form common habits and behaviours. This can range from childbirth to shopping. In the UK, most marriages take place based on mutual feelings of love, while in some other countries’ marriages may be arranged by the families through a process which has been accepted for many years. Myers et al. (2005) talk about arranged marriages against marriages of choice. They state “in countries with collectivist orientations what Buss et al. refer to as ‘traditional societies’ mate selection is often accomplished by the family rather than the individual” (Myers et al., 2005:183). How people from the two different approaches would see each other’s marriage would depend largely on what they have been taught. Behaviours based on learned customs helps to bring people together, so they do not feel excluded from their group (country). Once someone steps outside these customs, or is unaware of the customs, a problem can arise.

A recent television program focusing on the Indian railway industry showed the carriages full and overflowing. Passenger demand is so great that when the carriages become full people hang on to the outside of the train and in some instances, people are shown riding on the roof, sometimes with fatal consequences. Pucher et al. (2004) explore this area and state that “On peak hour trains many passengers are forced to hang outdoors and windows and to ride between train cars or even hang on the outsides of cars. Suburban trains and stations seem hopelessly overcrowded” (Pucher et al.,

2004:7). This is an accepted practice in many areas of India, but what would happen in the UK if a train arrived in a main line station with people clinging onto any part of the carriage and sitting on the roof in an effort to reach their destination?

Culture can be considered to comprise two parts. The first, material culture, refers to objects or belongings of a group of people. Oyster cards, automobiles, stores (shops) and the physical structure where people worship come under this heading. Nonmaterial culture would include ideas, attitudes, and beliefs of society; how a person has been programmed as they have grown up. Hall discusses culture in his book 'Beyond Culture' and he goes further to suggest there is also a lot of cultural related issues that are unseen which he compares to an iceberg, a lot of which is under the surface, unseen.

Steers et al (2010) states "culture is both simple and difficult to understand" (Steers et al. 2010:46). Steers et al. continues stating "from the standpoint of global management culture is best thought of as addressing three questions 'Who are we? How do we live? And how do we approach work?'" (Steers et al 2010:50). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner suggest a useful way of thinking about culture is "culture is the way in which a group of people solve problems and reconciles dilemmas" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1998:6). Hofstede et al states that "culture consists of unwritten rules of the social game. It's the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede et al 2010:6). Culture can also present itself at different levels, national, regional, or local. For the purpose of this research we will be looking at national differences between England and the Far East. However, the topic of culture can be extraordinarily complex. The different elements of culture have an impact upon each other, often changing the original picture, like in chemistry whereby adding two chemicals together the final product can be quite different to the original one.

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: 2002) have looked into the area of culture and state that "within the overall institutional settings, social institutions and cultural practices – i.e. laws, norms, traditions and codes of conduct- are often the main sources of persisting discrimination against women in developing countries" (Jutting and Morrisson, 2005:1). Although discrimination against women is outside this research project, when Jutting and Morrisson talk about cultural practices these must also impact upon local cultures and the way people approach their day to day life, their internal programming.

1.5.0 Justification for the Research

The reason for wishing to conduct research into culture was personal interest. Over the years my career has taken me to the Ford Motor Company, I have run my own business, and finally, before

launching my own company I was employed by the UK government working with businesses as they planned for the future. Although I was aware that dealing with overseas companies required some skills, I had not appreciated the knowledge that was required. In fact, while completing this research the knowledge mountain has grown rather than shrinking, as more and more areas have been discovered. Differences in trading procedures were soon highlighted as the company started growing and communicating with different countries around the globe. Reflecting on the years while developing the business, cultural errors in particular can be seen when the UK culture approach was taken as against the overseas local customs. It took me over three years to really get to know a Chinese gentleman and to establish a good working relationship

A second lesson learned was that not all countries in the Far East act in the same way; it is not just a case of East and West. Developing that a little further, there are differences between France and the UK, America, and the UK and so on. Hofstede talks about applying for a position in an American company that had just opened in Flanders. He was not offered the position and when he investigated why, he found out that “‘Dutch applicants’ in American eyes undersell themselves” (Hofstede et al., 2010:136). American interviewers know how to interpret American CVs and interviews and they tend to dismiss the information provided. He realised that culture had resulted in him not fully appreciating what was required and failing to get the position.

However, respected researchers into the topic of culture, such as Hall, are a little dated as his findings/books were published around 1959. Hofstede, another world-renowned guru on culture, completed his research project at IBM in the 1970’s. Although much of the research is still valid today, as communications get better and travel around the globe becomes easier and quicker some events have changed. In Hall’s book he discusses an event in Tokyo. He describes how taxi drivers had to ask the police for directions once they arrived somewhere near to their destination, not just because the streets were not named but because houses were numbered in the order in which they were built. Following VJ day the Americans introduced signs in English to help them move about. The Japanese politely waited until the Americans left before thinking about removing the signs. By then, however, the “Japanese were trapped by the foreign cultural innovation” (Hall, 1969:150). However, dated this event may now be, it does show how western influence had an impact.

Paulston et al. (2012) make reference to the difference between the way directions/signs are displayed in two countries which appear to be at the opposite ends of the pendulum swing as far as communications occur in a low and high context culture. They state “The smallest town in the United States carefully labels every street with a street sign and numbers the buildings consecutively, even though everyone in sight has lived there a lifetime and can name the occupants of every house. Yet

very few streets in the huge city of Tokyo are labelled or even have names and building numbers are none existent or arranged in random order” (Paulston et al., 2012:390).

Recently there has been growing interest in the field of culture but the topic is vast. My research focused upon, as the title of this document shows, ‘Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn’ and the impact this would have upon my relationship building with my overseas business colleagues.

The vignettes present the findings of the empirical research completed and show that as this longitudinal investigation has been completed my way of working has changed as I became aware of this “fuzzy” area called culture and the impact it can have if ignored. The vignettes also include an incident that occurred in the early days of this research and the awkward situation that arose while in Thailand. This was due to my naiveté and lack of ‘cultural awareness’ Thai people do not like conflict. Ignore culture at your peril as this research will show.

1.6.0 Methodology

The methodological approach taken in this study is a mixed methodology based on desk research, visits to the countries (observation) and working with business contacts from that part of the world. Desk research into the work completed by Hofstede et al., Meyer, and Hall has shown that different countries can approach situations from different angles. An expression used in many academic publications, which highlights the phenomena, is ‘the spectacles they are wearing’. In effect, it is how the person sees things. Hall (1969) looked at the Japanese and one of his observations provided some interesting information on their living accommodation. Hall (1969) states “in the use of interior space, the Japanese keep the edges of their room clear because everything takes place in the middle. Europeans tend to fill up the edges with furniture near or against the walls” (Hall, 1969:52).

The research gathered qualitative data. Saunders et al. state that qualitative data is “non-numerical data or data that has not been quantified. Quantitative data is numerical data or data that has been quantified” (Saunders et al., 2003:486). The qualitative data was gathered via observations and a survey instrument. The research took an inductive approach “involving the development of a theory as a result of the observation of empirical data” (Saunders et al., 2003:479).

The research adopts an autoethnography approach as it tried to uncover the cultural traits of the Far East people. Gill and Johnson state that this approach “allows the field worker to use the socially acquired and shared knowledge available to the participants to account for the observed patterns of human activity” (Gill & Johnson 2000:124). They continue, saying” in ethnography the focus is on the

manner in which people interact and collaborate on observable and regular ways” (Gill & Johnson 2000:125). Denscombe (2003) talks about the study of culture and groups and states that “ethnography tends to emphasize the importance of understanding things from the point of view of those involved” (Denscombe 2003:85). Ellis et al (2011) indicate that the research adopts an autoethnography approach when they say “autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience” (Ellis et al 2011:1). This is a fundamental goal of this research and establishing this information will help with the contribution to knowledge.

1.7.0 Scope of Research

Due to practical constraints, this paper cannot provide a comprehensive review of all the cultural differences between the Far East and the West. In fact, as this research commenced looking at the whole area of culture it soon became obvious that although many people would glibly refer to the Far East as if they are one homogeneous group, in reality they are not. For categorisation, we can put groups of people into boxes which we call countries. In fact, culture can go deeper than this when we look at a country. However, for the purpose of this research this thesis will look at a selection of Far Eastern countries and explore some of the differences between them and the way we conduct our lives in England. Although the prime area of the research will look at the business arena - as many of the activities relate to the building of relationships with organisations/people in the Far East, some local procedures (traditions) will be explored as well. Morrison et al. (2006) state that “Indonesians show great deference to a superior and consequently supervisors are often told what they want to hear” (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:234). In Indonesia, silence is an area that they are “comfortable with both in social and business settings” (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:234). In other cultures, this may be a challenge to accept if the importance of this silence is not realised. Clark et al (2016) compared British and Singaporean managers. The research found there were differences, and they state “understanding differences in terms of what competencies and expectations members of organisations in various countries have is critical to managerial success in international business endeavours” Clark et al (2016:539)

A full discussion of the differences between countries will be a challenging, if not impossible, task to complete, but it is hoped the research has provided some valuable information which will support the development of my company.

1.8.0 Conclusions

Mahatma Gandhi is quoted as saying “A nation’s culture resides in the hearts and soul of its people” (Gandhi M). Thomas Babington Macaulay, who worked in India during the 19th century, and was mentioned previously, tried to change the culture of the indigenous people without success although the use of English is quite extensive on the Indian subcontinent. To try to impose the UK way of working on someone from the Far East, or taking that one step further from another country, can lead to serious consequences when one person says ‘yes’ and the second person says ‘yes’ but their ‘yes’ may have a different meaning, i.e. ‘yes I understand.’ Bill Gates in South Korea thought he was being very polite and friendly when he met the President, but he was later to learn differently. This research may not clarify the whole area of the differences between the UK and the Far East, but it is envisaged that it will address many issues which will help when entering into a dialogue with people from that part of the globe.

Since starting this project, I have been reflecting on some of the actions I take and wondering what someone from overseas would think. The front doorbell just rang and when I opened the door there was a parcel sitting on the porch floor. I looked up and a gentleman in a bright red ‘hi-vis’ jacket was walking back to his Royal Mail van. At this time, he had his back to me. I bent down, picked the parcel up, checked it was for me and looked up. By then the gentleman was sitting in his vehicle looking in my direction. He waved at me and I waved at him – two complete strangers waving at each other. Nothing was said but in effect the act of the wave of the hand was just acknowledging each other and confirming the parcel was received. At the time I wondered what someone from the Far East would make of this hand waving activity.

Conceptual Framework

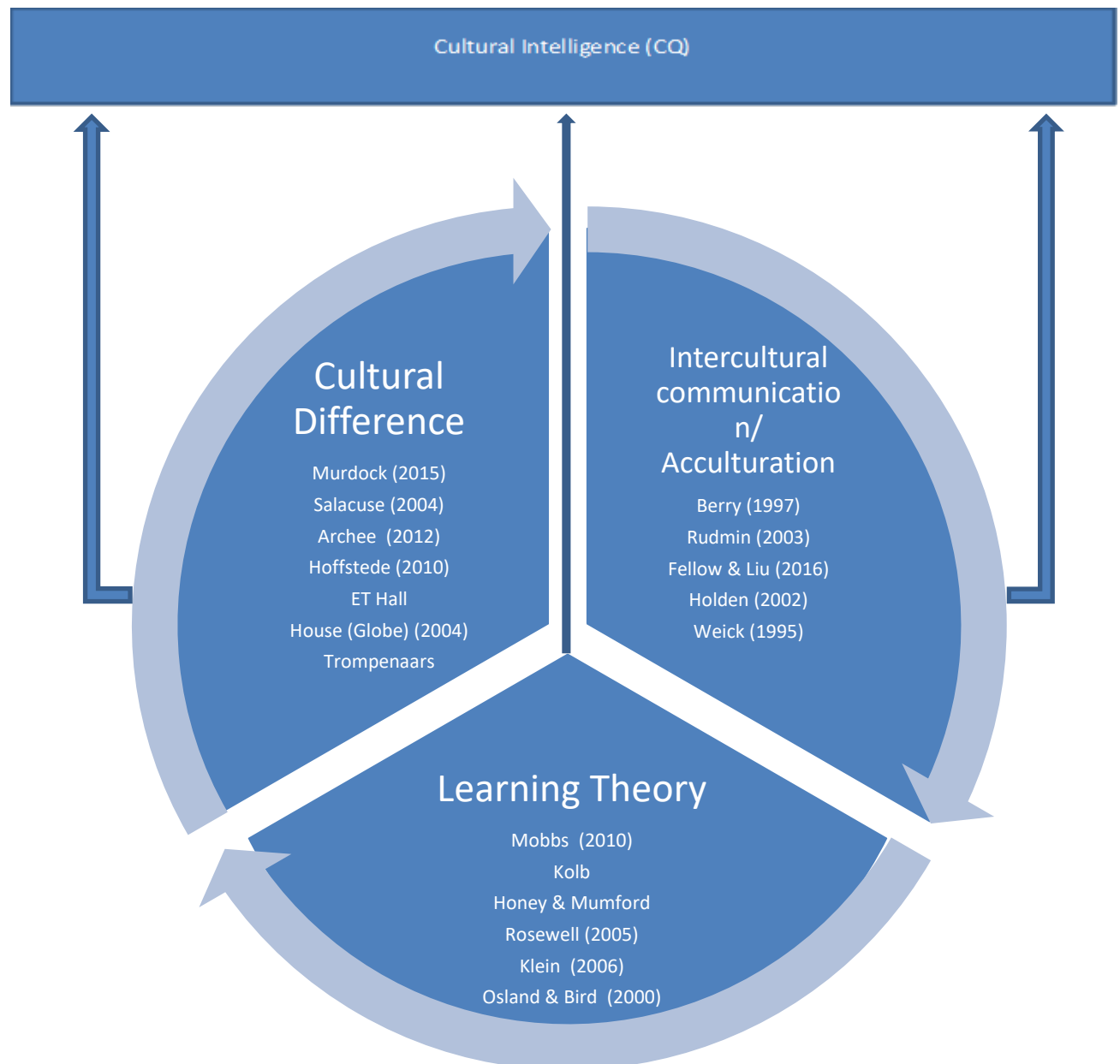


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was developed to represent my synthesis of the literature and what was happening. It maps out the writings of previous researchers leading to cultural intelligence. The model is designed to show how we make sense of culture when working overseas and help to answer the thesis question and support the author in his interlocations overseas. Despite the abundance of existing literature, this research has uncovered areas which have not been discussed before and this is described in the vignettes.

This research has already made me realise that the general statement 'dealing with people from the Far East' really needs further examination, because even though Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar/Burma, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Laos, Cambodia, Singapore and Indonesia are all part of ASEAN (Association of South East Asia Nations), and in an area that is regarded as the Far East, each nation must be treated as an individual country with its own nuances similar to the differences that exist between the UK and France. Balan and Vreja (2013) support this statement when they say "the difficulties that arise when cultural borders are crossed mainly the diminishing effectiveness of management processes that occurs when multinational companies, ignoring cultural differences, try to apply in foreign countries subsidiaries management formulas that are derived from their own cultural context and proved to be successful in that culture" (Balan & Vreja 2013:95). Hall and Hofstede, two eminent gurus in the field of culture, investigated the area of culture and their work, together with that of other researchers, will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

2.0.0 Literature Review

2.1.0 Introduction

This chapter examines a selection of existing literature focusing on research related to culture. This includes well-known gurus such as Hall, Trompenaars and Hofstede. It continues the discussion to include the theory of learning, the learning cycle, sense making and cultural intelligence (CQ).

2.2.0 International Business

International business transactions can become a real challenge if it is not recognised that not everyone around the globe treats each business process in the same way. Willcox (2014) states that “cultural distance increases the chance of miscommunication and that this distance influences the perceived similarity or dissimilarity of individuals involved in intercultural interactions” (Willcox, 2014:22). When interacting with overseas companies, business processes can be an extraordinarily complex phenomenon, although using existing research it is possible to see that some patterns and trends do exist which can help when trying to establish what is occurring. Mohamed et al (2018) discusses cultural values in a Malaysian company and states its “depends on the current awareness of employees in and practices in the company” (Mohamed et al 2018:63). The introduction of mobile telephones, computers and the internet, means that the opportunity to travel around the world and trade globally has increased dramatically, but despite previous research - some of which is a little dated - there appear to be some areas which need revisiting and updating. The expansion of the aviation industry has helped to make travelling around the world easier and, together with the relatively new modes of communicating via the internet, it has impacted on the number of times people communicate. Hymer (1960) discusses the topic of international operations and suggests that many things must be considered. He says “different nations have different governments, different laws, different languages and different economies; and communication between countries has, in the past at least, typically been far less than between regions within a country” (Hymer 1960:28). Letto-Gillies (2002) also touches on the topic of managing an international company, stating “companies should have learnt from previous experiences. The learning refers to both external conditions (markets and/or costs) and internal elements such as their own managerial organisation or the organisation of the supply chain” (Letto-Gillies, 2002:6). The United Nations have recognised that companies must revise their way of operating when they trade overseas. They say “Firstly, they learn from experience and improve their ability to operate internationally. Secondly, they gain experience and technology to enhance their firm-specific advantages, thereby improving their competitiveness

and performance” (United Nations, 2006:165). Although my company is a micro organisation compared to Shell, BP, and HSBC, we all still must recognise that trading away from home does require some modifications to the way we operate. Early and Ang (2003) state “as we sojourn around the globe, we encounter people who strike us as being like ourselves, and yet, at the same time, think and behave differently” (Earley and Ang, 2003:xi). Hall says “the world of communication can be divided into three parts: words, material things and behaviour. Words are the medium of business, politics, and diplomacy. Material things are usually indicators of status and power. Behaviour provides feedback on how other people feel and includes techniques for avoiding confrontation” (Hall & Hall, 1990:3).

2.3.0 The Dominant Paradigms

Respected anthropologist Edward T. Hall explored the different approaches that people adopt in different areas of the world. Why is the design of a room in America different to one in Japan? He looked at the area of territoriality – use of space, fixed walls in the west and moving walls in the Far East. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner looked at the different approaches around the world but from a different perspective. Following a large research project, using the data collected they developed a model to try to understand what was occurring. This model used ‘the seven dimensions’ which are discussed below. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkovs were able to look at the international company IBM. Their research results were based upon information received from offices located around the world which they then categorised into a format which enabled them to present their findings so that the different traits could be identified. Why was a manager in one office not acting in the same way as another employee of a similar status in another office in another country? In 1991 the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) program was conceived by Robert House. It worked from the theory that people’s underlying assumptions, stereotypes, and schemas influence whether they see someone as a good leader. However, as people from different cultures see the world through different ‘spectacles’ it would seem to suggest that someone who makes a good leader in one country would not necessarily be a good leader in another because of the cultural difference.

The literature review has been split into two areas: interactional ideas, which look at time, space and language, an area on which Hall focuses a lot of his attention in his research, and cultural dimensions, which includes Trompenaars, Hofstede and Globe etc.

Culture is often considered to be a subconscious and invisible control mechanism operating within a human being. Hall (1959) states that “for anthropologists culture has long stood for the way of life of

a people, for the sum of their learned behaviour patterns, attitudes, and material things” (Hall, 1959:20).

2.3.1 Interactional

Hall

“Edward T Hall (born 1914) exerted an unprecedented influence on cultural anthropology” (Schilling & Kozin 2009:1). He is a recognised pioneer in the study of intercultural communication whose initial research focused on observing the animal world and living with people from different cultures. Oliver (2016) considers Hall was “regarded by many as the father of intercultural communication as an area of academic inquiry, due in large part to his writings on culture and communications” (Oliver 2016:73). He completed a doctoral degree in anthropology in 1945, with his research playing a key role in painting a picture showing how people view the world and react (behaviour) which is controlled by a complex grid of unconscious cultural patterns. It was from his work that a tool was developed which researchers have been allowed to build upon.

One of Hall’s main contributions to the cultural discussion is his theory that culture is communication. What is said, how it is said and what is not said, when carefully examined, can all reveal subtleties within the spoken language. Hall was one of the first to learn how to recognise cultural differentiation. Although some cultural differences can be observed some cannot and Boeing touches on this area when he says “due to the invisible cultural differences, communication between two different cultures is far more challenging than within the same culture” (Boeing 2013:10). Gallion (2013) looked at Halls work and suggests that he “stressed that peoples view of the world and their behaviour are largely determined by a complex grid of unconscious cultural patterns (Gallion 2013:27). What is done and how it is done began to communicate a message which was equally powerful as the spoken language. In his book ‘The Silent Language’ Hall refers to his PMS (primary message system) (Hall, 1959:38). This system covers interaction, association, subsistence, bisexuality, territoriality, temporality, learning, play, defence, and exploitation. He also states “the fact messages on the word level can mean one thing and that sometimes something quite different is being communicated on another level” (Hall, 1959:xii). In ‘Beyond Culture’ Hall suggests you must “first recognise and accept the multiple hidden dimensions of unconscious culture, because every culture has its own hidden, unique form of unconscious culture” (Hall, 1976:2). In Hall’s ‘The Hidden Dimension’ he focusses upon “personal space and man’s perception of it” (Hall, 1969:1). Hall’s books are discussed in greater detail in the following pages.

2.3.2 Hall: The Hidden Dimension

Hall writes “The central theme of this book is social and personal space and man’s perception of it” (Hall, 1969:1). He goes on to discuss areas connected with culture and differences around the world. There are visible signs which can be seen when traveling overseas such as what people wear, the way people greet you, the sounds and smells, but there is this odd feeling, something which cannot be seen is also present. This hidden dimension of culture is sometimes compared to an iceberg, as a considerable amount is hidden below the surface of the water. It is not until you start communicating with people from the Far East that you begin to realise there are differences and that ‘culture’ can have such a major impact.

Hall cites ten dimensions, some of which are discussed below, which he considers to be the primary message systems (PMS). I have taken some of Hall’s PMS - interaction, crowding, territoriality, temporality, learning, play and defence - and examined them below.

- 1 Interaction – This relates to speech, tone, voice, gesture, play and defence. Hall found that the Arabs make more use of olfaction and touch than the Americans, stating that “The intermediaries who arrange an Arab marriage usually take great precautions to ensure a good match. They may even on occasions ask to smell the girl and will reject her if she ‘does not smell nice’” (Hall, 1969:49).
- 2 Crowding –pecking order, rank, and societal structure. Hall looked at canaries crowded into a cage and the impact this had on the “nesting of the lower-ranking birds” (Hall, 1969:38). This research demonstrated that crowding could have a negative impact. The empirical research went further by providing cages for pairs of birds so they could nest and rear their young. The outcome was that they were more successful at breeding. Compare this to a busy London station, Canary Wharf underground station, where people automatically stopped getting onto full trains, waiting for the next one to arrive. In Japan they have a ‘Pusher’ who, as the title suggest, pushes people onto the train (Wikipedia - passenger pusher).
- 3 Territoriality – use of space. “The removal of boundary markers and trespass upon the property of another man are punishable acts in much of the western world” (Hall, 1969:10). Fixed space in one culture can be semi-fixed in another. Hall’s research identified that one culture may regard a building as having fixed walls whereas another may move the wall. “In Japan, for example, the walls are moveable, opening and closing as the day’s activities change. In the United States people move from one room to another for different activities” (Hall, 1969:111). Hall discusses the concept of space which varies within Europe/USA. As an American anthropologist he noticed that the Japanese kept the edges of the room clear

because everything takes place in the centre of the room, whereas “Europeans tend to fill up the edges by placing furniture against the walls” (Hall, 1969:52).

- 4 Temporality – rhythm of life, linear or cyclical history, rate of speech. Time is so woven into “the fabric of existence that we are hardly aware of the degree to which it determines and co-ordinates everything we do” (Hall, 1976:18). My work involves meeting senior executives from the Far East. It would appear they do not put the same importance on time as we do here in the UK. Vignette 4 explores the different approach to the importance of time between two people from different cultures
- 5 Learning – logical versus experiential. How is knowledge transferred? Culture is a shared behaviour which is acquired and therefore cannot be taught. “Education is simply one more instance of man’s having developed an elaborate extension to do and presumably enhance what he did once for himself quite naturally” (Hall, 1976:35).
- 6 Play – Many people around the world have what are known as ‘joking’ relationships. (Hall 1959, :52). Hall suggests that there are times and places for play, such as set rooms/areas in houses and parks outside. However, this play varies across the world. Hall gives an example of the Pueblo of New Mexico where an old man races against a young boy. Although to someone in Britain it would be surprising if the young boy did not win, the function of the race in New Mexico was to do one’s best – not just to win.
- 7 Defence – This area is of importance to animals and the human race. Animals have their defence mechanisms - such as the opossum which plays dead, or the lizard which changes its colour. The human race has many defensive mechanisms - not only warfare but the development of medicine in the defence against disease, or the law-enforcement agencies which have been developed to keep the population safe. However, different cultures approach the defensive processes in different ways. Hall states that the Navajo regard many activities such as medicine, entertainment, sports, and science as religious activities. In the Middle East Islam plays a more pervasive role than Christianity does today in Europe. According to Hall “People in the western world would have difficulty grasping the extent to which religion infiltrates all aspects of life in the Arab world” Hall (1959:54). When looking at medicine there is the voodoo of Haiti and the herb doctor of China.

To highlight the differences in culture revolving around religion, Hall talks about an example that occurred in the Second World War. As the Japanese cultural system assumed that none of their troops would be taken alive by the allies, no instructions were given to the Japanese troops as to how they should behave. As a result, the prisoners of war (POWs) had no

guidelines and co-operated with their captors to such an extent that the allies could consider it to be traitorous.

In a similar situation, the Korea American war, the Americans assumed that if their soldiers became POWs, they would only give their name, rank, and serial number. However, this did not work, and many died or defected. The main reason was that they were operating according to one cultural pattern and were unprepared to cope with either the North Korean or Chinese Communist pattern. Most POWs were under the impression that they would be treated badly and were confused when they received soft treatment. They assumed the war was over for them and the cultural bond to the armed forces crumbled.

- 8 Exploitation – of society, nature etc., for the culture’s own gain. Hall cites how the giraffe has adapted to have a long neck so it can reach the high foliage, and the “toes of the tree sloth” (Hall, 1959:56) have developed. Both have adapted to meet specific environmental conditions.

The above discusses some of Hall’s PMS (Primary Message Systems) and even today, many years after the research, his observations have an impact upon the way we work. The way a person from an Arab country will react in a particular situation will be different from how an American will react.

Hall explores space as a system of communication, using the term proxemics. Proxemics research, according to Hall’s findings, is experienced via sensory interactions which can be perceived in a totally different way by someone else. Therefore, two people talking from different parts of the world may appear to act differently. One might wish to stand remarkably close when talking while the other party may feel extremely uncomfortable with this close encounter. Watson and Graves (2017) refer to Halls work and refer to a comment made by Hall where he states “members of different cultures, when interacting with each other, cannot be relied upon to attach the same meaning to the same elements of proxemic behaviour” (Watson & Graves 2017:34). Hall refers to his previous research into the animal kingdom when an animal will defend his territory against other members of their own species. He refers to an experiment carried out on rats (Hall, 1969:29) where territoriality and social organisation were monitored. Where the population was high it did appear to impact upon the courting, sex behaviour, reproduction, and nest-building care of the young, territoriality and social organization. He suggests that some of the traits displayed by animals can be seen in the activities of human beings, but because of the development of the human they have a greater capacity to withstand the pressures/stresses that occur in life.

By studying the past, Hall has been able to paint a picture of the notion of what the perceptual world of early humans may have been like. He discusses the early Egyptians and suggests that orientation and alignment of religious structures to the cosmos was a prime factor in their development. In our own culture, chapels are small whereas cathedrals are large and impressive.

He goes on to look at the human receptor systems and how they are conditioned to respond to their current environment. He suggests there are visual, auditory, olfactory, kinaesthetic, tactile and thermal perceptions of space, all of which impact upon the method of examining the data received and the way people respond (Hall, 1969:68). When looking at the world we can say that the Far East functions in one way and the West functions in another, but this picture is very simplistic especially when you consider Hall's statement "the concept that no two people see exactly the same thing when actively using their eyes in a natural situation is shocking to some people because it implies that not all men relate to the world around them in the same way" (Hall, 1969:69). If this statement is accepted, it immediately means that we cannot accept that everyone will function the same way within countries, because within the regions of the country there may be differences (micro/macro approach).

Hall then moves to fixed feature spaces. In Japan the intersections, but not the streets, are named. Houses, instead of being related in space, are related in time, and numbered in the order in which they are built.

He discusses the layout of Western houses with their "special rooms for food preparation, eating, entertaining and socialising, rest, recuperation and procreation – but for sanitation as well" (Hall, 1969:103). This labelling of rooms did not appear in Europe until the eighteenth century. "Members of the family had no privacy as we know it" (Hall, 1969:104). However, it should be noted that this European approach to house layout may not be the same in other cultures, Hall states that in Japan, for example, the walls are moveable, opening and closing as the day's activities change. He also states that a guest in a Chinese home does not move his chair except at the host's suggestion. To do so would be like going into someone's house and changing the layout.

Hall then looks at informal space – the social distance among humans.

Some thirty inches from my nose
The frontier of my person goes
And all the untitled air between
Is private pagus or demesne
Stranger, unless with bedroom eyes
I beckon you to fraternise
Beware of rudely crossing it
I have no gun, but I can spit.

(W H Auden cited in Hall 1969:113).

People sense distance. Whether a person stands close or leaves a space will depend upon the communication. This proxemics behaviour occurs out of awareness, is culturally conditioned and entirely arbitrary. Hall's research into animals revealed that they have territories which they occupy and defend. He states that humans have similar traits in that they will defend their space. He explores the following areas:

- Intimate distance - there is a high possibility of physical contact
- Personal distance – small protective sphere or bubble that an organism maintains
- Social distance – no one expects any physical contact
- Public distance – the distance has increased and gives people the opportunity to react to any unexpected action

Hall goes on to discuss the difference between the UK and US use of space to classify people's position in society. He suggests that in the UK it is the social class system that determines who you are whereas in the US it is space, for instance where your office is located. Propinquity in the US is an accepted invisible boundary around a group of people involved in a discussion. Voices will be kept low and, in this way, privacy is afforded for anyone nearby. However, when looking at an office, when does someone cross the threshold and enter someone's space? Hall suggests that just by holding the door open, half in half out of the office, you have not quite entered the person's space, whereas in Germany as soon as someone enters into a dialogue with someone - whether fully in the office or not - they have entered the German's space. "In every instance where the American would consider himself outside he has already entered the German's territory" (Hall, 1969:133).

It is interesting to see how Germans react to this area – private sphere. Although it is an old research project, it does shed some light on the different ways people operate around the world. During the Second World War a group of American officers were invited to watch a group of German prisoners, held in the Midwest, who were billeted four to a hut. The research showed it was not long before the inmates were looking for materials to build partitions and create their space. The outcome of this research was further supported in Berlin. After the surrender of Berlin, the allies had to bring some sense of normality to the crushed nation/city. As many of the houses had been demolished by the bombing, an order was issued telling the residents to share those kitchens and bathrooms that were still operational. However this order had to "be rescinded when the overstressed city dwellers started killing each other over the shared facilities" (Hall, 1969:135).

Having been born in England, I prefer non-contact groups and have been known to leave an exhibition where I cannot have my 'own space'. The Japanese, however, prefer 'crowding' in certain situations. "They feel it is congenial to sleep close together on the floor, which they refer to as 'Japanese Style'" (Hall, 1969:152). The experience of 'space' is quite different in western culture than in Japanese. When

a Westerner thinks of a space, they mean the distance between two objects and think of space as empty. However, the Japanese are conditioned to give meaning to spaces, to perceive the shape and arrangement of spaces; for this they have a word: 'ma' (Hall, 1969:153).

Although the Americans and the English speak English, the culture of the two nations can create differences in the way they approach worldly affairs. For instance, a middle-class Englishman is brought up in a nursery shared with brothers and sisters. In America, a similar sibling would expect to have a room of his own. In an experiment, American subjects were asked to draw their office. The picture they drew was only of the part that they used, even if in a shared office.

When an American wants to be alone he goes into a room and shuts the door – he depends on architectural features for screening. For an American to refuse to talk to someone else present in the same room - to give them the silent treatment - is the ultimate form of rejection and a sure sign of displeasure. "The English, on the other hand, lacking rooms of their own since childhood, never developed the practice of using space as a refuge from others" (Hall, 1969:140). Until the two get to know each other better tension may exist. Thus, it is interesting to note that even though they both speak the same language issues can arise which, in effect, goes back many years to when the child was being programmed (growing up in a country with its outlook on life – culture).

Many people will have experienced the situation where an American enters the room and suddenly there is a booming voice many decibels louder than anyone else. Hall addresses this when he states that Americans increase the volume as a function of distance, using several levels. "In many situations the more gregarious Americans do not care if they can be overheard" (Hall, 1969:142). To some people some Americans can be overbearing and can at times become very annoying.

In Hall's book *The Hidden Dimension*, he focuses on issues to do with or associated with the experience of space, which relates back to how a person is programmed as they grow up (culture). He suggests that the Americans suffer from an "a-cultural bias" (Hall, 1969:183). It would appear that they focus on content (function) rather than structure (form). He refers to his research into the animal kingdom and states how his findings indicated that they suffered from similar problems to humans: circulatory and heart disease. It would appear the focus of the book is that people cannot divest themselves of their own culture. Once programmed from birth it is a challenge to forget about this method of interrelating with others.

2.3.3 Strengths of Hall's research:

Hall was one of the early pioneers researching intercultural communication, and future generations have used his findings to explore the area of culture in greater depth. He completed his PhD in 1945, and since then a lot has changed, including the speed at which communications and people travel around the world. Hall's PMS provided a structure for future researchers to develop a model when completing their research. A second particularly important contribution he made was to gain a greater understanding of culture as communication. It is interesting to see how Hall tried to compare his original research, which was into the animal kingdom, to similarities in the human world.

2.3.4 Weaknesses of Hall's Methodology:

Hall discusses his approach to his research in the second page of his book (author's preface) when he states:

"As an anthropologist I have made a habit of going back to the beginning and searching out the biological substructures from which human behaviour springs. This approach underscores the fact that humankind is first, last, and always a biological organism. The gulf that separates humans from the rest of the animal kingdom is not nearly as great as most people think. Indeed, the more we learn about animals and the intricate adaptation mechanisms evolution has produced, the more relevant these studies become for humans in their search for the solution to many complex human problems" (Hall, 1969:X).

He suggests that humans cannot break away from their own biological organism. This implies that humans will all react the same way to stimuli, but this overlooks the many differences that occur around the globe, including religious or local beliefs/traditions which have had an impact on the way the local culture has developed. Other eminent academics have commented on Hall's work and weaknesses, but this area is outside the scope of this research project.

2.3.5 Hall: Beyond Culture

Most people would agree there are two major issues in the world today. According to Hall "The first and most visible is the population/ environment crisis. The second, more subtle but equally lethal, is humankind's relationships to its extensions, institutions, ideas, as well as the relationship among the many individuals and groups that inhabit the globe" Hall (1976:1). Missana (2011) suggests that "the future depends on the ability to transcend the limits of individual cultures. To do so, people must first recognise and accept the hidden dimensions of unconscious culture" (Missana, 2011). The report then goes on to say "in order to cooperate, they must know each other's ways of thinking" (Missana, 2011

9). This then introduces the concept of culture and different cultures around the world. It is considered that culture “is not innate but learned; its various facets are interrelated; it is shared, and it defines the foundries of different groups. Culture is people’s medium” (Missana 2011). Hall (1976) focuses upon cultural issues that make nations, and sometime people within a nation, different (for example, American and the subculture of the Native American tribes within the country). It would appear that there is no technical solution for the crisis as the solutions are related to power. For the global community to be able to live together they must realise that, although many people can speak the same language, they may respond to different scenarios in different ways depending upon their culture. Hall (1976) talks about clashes within the Middle East, Far East and Africa. Looking at the world map today some of the unrest in the Middle East exists between tribes (ethnic groups). If we focus on Bahrain there are eight or nine ethnic groups, with the two mentioned in the media quite often being the Shia and Sunni. These two groups lived peacefully under a king who is a Sunni Muslim. In 2011 a conflict erupted between the two ethnic groups and, although calm has returned, what lies under the surface is unknown. Further disputes exist in Syria and Iraq - both problems involve culture. Looking at the Far East there is tension between the Japanese and Chinese and, moving into Africa, tension exists in some African countries. Hall suggests that for mankind to survive they must “transcend the limits of individual cultures” Hall (1976:2). He also suggests that once people began evolving their extensions, particularly language, tools and institutions, they got caught in a web of ‘extension transference’: they became alienated and incapable of controlling the monsters that they had created. He asserts that tension between creativeness and diversity can develop and gives the example of the early days of the Industrial Revolution when villagers and field-hands were brought into factories to work. In the fields they had one set of rules, whereas now they had to work to the whistle and had established working times. However, by the time this initial workforce had children they had become used to the factory work-pattern and accepted it - and as time went by so the acceptance of the whistle became second nature.

Hall provided a considerable amount of documented records of his research; however much of his research was conducted many years ago. Although ‘The Silent Language’ was originally published in 1959 and is now quite dated, it does provide background information on what happened in the past and how it may impact upon any communication today. Cardon (2008) looks at Hall’s work and suggests that his “model has received little criticism because Hall was vague in his presentation of the model and ranked cultural groups rather than national cultures” (Cardon, 2008:400).

2.3.6 Strengths of Hall’s Beyond Culture.

Hall’s research had a major impact upon the influential concept of high and low context communication. Since the publication of the book many research projects have used Halls findings.

He is considered by many to be “the most influential figure” (Montgomery, 2006:1) connected to cultural research. However, he did have his critics who challenged some of his work, such as Kittler et al. (2011).

2.3.7 Weaknesses of Hall’s Beyond Culture.

Although the research introduced interesting concepts, Kittler et al. (2011) suggest some areas which need to be used with care. They say that the use of the high/low context communication can be “argued to vary across cultures and country classifications have been attached to Hall’s concept. These country rankings have evolved over time classifying (national) cultures as ‘high-context’ (HC) and ‘low-context’ (LC)” (Kittler et al., 2011). Since this original research, subsequent studies based upon Hall’s findings have not always supported his conclusions. Kittler continues, “Based on a systematic review, we particularly question whether the country classification attached to Hall’s concept is built on rigorous and substantiated findings. Our study shows that most previous research that utilized HC/LC country classifications is based on seemingly less-than-adequate evidence. Mixed and often contradictory findings reveal inconsistencies in the conventional country classifications and show that they are flawed or, at best, very limited” (Kittler et al., 2011:1). Further criticism suggests that Hall did not treat High and Low cultures with the same unbiased approach. However, when *Beyond Culture* was first published it did open a Pandora’s box and subsequent researchers have used his model to develop this area further. For the purpose of this research I do not intend to comment further upon this area.

2.3.8 Summary

Hall’s early research focused upon the animal kingdom and he compared similarities revealed between that and the human race. His later research concentrated on the human population and differences that occurred when indigenous individuals carried out a similar task in different parts of the world. Hall’s research helped me to gain an understanding of acculturation and the understanding I gained acted as a foundation as I uncovered new knowledge following my empirical research. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner continue the theme of culture and their research is discussed in the following pages.

2.4.1 Cultural Dimensions

Trompenaars and Turner, Hofstede, and GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness), explore the phenomenon of cultural and explain their findings through certain dimensions, such as power distance, individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs femininity etc. “The cultural dimensions approach derives from the idea that dimensions are based on cultural values which representing stable cultural elements shape the significant differences between specific cultural patterns of different groups” (Tocar 2019). This is discussed further below starting with Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner.

2.4.2 Trompenaars and Hampden Turner

Following on from Hall’s early work on culture, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner studied culture as it operated within businesses. In their book ‘Riding the Wave of Culture’ they look at cultural differences and how they impact upon companies. However, Trompenaars et al. (1998) state “it is our belief that you can never understand other cultures” (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998:1). Trompenaars became interested in culture when he observed his own mother and father, one Dutch and the other French, having differences of opinion, one wishing to do things the Dutch way and the other the French. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner state that “many multinational companies apply formulae in overseas areas that are derived from, and are successful in, their own culture” Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998:5) and then wonder why events don’t work out as they expected. Not only are there differences between one side of the world and the other, but also between neighbouring countries - for instance Holland and Belgium where many Dutch managers distrust authority whereas Belgian managers thrive in this environment.

To help identify the different ways of working around the globe, Trompenaars and Hampden–Turner developed a model which they called ‘the seven dimensions of culture’. The model was published in their book ‘Riding the waves of Culture’ (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:9).

The model was developed after they had spent many years researching the preferences and values that people had in different countries/cultures around the globe. As part of their research, they sent questionnaires to almost 50,000 managers in different countries. The completed replies, when analysed, produced a pattern which indicated that people from different cultures are not randomly different from one another but, in fact, can be predictable in how they relate to people. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner make reference to people stating that “what is important to consider, however it is not what they are and where they are found physically , but what they mean to people in each culture” (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998:3). They go on to explore the essence of culture

which is not visible on the surface which is compared to an iceberg – a small proportion is visible but a lot more is hidden beneath the water. They suggest that each culture has its own way of thinking, its own values and beliefs which people have been indoctrinated with since birth, and that people therefore base their whole approach to life on this internal database that has developed within them.

To help uncover these differences in culture, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner developed the following instrument which distinguishes people from one culture to another. They developed the seven dimensions, of which the first five cover the ways in which human beings deal with each other. The dimensions are:

2.4.3 Universalism versus Particularism

This relates to how people have been programmed when looking at rules and relationships. In the case of universalism people place a high importance on rules and laws. These rules and laws take priority over relationships. This is the reverse to particularism in which greater attention is given to relationships. They refer to universalist rules such as: 'do not lie', 'do not steal' - the golden rules. In some universalistic societies you will observe people standing by the roadside waiting to cross the road at red pedestrian crossing lights even when there is no traffic in sight. One of the issues these two differences raise is that a universalist will say 'you can never trust a person from a particularistic society because they will always help their friends' whereas a particularist would say of a universalist 'you cannot trust them as they would not even help a friend' (see table 1).

This relationship building was highlighted in the case of Enron who did not appear to recognise the importance of understanding the working culture of the Indian people they were working with. They adopted a time-is-money approach rather than spending time getting to know the Indian company. One of the reasons promulgated for the loss of the contract, according to Salacuse, was that to an American company like Enron the 'time is money' (Salacuse 2004:5) approach applies, whereas to the Indian company the slower the negotiations the better, as it gives the people involved a chance to build up trust. Trompenaars et al.'s research suggested that relationships took precedence over any formal process and that is the process that was adopted which produced a positive outcome.

Universalist cultures include the US, Canada, UK, Netherlands, and Germany, while particularistic cultures include Russia, Latin America, and China.

Practical tips for doing business in universalist and particularist cultures:

UNIVERSALIST	PARTICULARIST
Focus is more on rules than relationships	Focus is more on relationships than on rules
Legal contracts are readily drawn up	Legal contracts are readily modified
A trustworthy person is one who honours his or her word or contract	A trustworthy person is one who honours changing mutualities
There is only one truth or reality, that which has been agreed to	There are several perspectives on reality relative to each participant
A deal is a deal	Relationships evolve

Table 1: Universalist and Particularist Cultures

(Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:49)

2.4.4 Individualism versus Communitarianism

This is, in effect, the individual versus the group (see table 2). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner suggest that individualistic organisations have been deliberately formed and developed to serve the stakeholders. Employees join because it is in their interest and will perform particular functions within the organisation and expect to be rewarded in return. “Authority originates in an individual’s skill at performing tasks, and an individual’s knowledge is used to make the organisational instruments work effectively” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:64). However, in communitarian cultures organisations are not necessarily expected to support one person but act in a social context which will involve everyone and benefit them all. These types of organisation can sometimes be likened to large families. According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner “The growth and prosperity of organisations are not considered bonanzas for individual shareholders or gravy-trains for top managers” Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998:64).

Individualist cultures include the US, Canada, UK, and New Zealand, whereas communitarian cultures include countries such as Indonesia and Japan.

Individualism

More frequent use of the 'I' form.

Decisions made on the spot by representatives.

People ideally achieve alone and assume personal responsibility.

Vacations taken in pairs, even alone.

Communitarianism

More frequent use of the 'we' form.

Decisions referred back by delegate to organisation.

People ideally achieve in groups which assume joint responsibility.

Vacations in organised groups or with extended family.

Table 2: Individualism and Communitarian Cultures

(Trompenaars and Hampden–Turner, 1998:68)

2.4.5 Neutral versus emotional

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner discuss the impact that reason and emotion have on the way a person responds in their approach to daily life. They suggest that cultures that are affectively neutral do not display their feelings but are able to keep them controlled and subdued. The amount of emotion shown is down to the local convention. In cultures where emotion is neutral people will make a great effort to control their emotions. Reason will influence any decisions far more than their feelings. However, in areas where expressing emotions is a normal activity it is accepted to show emotions (see table 3).

Neutral cultures include Finland Germany and the UK, emotional cultures include Poland, Spain, France, and Italy.

Neutral	Emotional
Do not reveal what they are thinking or feeling	Reveal thoughts and feelings verbally and non-verbally.
May (accidentally) reveal tension in face or posture	Transparency and expressiveness release tensions.
Emotions often pent up will occasionally explode	Emotions flow easily, effusively, vehemently and without inhibition.
Cool and self-possessed conduct is admired	Heated, vital, animated expressions admired.
Physical contact, gesturing or strong facial expressions often taboo	Touching, gesturing and strong facial expression common
Statements often read out in monotone	Statements declaimed fluently and dramatically

Table 3: Neutral versus Emotional Cultures
(Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:80)

2.4.6 Specific versus diffuse

Trompenaars et al. classify people who try to keep their personal and work lives separate as are specific and those who allow their personal and work lives to overlap as diffuse. Therefore, if two people from the same organisation were to meet outside work, and they came from a specific culture, the manager would respect the knowledge his employee may have on other subjects. However, in a diffuse culture the manager would be the manager and the respect demanded in the workplace would be expected outside – the director is the director (see table 4).

Specific cultures include US, UK Germany, and Netherlands, while diffuse cultures include Argentina, Spain, India, and China.

Specificity	Diffuseness
Direct, to the point, purposeful in relating.	Indirect, circuitous, seemingly 'aimless' forms of relating.
Precise, blunt, definitive, and transparent.	Evasive, tactful, ambiguous, even opaque.
Principles and consistent moral stands independent of the person being addressed.	Highly situational morality depending upon the person and context encountered.

Table 4: Specific versus Diffuse Cultures
(Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:103)

2.4.7 Achievement versus ascription

Trompenaars suggests that all societies give certain sections of their society higher status than others (see table 5). In some societies this status is based on achievement while in others it is by virtue of age, class, gender, education etc. The former status is called 'achieved' while the latter is 'ascribed'. Achievement (doing) people believe you are what you do. They value your position over everything else. Ascription (being) people believe that you should be valued for what you are.

Achievement cultures include US, Australia, and Scandinavia, whereas ascription cultures include France, Japan, and Saudi Arabia.

Achievement-oriented

Use of titles only when relevant to the competence you bring to the task.

Respect for superior in hierarchy is based on how effectively his or her job is performed and how adequate their knowledge.

Most senior managers are of varying age and gender and have shown proficiency in specific jobs.

Ascription-orientated

Extensive use of titles, especially when these clarify your status in the organisation.

Respect for superior in hierarchy is seen as a measure of your commitment to the organisation and its mission.

Most senior managers are male, middle aged and qualified by their background.

Table 5: Achievement Orientated versus Ascription Orientated Cultures (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:121)

2.4.8 Attitude to time

Business owners need to have some method to be able to plan, and so the concept of time has been introduced to enable this co-ordination. However, different cultures around the world do not see time through the same lens. In cultures where they like events to occur in order, 'sequential time', Trompenaars et al. suggest that a high focus is put on punctuality, planning, and keeping close to the plan. The adage that 'time is money' is high on the agenda. When schedules are not met there is the possibility of a full investigation. However, where people see the past, the present and the future as interwoven they will often work on different projects at the same time and timescales are subject to flexibility. For examples of sequential time cultures, you need to look at Germany, the UK, and the US. For synchronous time culture you need to look at Japan, Argentina, and Mexico.

In November 2017, the Evening Standard newspaper ran an article which focused upon the Japanese approach to 'time'. The story involved a train and the fact that it left the station 20 seconds before the due departure time.

A Japanese rail company has 'sincerely' apologised after one of its trains departed 20 **seconds** ahead of schedule.

Bosses at Tsukuba Express, a company operating across Japan's famously prompt transport network, issued a statement after its train left Minami Nagareyama station seconds early. The train had been scheduled to leave on November 14 at 9:44:40 but instead departed at 9:44:20. According to the company, the error was due to a member of staff not double checking the train timetable. No customers had complained about the departure time, but before the end of the day the company had published the statement.

(Evening Standard 2017)

On the C2C timetable here in the UK there a comment which states, "Doors may be closed up to 30 seconds prior to the advertised departure time" (C2C 2017 – Online)

In the above examples it would appear that the Japanese place great importance on time. One train company in the UK, the C2C, places a high priority on keeping to the timetable, which is supported by the network rail publication; but its definition of punctuality is slightly different to that of the Japanese. Network Rail states that 'The measure of train punctuality also known as PPM (public performance measure) means trains arriving at their terminating station within five minutes for commuter services and within 10 minutes for long distance services' (Network rail)

In the Greek myth the Sphinx, a monster with the face of a woman, the body of a lion and the wings of a bird, asked all wayfarers on the road to Thebes: "What creature is it that walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon and three legs in the evening? Those unable to answer, she ate. Oedipus, however, answered 'man' and the Sphinx committed suicide. He had grasped that this riddle was a metaphor for time. Four legs was a child crawling, two legs the adult and three legs an old person leaning on a stick" (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:123)

Although this example may be considered a little extreme - eating people - it does highlight the necessity to look at the concept of time and how it is being used when communicating with people around the globe (table 6).

Sequential cultures include the US, Germany, and Britain, whereas synchronic cultures include France, Italy, and Mexico

Sequential	Synchronic
Do only one activity at a time.	Do more than one activity at a time.
Time is sizeable and measurable.	Appointments are approximate and subject to 'giving time' to significant others.
Keep appointments strictly; schedule in advance and do not run late.	Schedules are generally subordinate to relationships.
Relationships are generally subordinate to schedule.	Strong preference for following where relationships lead.
Strong preference for following initial plans.	

Table 6: Sequential versus Synchronic Cultures
(Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:143)

2.4.9 Attitudes to the environment

The final dimension of this model concerns how people relate to their environment (see table 7). Mankind has had to respond to natural elements such as wind, fire, and earthquakes as well as environmental problems created by mankind. Over the years, a change in thought processes has occurred: whereas years ago people thought that nature would impact upon human existence, today man is taking so much of the world's natural resources that restrictions may have to be imposed. An example which is often highlighted in the media is the whaling industry in Japan and the consequent impact upon the whale population. The model explores data under the headings of Internal and External direction. Internal direction relates to people who think that they can control their environment to achieve their targets. External direction is the reverse - people believe that the environment controls them, and they must incorporate ways of working which works with the environment.

Examples of internal direction cultures include Israel, the US, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. External direction cultures include China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia.

Internal Control	External control
Often dominating attitude bordering on aggressiveness towards environment.	Often flexible attitude, willing to compromise and keep the peace.
Conflict and resistance means that you have conviction.	Harmony and responsiveness, that is, sensibility.
Focus is on self, function, own group and organisation.	Focus is on 'other' that is customer, partner, colleague.
Discomfort when environment seems out of control or changeable.	Comfort with waves, shifts, cycles if these are 'natural'.

Table 7: Internal Control versus External Control Cultures
(Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:159)

Trompenaars et al. then change focus to review how general cultural assumptions about mankind, time and the environment affect the culture of organisations. They discuss four types of corporate culture which they have categorised as follows:

1. Family culture
2. Eiffel Tower culture
3. Guided missile culture
4. Incubator culture

When discussing **family** culture, they consider it to be a personal relationship, but also hierarchical, where the father - with his wealth of experience and age - is respected and considered most knowledgeable. The result is a power-orientated corporate culture. In this case, it is considered that the father knows best and will look after his family. According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) "Rather than being threatened, this type of power is essentially intimate and (hopefully) benign" Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998:163).

The Japanese appear to adopt this type of cultural structure, with younger members of an organisation in the same ranks respecting those who are senior in age. In this 'family' cultural structure, it is considered that performing well is a way of pleasing your family. Communication is considered to be high context; a lot of information is taken for granted, part of the culture of the organisation. The decision making is not only influenced by the father or any older brother at work but will impact on all situations. As a result of this close 'family' relationship the staff may be motivated more by praise than financial reward. "The family model gives low priority to efficiency (doing things right) but high priority to effectiveness (doing the right things)" (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:170). Countries which have family style cultural organisations include Japan, Spain, and Italy.

Eiffel Tower culture has a clear function, with the higher levels holding the lower levels together. It is expected that you will obey the boss and if the person who holds the role is to leave and be replaced you will then obey the new boss. It therefore follows that authority stems from the role and the person who holds that role. However, away from the organisation the relationship changes and everyone is equal, but there are still some differences. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner state that “German and Austrian companies, which are typically Eiffel Tower models, the title of professor or doctor are common on office doors. This is extremely rare in the USA” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:171). They discuss the way people in the Eiffel tower model move up the tower to jobs of greater responsibility. In larger organisations staff known as Human Resources will look at the overall picture and move people as required, ensuring they have the necessary skill to fulfil the position. A change in the Eiffel Tower structure can only occur through a change in the rules, although this may upset the employees. Changes in rules include changes in procedure and changes in job descriptions. They also state that “They usually mean wholesale firings and redundancies. Such companies resist change and when it becomes inevitable suffer major dislocation as a consequence” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:174).

The **guided missile** culture differs from both the previous models by being egalitarian. It is orientated to tasks and is typically completed by teams or project groups who must complete the task. Trompenaars et al. cite the example of NASA where groups work on projects such as lunar landing modules. There are in the region of 140 different kinds of engineers working on the project, all of whom have a valuable input, with the aim of building a fully functional lunar module. There will be coordinators, but they may know less than the specialists working in their teams. They explain that “The end is known but the possible trajectories are uncertain” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:178). Guided missile groups tend to be temporary, coming together for a particular project.

The **Incubator** culture is based on dealing with existence and on individuals taking greater priority than organisations. Trompenaars et al. state that if organisations are to be tolerated at all, they should be there to serve as incubators for self-expression and self-fulfilment. The goal is to free people from their day to day processes and allow them to be creative. “Similar to an incubator, this culture is like a leadership team” (Trompenaars & Greene 2017:4). Typical firms that would be considered part of the ‘incubator culture’ would be companies that operate in Silicon Valley, where the founder is a creative person developing a product. However, for this type of person to survive they need a team around them that will, in effect, run the business and draw the founder’s and his creative team’s attention to issues on the horizon. They may also be involved in finding resources which will enable the completion of the project. The hierarchy will be minimal, and the character/charisma of the person will carry a considerable amount of authority. Trompenaars and

Hampden-Turner describe incubator cultures as enjoying “the process of creating and innovating”. They go on to say that “Because of the close relationship, shared enthusiasms and super ordinate goals, the incubator at its best can be ruthlessly honest, effective, nurturant, therapeutic and exciting, depending as it does on face to face relationships and working intimacies” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:181). A positive factor of this type of culture is that changes can occur very quickly because the members have a very close working relationship.

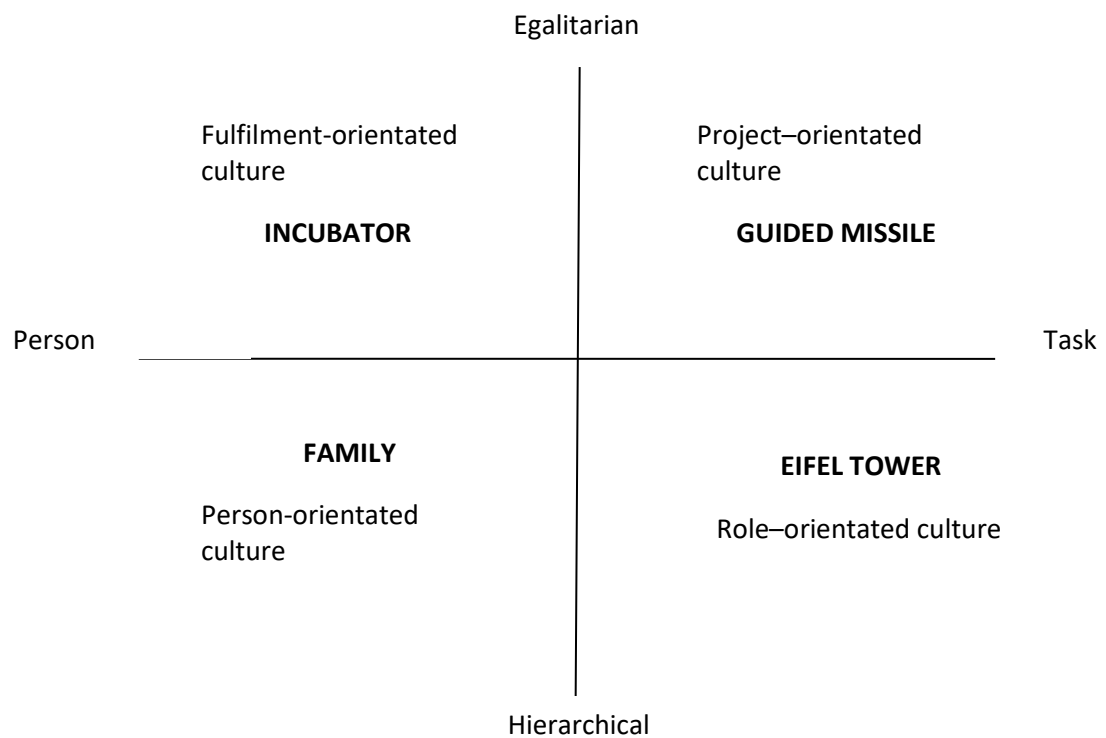


Figure 3: Pictorial Representation of Corporate Cultures
(Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:163)

Figure 3 is a pictorial representation of the previous discussion. It must be appreciated that it is impossible to stereotype everyone and that Trompenaars et al. have developed the model from their limited research.

National patterns of corporate culture

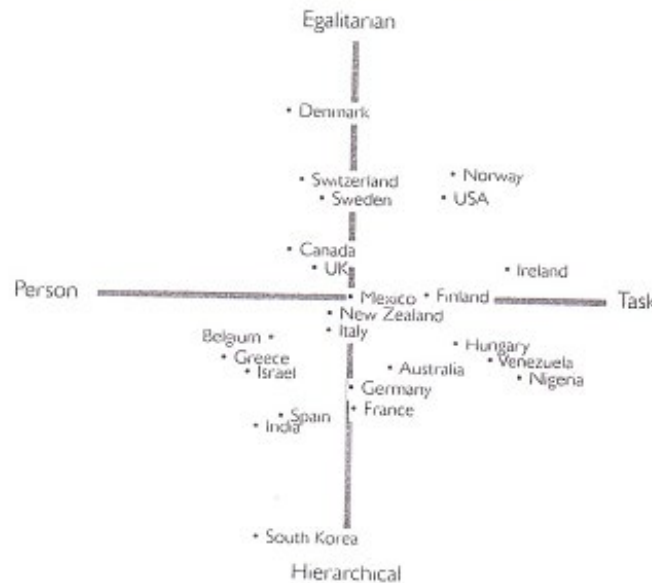


Figure 4: National Patterns of Corporate Cultures
(Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:184)

Figure 4 shows the results of a survey and gives an indication, by country, of the different cultural patterns that exist. However, Trompenaars et al. offer a word of warning, suggesting that smaller companies are more likely to take the family and incubator form whereas larger ones tend to be of the Eiffel Tower or guided missile type, wherever they are located around the globe.

A theme flowing through Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) relates to one company and the problems it has had to face relating to culture. The company, which they refer to as MC, develops, produces, and sells medium to large computers to customers around the globe. The study explores different challenges that have arisen with the climax of the story developing as follows:

What I've been through in the last eight months is about as far from a smoothly running computer or a living organism as you could get. I'll tell you what's its really like, because I was reading the story to my kids. It's like that crazy croquet game in Alice in Wonderland where she has to play with the flamingo as a mallet, waiters bending over as hoops and hedgehogs as balls. The flamingos twist its head round to look at Alice, the hoops wander off and the balls crawl away. The result chaos.

Other cultures aren't part of a machine, or the organs of a supranational body. They're different animals, all with logic of their own. If we asked them what game they are playing, and got them to explain the rules, we might discover when we aren't holding a mallet at all, or even get the hedgehog to go in the right direction.

(Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:185).

The final paragraph sums up the executive's thoughts. In effect, he is recognising that culture must be considered to get things done.

Universite Nice Sophia Antipolis reports that “Trompenaars’ seven dimensions have been used in a variety of ways to gain insights into the kinds of problems that might arise in different contexts (face to face, company to company, and company to customer)” (Universite Nice Sophia Antipolis, 2008:139). They go on to say that using Trompenaars’ model can give an indication of what to expect from firms based in a particular area. However they also warn that “The Japanese are moving away from a reliance on collectivism in the form of the state, large firms, and group associations and placing more value on personal responsibility and individual performance” (Universite Nice Sophia Antipolis, 2008:139). Furthermore, they give an indication of another change, but in all research we have to remember that, as time moves on quite often activities and attitudes change, especially in the electronic world (very fast flow of communications) we now live in.

2.4.10 Summary

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s extensive survey enabled a comprehensive model to be developed which enables the comparison of workers in different countries. This information has been used to support my findings contained in the vignettes.

Research completed by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov provides a framework for exploring different cultures. Once it is realised that differences do exist then their model can be used to help examine the information gathered.

2.5.1 Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov

In Hofstede et al.’s *Cultures and Organisations Software of the Mind*, they focus upon the cultural issues of both national cultures and organisational issues. Over the past 25 years plus, Geert Hofstede has developed a framework for exploring different cultures and, together with his son Gert and friend Michael Minkov, they discuss the topic of culture and the results from their empirical research. “Hofstede was the first to quantify cultural orientations held by people in more than 60 countries” (Beugelsdijk & Welzel 2018:1470)

According to Hofstede et al. (2010) the world is full of confrontations between people, groups and nations who think, feel and act differently. If you look at Bahrain there is the Sunni-Shia conflict, which appears to have been in the background for years, although recently the differences have been brought to the surface. The Syrian civil war would appear to involve culture - the ruling party from the Alawites religious group being an off-shoot of Shiite Islam, which is estimated to comprise 12% of the population. Its power has created resentment within the Sunni Muslims, a religious group who make up around 75% of the population. Hofstede et al. advise that recognising that differences do exist

and “understanding the differences in the ways these leaders and their followers think, feel and act is a condition for bringing about worldwide solutions that work” (Hofstede et al., 2010:4) . They go on to state that culture is learned, not innate. It evolves within a person as they interact with the environment in which they live. In addition, natural culture, according to Hofstede, has four layers which he describes as his Onion model. As you go deeper into the onion you reach different areas which he states impact upon someone’s cultural development. The three outer layers he calls practices. The first symbols he classifies as words, gestures, national dress (attire) pictures, McDonald’s logo or objects that carry meaning that can be readily recognised by someone from the same culture. This first layer is subject to outside influence. New symbols can be introduced and the old one disappears. The next level is referred to as Heroes. These heroes can be dead or alive or a TV/movie character. Imaginary characters include Batman, Barbie or Snoopy. Moving deeper into the onion we have rituals which include ways of greeting and showing respect to others. This area also includes religious ceremonies. Despite the world becoming a smaller place (metaphorically speaking), with the introduction of computers and high-speed travel, rituals still tend to vary from country to country. The approach that a student from the Far East takes in respect of a lecturer is different to that of a UK student. The core of the onion, Hofstede suggests, is the area which presents the greatest difficulty when trying to enlighten people to a new culture (figure 5).

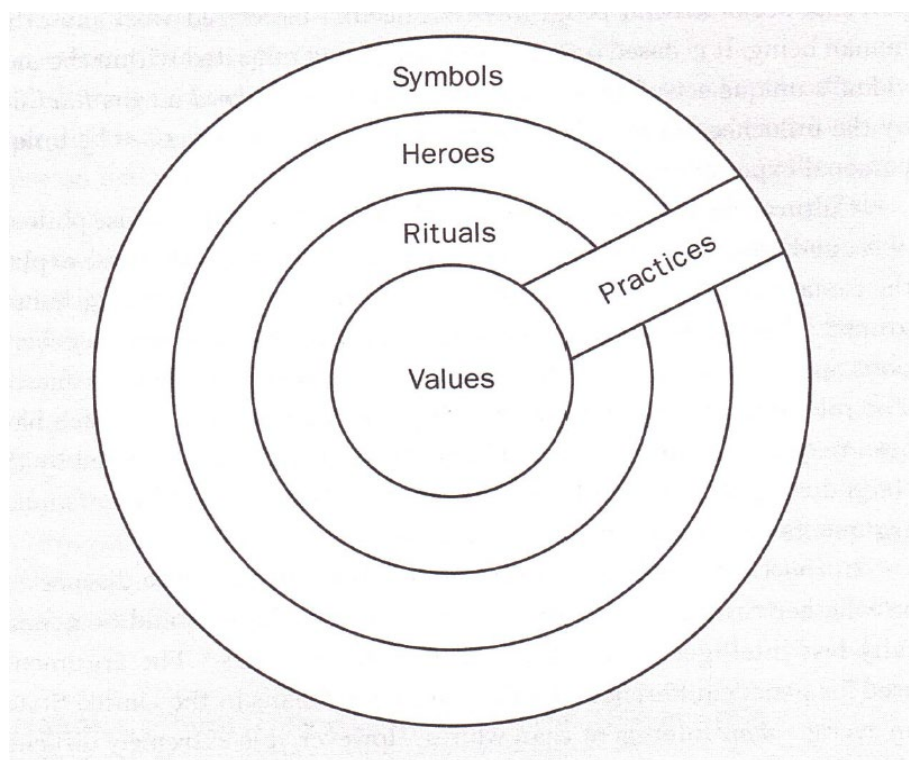


Figure 5: Hofstede's Onion
(Hofstede et al., 2010:8)

The book suggests the following values are the areas where a national norm will occur:

- Evil versus good
- Dirty versus clean
- Dangerous versus safe
- Forbidden versus permitted
- Decent versus indecent
- Moral versus immoral
- Ugly versus beautiful
- Unnatural versus natural
- Abnormal versus normal
- Paradoxical versus logical
- Irrational versus rational

(Hofstede et al., 2010:9)

The above values are all reinforced by parents in the upbringing of their children (the programming) in a particular culture. People living in a particular area/culture will accept the unwritten rules and implement them unconsciously, thinking of them as the norm and right. The problem arises when people from different cultures meet and they have different values. People will have different opinions as to what is evil and what is good, what is ugly and what is beautiful. Females in Western countries may walk around on a warm day quite scantily dressed, whereas in some Arab countries (and when they visit the UK) ladies will wear the burka. The following article, taken from the internet, highlights the differences in approach. It is interesting to note that the human rights organisation has got involved. Would this sentence be allowed in the UK?

A Burka Dressed Woman - Islamic Law - A 17-year old girl was sentenced by an Islamic court in the northern state of Zamfara. The girl, whose father allegedly forced her to have sex with three men, will be flogged for breaking a law against premarital sex. Judge Idris Usman Gusau said the sentence - 180 lashes with a cane - would be carried out on January 27 despite an appeal by the Nigerian government to suspend the punishment. The sentence has prompted an outcry from human rights groups which fear the girl may die. (BBC:2000)

Hofstede et al. state that our values are acquired at an early age. For the first 10 to 12 years of life values are absorbed mainly from the family, but around this time (10 years) the learning pendulum begins to swing and outside influences begin to have an impact. At the same time, as value learning changes so do practices, those having a bigger impact on the post ten to twelve-year olds. However, this early-years programming (values) remains unconscious to those who hold these values. The authors explore the layers of culture and suggest that most people belong to a number of different groups. This involves several levels of mental programming. These levels could include:

- A national level according to one's country (or countries, for people who migrated during their lifetimes)
- A regional and /or ethnic and /or religious and/or linguistic affiliations level
- A gender level, according to whether one was born as a girl or as a boy
- A generation level, separating grandparents from parents from children

- A social class level, associated with educational opportunities and with a person's occupation or profession
- For those who are employed, organisational, departmental, and /or corporate levels according to the way employees have been socialized by their work organisation.

(Hofstede et al., 2010:18)

If we look deeper into this programming, we may find the different levels do not complement each other and in effect there is a conflict. For example, generation values may conflict with religious values such as arranged marriage or education, or the lack of education of girls, as the recent abduction of female students in Nigeria seems to revolve around. If we look at some parts of the world the male takes dominance over the female. A further complication is changes in society and acceptance of the gay and lesbian movement. This gets even more complex when you look at the lady boys in Thailand where someone born as a boy becomes a girl and the reverse – girl to boy. Hofstede et al. suggest that “conflicting mental programs within people make it difficult to anticipate their behaviour in a new situation” (Hofstede et al., 2010:18).

Natural cultural differences are considered to follow the different nations around the globe with each person being identified by the passport they hold. The world was divided up over time according to the strength of different countries, e.g. the British Empire. However, as these powers declined and countries gained independence many new emerging countries' borders adopted their colonial power boards rather than a cultural power, which suggests that nations should not be considered societies. According to Hofstede et al. (2010) society is a historically, organically developed form of social organisation. They go on to state that the concept of common cultures applies to societies, not to nations. Within nations there is the common bond, national language, common media, a national education policy and one army, although there can still be groups within nations trying to raise the profile of their culture such as the Basques in Spain and the IRA in Ireland. It is therefore dangerous to categorise everyone from a particular area. For instance, 'The Far East' or 'France' could have cultural difference within each definition. Kristjansdottir et al (2017) research found that “national culture to have an impact on the international trade of countries; this finding indicates that variations in national culture are likely to affect trade between countries” (Kristjansdottir et al 2017:7). One of the reasons for looking at these differences is to develop a greater understanding of them, which in turn will allow people to see how the culture operates and immerse themselves into this new way of operating.

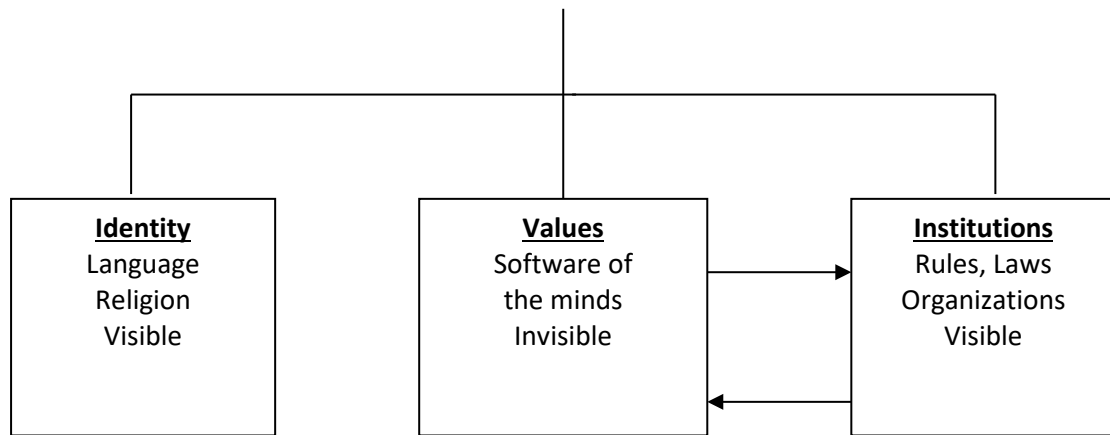


Figure 6: Sources of Differences between Countries and Groups

Figure 6 shows the difference between countries and groups. It tries to answer the question: ‘to which group do I belong?’ The answer is often routed in the second and third area shown in the box above (language/religion) and is visible. Hofstede et al. suggest that identities can change over someone’s lifetime – perhaps when someone moves to another country. A challenge for a migrant (second generation) is to know which country they should identify themselves with – is it their new country or the country they left? Identity is explicit and can be explained in words such as a man or a British citizen. Values are invisible and refer to the software people have inside them. It relates to motives, emotions, and taboos. The author had a discussion with a senior Chinese executive on the topic of independence of Scotland from the UK. The Chinese gentleman could not understand how the UK would allow Scotland to leave. As he said, Taiwan is part of China and always will be. It is how he was programmed from birth to look at these events. Hofstede et al. discuss how countries, as they develop, introduce laws, rules, and different support institutions such as schools, hospitals etc. which they categorise as institutions. These institutions are clearly visible. They then pose the question: “If we can explain such differences by institutions that are clearly visible, do we really need to speculate about cultures as invisible mental programs?” (Hofstede et al., 2010:24)

They suggest the answer was given by a French nobleman in the early 1700s that there is a “general spirit of a nation (what we now call its culture), and that ‘the legislator’ follows the spirit of the nation, for we do nothing better than what we do freely and by following our natural genius”. (Hofstede et al., 2010:24). It would be interesting to examine some of the laws that have emanated from the European parliament and how the end results have differed in different countries of the union.

Hofstede et al. suggest that countries’ values are strongly related to structure and the way their institutions function, hence the horizontal arrows linking these two together. He considers that it would be a challenge to change the way people think and feel simply by importing an outside influence

(Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade:2001). In a recent television documentary, a comment was made by the television presenter about Thomas Babington Macaulay. Born in 1800 and died in 1859, Macaulay was connected to the East India Company when Britain's power was in the ascent as a world leader. The programme discussed the way India operated and what should be done in effect to change the culture. The programme quoted Macaulay as follows:

Introduced to modern scientific knowledge via English language could not be done via Indian classical language. British culture highest of human civilisation and bestowed on Indian subjects, Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes – opinions – morals and intellect – first teach English.

There is a debate as to the exact wording but it would appear that the fact someone in the 1800's had identified that people were different had led to the culture debate. Even today if we look at the conflicts around the world and the intervention of a major power, events do not necessarily unfold as expected. The removal of a dictator does not necessarily solve a problem. It is not until people's programming can adapt to the new circumstance that a situation will change.

Hofstede et al. (2010) is based upon the research they completed within IBM, which is an international company that has offices in many countries. Although the staff in these different locations carried out similar roles, Hofstede et al. wished to explore how a particular function operated within different countries. The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire revealed that although the different locations suffered many of the same issues/problems, the solutions the staff implemented differed from country to country in the following areas:

- Relation to authority
- Concept of self – in particular:
 - The relationship between individual and society
 - The individual's concept of masculinity and femininity
- Ways of dealing with conflicts, including the control of aggression and the expressing of feelings.

(Hofstede et al., 2010:30)

The above areas represent dimensions of culture, a dimension that can be measured against other cultures. Hofstede et al. used this listing to develop the following dimensions:

- Power distance (high and low)
- Collectivism versus individualism
- Masculinity versus Femininity

- Uncertainty avoidance

(Hofstede et al., 2010:30)

More recently they added a fifth dimension: long term orientation versus short term orientation.

Power distance can be defined as the extent to which the boss rules. In high power distance everyone is in their place and employees are reluctant to criticise people above them in the company structure. People from high power distance control expect senior figures to them to be autocratic so, for example, teachers in high power cultures are not questioned. The reverse is expected in a low power distance. In this situation everyone works as colleagues, and employees expect to be consulted on many issues. Teachers working in this lower power culture would expect to be challenged and learners are encouraged to challenge them. In the research completed by Hofstede et al., Malaysia, The Philippines, Indonesia, India, and Singapore were found to be high power distance cultures, whereas Austria, Denmark, Norway, and the UK tended towards being low power distance cultures.

Collectivism: The culture is to be loyal to the group. From birth, people are integrated into strong groups (family units) to which they remain loyal and which protect them in return for this loyalty. An individualist culture is at the other end of the pendulum swing, the focus being on the person, his/her initiative, and achievement. Every individual is expected to look after themselves and the goal is to be a good leader (me, me, me). People from collectivist countries place great importance on the needs of the group in actions taken and are likely to speak elliptically, rather than addressing the topic directly. The directness by people from individualist cultures may appear rude to people from collectivist societies and, similarly, people from collectivist countries may appear to be evasive to people from individualist cultures. Collectivist societies would include Indonesia, South Korea, Thailand, and Singapore, whereas Individualist societies would include countries such as the USA, Australia, and the UK.

Masculine societies exist where the male attributes (masculine, assertive) are the dominant values of society and there are distinct gender roles. In these societies, men are expected to be assertive, tough, and focussed upon material success, whereas in the feminine culture females are expected to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. In high masculine societies males would focus on big and fast things (material success). In feminine cultures the gender roles overlap, males are expected to be more assertive than females and both the sexes are concerned with the quality of life. Masculine societies would include Japan, Austria, Italy, and Great Britain. At the other end of the index you find Sweden, Norway, and Thailand

High uncertainty avoidance occurs where people have a need for clarity and will follow rules even if these rules can lead to an obvious problem. People from these cultures need their lives to be highly

structured and supported by rules and regulations. At the other end of the scale, where people do not worry about the future (low uncertainty avoidance), people take each day as it comes, and rules are taken as recommendations. People from these cultures prefer to work to guidelines, general principles that are flexible. France is a strong uncertainty avoidance country, having a constitution which runs into hundreds of pages that sets down the rules for the country to follow when addressing different challenges. England is at the other end of the scale as it does not even have a written constitution - relying instead upon judges to interpret the laws for setting legal precedents. Learners in high uncertainty avoidance cultures expect a highly structured environment where every question has a right answer, whereas those learning in a low uncertainty avoidance culture will operate in a more open-ended environment and answers may include 'it depends'. Those countries having low uncertainty avoidance would include Singapore, Denmark, and Great Britain. Countries with high uncertainty avoidance would include Greece, Portugal, Japan, and Belgium.

The final dimension of long term versus short term orientation explores cultures against a set of values. Long term orientations value their relationships by status, thrift, and a sense of shame. Short term orientation at the other end of the scale values personal stability, protecting your 'face', a respect for tradition and reciprocity of favours and gifts. This fifth dimension was added by Hofstede in the 1990's. Hofstede's research had revealed that Asian countries which had a strong link to Confucian philosophy acted differently from Western cultures. It indicated that in countries with a high long-term orientation, 'losing face' and delivering on social obligations was ranked high. Hofstede's research indicated that people in the United States and United Kingdom who have short term orientation can be creative and develop novel ideas as these cultures do not value tradition as much as others.

Hofstede's research has had its critics, and some of the areas of concern are recorded below.

1. That the dimensions developed from data collected between 1968 and 1973 were only relevant for that particular period.
2. That corporate cultural and other influences were from this one organisation (IBM)
3. That the use of attitude survey questionnaires alone was not a valid basis for the resulting values and dimensions his study concluded with (Universite Nice Sophia Antipolis, 2008:138)
4. By the term 'national culture' Hofstede means the culture of a country or state and not necessarily of a nation. McSweeney (2002) comments that "although the state Great Britain is composed of at least three nations – England, Scotland and Wales – Hofstede treats it as a single entity with a single national culture" (Mc Sweeney, 2002:92).
5. When looking at common individual national culture McSweeney (2002) states that a unique national culture is assumed to be individually carried by everyone in a nation. In a similar

sense Taylor states that “the problem with Hitler was that he was German” (Mc Sweeney, 2002:93)

6. Although many surveys were used in the research, when you break them down into countries the return from some countries was very low. McSweeney(2002) comments “The first survey in Pakistan was of 37 IBM employees” (Mc Sweeney, 2002:94)

Nakata (2009) suggests that when Hofstede was working on his book in 1980 the world was a simpler place; nations were fairly stable. However, Nakata states “in the nearly three decades that have passed, nations have become more permeable and heterogeneous and are altering through dismantlement (e.g. the former Soviet Union) as well as integration (e.g. the European Union)” (Nakata, 2009:5). Added to these physical changes you must look at the advances in the worldwide communication structure via emails and the internet and the dissemination of information/knowledge via the different modes of communication.

2.5.2 Summary

Hofstede’s model enabled cultural dimensions to be measured against other cultures. This model has been used when presenting the finding of this research. It helped gain an understanding of the events being studied.

The Globe project built on Hofstede’s and other published work. One of the major outcomes of the research was to develop a description of how cultures differ from one another.

2.6.1 GLOBE

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) research program was conceived in 1991 by Robert House of the Wharton School of Business in the USA. “Broadly, the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness) research programme seeks to study the effectiveness of leadership behaviours in different cultural contexts” (House et al (2010:111). This research incorporated Implicit Leadership Theory and Hofstede’s dimensions into one research study. The Implicit Leadership theory works from the premise that people’s underlying assumptions, stereotypes and schemas influence the way they see someone as a good leader. However, as people from different cultures see the world through different ‘spectacles’ it would seem to suggest that someone who makes a good leader in one country would not necessarily be a good leader in another, because of the cultural differences. The first study looked at 62 societies and its findings were based on the results of a study of around 17300 middle managers from 951 organisations in the financial services, food processing and telecommunications sectors. A second investigation, the results of which

became available in 2007, complemented the first program. “To this day, GLOBE project represents the most comprehensive study of leadership preferences ever undertaken (Giuliani G 2016:37). The research program built on findings published by Hofstede and others.

One of the major outcomes of the research was to develop a description of how cultures differ from one another. The GLOBE research established nine dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, humane orientation, collectivism (institutional), collectivism (in groups), assertiveness, gender egalitarianism, future orientation, and performance orientation. These are briefly explored below.

Power Distance	The degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equally.
Uncertainty Avoidance	The extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events.
Humane Orientation	The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others.
Collectivism I (Institutional)	The degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.
Collectivism II (In-Group)	The degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.
Assertiveness	The degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational and aggressive in their relationships with others.
Gender Egalitarianism	The degree to which a collective minimizes gender inequality.
Future Orientation	The extent to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviours such as delaying gratification, planning, and investing in the future.
Performance Orientation	The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence.

(Hoppe 2007:1)

The development of the cultural dimensions shown above allowed GLOBE to place 60 of the 62 countries into country clusters which then allows us to examine the information. Figure 6 shows that the findings indicate that the UK fits into the Anglo grouping and is like Canada, the USA, Australia, Ireland, South Africa (white sample) and New Zealand. It also shows that the further the clusters are

apart the greater the cultural differences. In the case of the UK the biggest difference is with the Middle East which includes Turkey, Kuwait, Egypt, Morocco, and Qatar. It is interesting to note that GLOBE speaks about societies rather than countries. The results of the research indicate that some countries are fractioned into rather different cultural groups. This introduces another factor for an English manager when in South Africa as there would appear to be differing cultures within the country, South African Whites and South African Blacks. This occurs again when looking at Switzerland when they fit into two culture clusters, the Latin Europe, and the Germanic Europe.

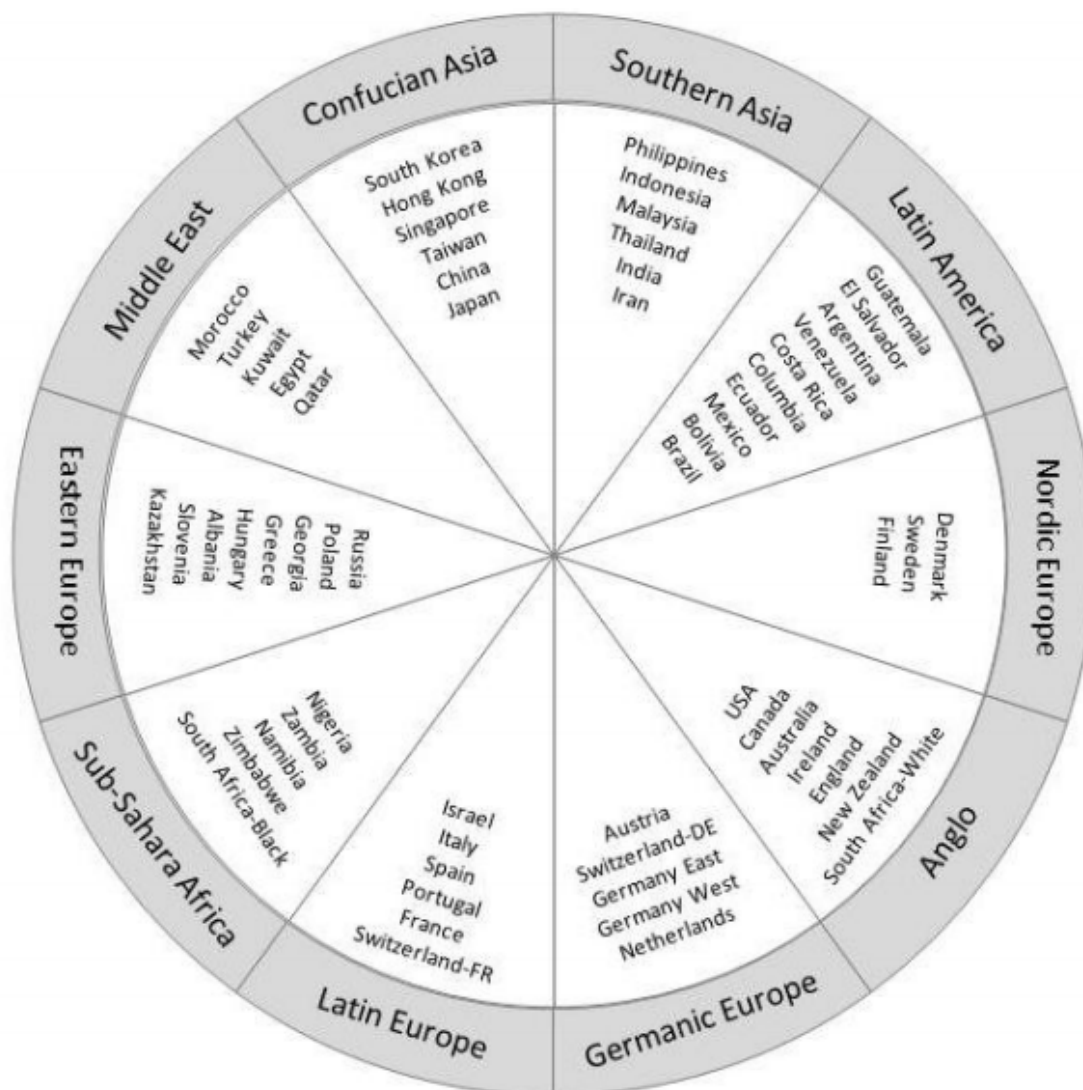


Figure 7: Globe Study
Hoppe 2007 2)

The second major finding that the GLOBE research revealed was that different cultures conceptualise leaders from a different standpoint. GLOBE took the stance that a leader has been programmed from birth in societal and organisation norm values and beliefs. Leadership Categorization Theory states

“everyone has an implicit idea of what leaders look, act and behave like” (Karadakil, 2015:6). These qualities are what people look for in a leader to evaluate whether the leader is worth following or not. The research also introduced cultural values and practices as part of its study.

The study examined 112 leader characteristics which included such characteristics as modest, decisive, autonomous, and trustworthy. From this 112 the characteristics were analysed and reduced to 21 (see figure 8)

Integrity	Humane
Inspirational	Status conscious
Visionary	Conflict inducer
Performance-oriented	Procedural
Team-integrator	Autonomous
Decisive	Face saver
Administratively competent	Non-participative
Diplomatic	Autocratic
Collaborative team orientation	Self- centred
Self-sacrificial	Malevolent
Modest	

Figure 8: Cultural Values and Practices
(Hoppe, 2007:3)

These 21 categories were reduced to six styles within the research project. The six were:

The performance-oriented style (called ‘charismatic/value-based’ by GLOBE) stresses high standards, decisiveness, and innovation; seeks to inspire people around a vision; creates a passion among them to perform; and does so by firmly holding on to core values.

The team-oriented style instils pride, loyalty, and collaboration among organizational members, and highly values team cohesiveness and a common purpose or goals.

The participative style encourages input from others in decision-making and implementation; and emphasizes delegation and equality.

The humane style stresses compassion and generosity; and it is patient, supportive, and concerned with the well-being of others.

The autonomous style is characterized by an independent, individualistic, and self-centric approach to leadership.

The self-protective (and group-protective) style emphasizes procedural, status-conscious, and 'face-saving' behaviours; and focuses on the safety and security of the individual and the group.

(Hoppe, 2007:3)

The results were presented in a numerical representation with the lower scores (1) indicating that the style had a negative impact when looking at outstanding leadership. Scores from 4.5 to 7 indicated that the style was contributing to outstanding leadership. Table 8, below, shows a selection of Far Eastern countries compared with England:

Table 8: Comparison of UK and Overseas Leadership Styles

Country	Charismatic	Team orientated	Self- Protective	Participative	Humane orientated	Autonomous
England	6.01	5.71	3.04	5.57	4.90	3.92
Indonesia	6.15	5.92	4.13	4.61	5.43	4.19
Malaysia	5.89	5.8	3.50	5.12	5.24	4.03
Philippines	6.33	6.06	3.33	5.40	5.53	3.75
Thailand	5.78	5.76	3.91	5.30	5.09	4.28
Taiwan	5.58	5.69	4.28	4.73	5.35	4.01

The difference in leader styles will make people acceptable in one country but not necessarily so readily accepted in another. Certain cultural traits such as the autonomous leader style may be acceptable to one culture but not to another. For example, in the US for leaders to be described as decisive they will be expected to be able to make quick and approximate decisions. However, if we look at the qualities needed to be considered a decisive leader in France or Germany, they will need to be more deliberate and precise. This same principle applies on the global stage – what is acceptable in one country may not meet expectations in another.

Gupta et al. (2002) focus on the GLOBE Southern Asia cluster. This includes India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand. At the time of the research the population had reached nearly 1.5 billion people. The report goes on to state “the hallmark of the cluster is its high-power distance and group and family collectivism practices. In terms of values, it aspires for a much stronger future orientation and performance orientation, and much lower levels of power distance” (Gupta et al. 2002:16). The region’s history helps to explain how it has reached its current status. Going back to 1700 BC, several independent kings ruled the region, each stamping their own mark. Local cultural patterns emerged relating to trade, exchange, and cultural development. The introduction of new technology and minerals resulted in local areas starting to trade which helped unify these groups.

Around 1200 BC a concept existed based on “territorial conquest, in which a king was declared emperor, and surrounding kingdoms were required to recognise him as their moral and political overlord or face military action” (Gupta et al. 2002:19). During this time, the networks were further developed via the rajasuya yagya (religious rites of Emperor Hood), which required the kings to have daughters married to the emperor or within the emperor/king’s families. The practice of the male-dominated society and the dowry system were two important cultural artefacts which continue today in some societies. Between the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD, when the Great Wall of China was constructed, trade changed because those trading with China now had to look elsewhere as the wall in effect locked them out. As a result of the existing complex rules that regulated these people a complex ‘caste’ system emerged, together with rules which controlled entry into an occupation which was based on parental occupation and village, and around this time Buddhism was adopted by the most powerful tribe, the Kushans. The 5th century AD saw the fall of the Kushans and the Roman Empire, so traders now looked towards India and south-east Asia despite all the differences that existed. Further unrest resulted in the late 13th century in the setting up of the Islamic state of the sultanate of Malacca, with its influence felt as far afield as the Philippines. Malacca at this time was an important sea route for Indo-China trading. To counter this development in Islamic growth the Chinese, in the 14th century, encouraged Chinese migration to trading posts with south-east Asia, which was a major turning point and now meant that China had considerable influence in the southern Asia society. However, following the Chinese immigration, the Portuguese and the Dutch began to take an interest in the area in the 16th century followed by the British in the 18th century. This immigration into south-east society played an important role when, in the 20th century, many countries gained their independence. Today a considerable amount of economic activity is driven by the Chinese migrants. Gupta et al. state that “historically, the region boasted of communities loosely united through alliances, and experienced intermittent local and foreign conquests for rule over primarily agrarian and craft based economies” (Gupta et al., 2002:19). Today the area of Southern Asia includes the Tiger countries, those countries that are expecting strong economic development.

2.6.2 Summary

The GLOBE project built on the framework provided by Hofstede and Trompenaars, with its research looking at ways to avoid pitfalls of ignorance and insensitivity. The Universite Nice Sophia Antipolis suggests that “recent debates have usefully raised some methodological issues associated with these kinds of studies, and provides interesting points of contention we should be aware of rather than blindly accepting the above” (Universite Nice Sophia Antipolis, 2008:140).

As this research project progressed the knowledge gained was used by the author. This is reflected in one of the vignettes where the approach taken to address a problem was not a UK cultural approach (avoiding pitfalls of ignorance and insensitivity) and the resulting outcome was considered extraordinarily successful.

Salacuse looks at the way culture can affect the way people negotiate and how this can impact upon the outcome.

2.7.0 Impact of Culture on Negotiation

Salacuse (2004) explores the different ways culture can affect the way people negotiate and he suggests ten ways that the approach can impact on the outcome (table 9):

1. Negotiating Goal	Contract	Relationship
2. Negotiating attitude	Win – Lose	Win-Win
3. Personal style	Informal	Formal
4. Communication	Direct	Indirect
5. Sensitivity to time	High	Low
6. Emotionalism	High	Low
7. Form of agreement	General	Specific
8. Building an agreement	Bottom up	Top down
9. Team Organisation	One Leader	Group consensus
10. Risk taking	High	Low

Table 9: Negotiating - Different Cultural Goals Salacuse (2004)

As indicated in the table, culture profoundly influences how people think. As a person develops, the guidance received from their parents and their social surroundings will vary from country to country.

Each country may also have a micro culture, but for this research project we will be looking at the macro impact of the difference, country to country.

The above table shows that in some countries the negotiating goal may be first and foremost to get a contract signed, whereas other countries may consider the creation of relationships a higher priority. This was a major stumbling block with Enron when the Americans were dealing with an Indian company; while the Americans were focused on signing a contract, the Indians concentrated on relationship building. The second difference is the win-lose or win-win approach. The Japanese have been programmed to be a win-win nation, whereas only 33% of the Spanish adopt that approach (Salacuse, 2004). When Salacuse explores the personal style, he looks at the way people address each other, the use of titles, how they dress and how they interact with each other. His research indicates that Germans have a more formal style than Americans. When comparing Japanese businesspeople to Americans, the American may wish to call a Japanese colleague by their first name, but that is an act of disrespect in Japanese culture.

Communications can take the form of a direct or indirect approach. Where directness is valued, for example in Israeli culture, you will receive clear and definite answers to any questions, whereas in an indirect culture, such as in Japan, you can expect to get vague responses. Salacuse (2004) posits that one of the reasons that the Camp David negotiations between the Egyptians and the Israelis were so challenging was the cultural difference. "The Egyptians interpreted Israeli directness as aggressiveness and, therefore, an insult. The Israelis viewed Egyptian indirectness with impatience and suspected them of insincerity, of not saying what they mean" (Salacuse, 2004:4). Time sensitivity is a factor which can impact upon negotiations. The research shows that Germans tend to be punctual, whereas many Asian countries, including Indonesia, do not place such great importance on time. Americans like to get in, sign the deal and leave whereas the Japanese and Asians like to spend time getting to know someone before deciding whether they wish to do business with them.

Showing your emotions can have an impact when discussing matters with someone from another culture. Latin Americans and the Spanish were found to consider themselves as emotional whereas the Germans and English ranked as the least emotional. When Salacuse looked at different types of agreement, general or specific, he found that the Americans liked very detailed contracts whereas the Chinese preferred a contract which offered a more general presentation, because they consider the relationship to be very important, so that any subsequent issues can be resolved 'among friends'.

Different cultures take different approaches to business. In the majority of cases, once negotiations reach a stage where everyone agrees, then a written agreement which encapsulates the information is drawn up and signed. However, on the road to the goal of a signed agreement differences can be

encountered. Americans prefer to ensure every eventuality is considered, whereas the Chinese prefer a more general contract, a set of guidelines. As they will already have built a relationship before the contract is signed, they will be able to use this relationship to help address any problems. Salacuse (2004) states that “only 11 percent of the English favoured general agreements” (Salacuse, 2004:6)

A further consideration when developing an agreement is whether the agreement is developed from a ‘bottom up’ or ‘top down’ approach. In the case of ‘bottom up’ it will start with general principles and then move on to the specifics such as price delivery date. However, if it is a ‘top down’ approach the reverse process will occur, with price and delivery date being some of the first topics to be discussed. Salacuse’s survey showed that, for Americans, negotiating a deal is basically making a series of compromises and trade-offs on a long list of particulars, whereas “For the French, the essence is to agree on basic principles that will guide and indeed determine the negotiation process afterwards” (Salacuse, 2004:6).

It is important to understand how each party is organised in any negotiation situation: who the key players are, who really has the authority to make commitments, and how decisions are made. Culture plays a major part, as some cultures emphasise the group approach while others emphasize the individual approach, which will impact on the teams. Salacuse’s (2004) research shows that the American style has a “supreme leader who has complete authority to decide all matters” (Salacuse, 2004:7)

Finally, Salacuse looked at cultures that were more risk-averse than others. He states that “in deal making, the negotiators’ cultures can affect the willingness of one side to take risks – to divulge information, try new approaches, and tolerate uncertainties in a proposed course of action” (Salacuse, 2004:7). His research has shown that the Japanese like to gather as much information as possible and their decision-making process tends to be risk-averse whereas the Americans, by comparison, are risk takers.

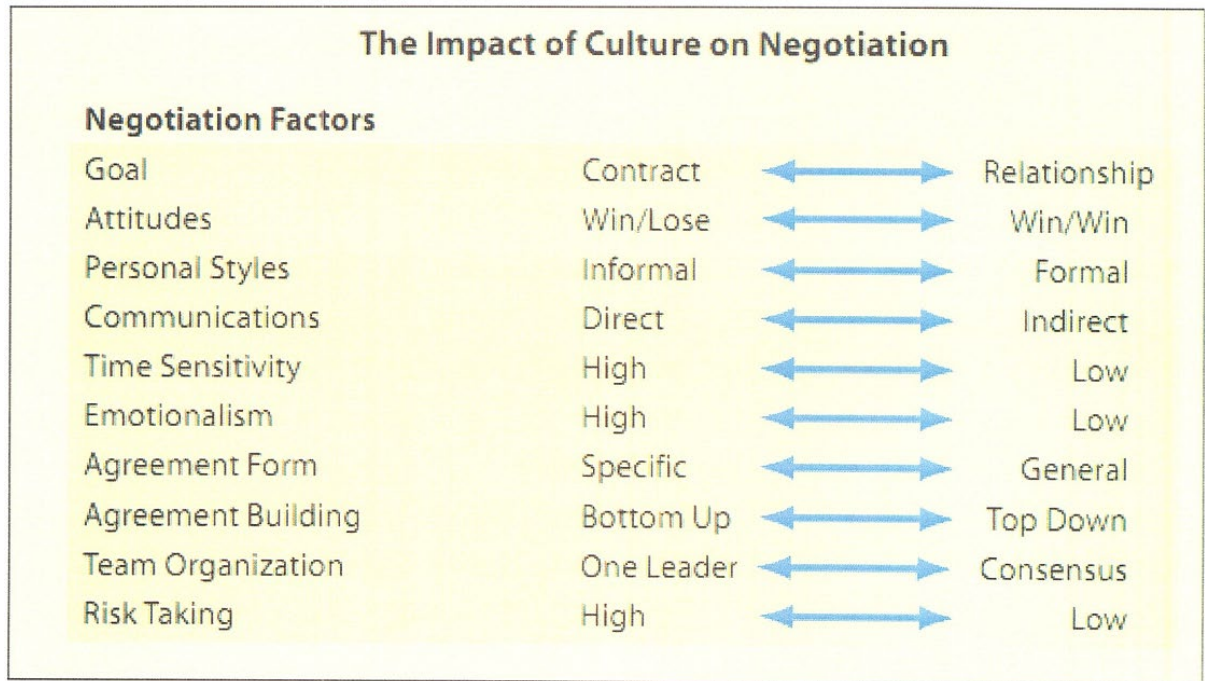


Figure 9 Impact of Culture on Negotiation
(Salacuse, 2004)

Figure 9 provides a summary of the issues discussed and highlights the differences that may exist when negotiating with people from a different country.

2.7.2 Summary

Salacuse's research produced information on different negotiating cultures and how it can impact upon the outcome. It is important to understand how each party is organised in any negotiation situation and this was taken into account in the incident described in vignette 7. The new knowledge gained while completing this research was reflected upon and helped to ensure a good outcome.

The whole research project has been an exercise of discovering new knowledge. Kolb's and Honey and Mumford's research looks at the area of learning. But how do you make sense of this new information?

2.8.1 Theory of Learning

Over the years that I have been working on this research project I have discovered many new approaches to life around the globe. For example, the UK has an individualistic culture, whereas the Indonesian/Japanese have a communitarian approach. Kolb (1974) and Honey and Mumford (1986a) explore the areas of learning. Kolb's learning theory "sets out four distinct learning styles, which are based on a four-stage learning cycle" (Kolb, 1974, cited in McLeod, 2013:2). According to Rosewell "Peter Honey and Alan Mumford (1986a) identify four distinct styles or preferences that people use

while learning. They suggest that most of us tend to follow only one or two of these styles and different learning activities may be better suited to particular styles. Knowing your predominant learning style will help you judge how likely an activity is to be helpful to you” (Rosewell, 2005:1). It is envisaged that using existing literature from these eminent researchers will help in the exploration of how a person is programmed (home culture) and also show how that fits in within the new experiences gained while researching overseas culture.

Barnett (2011) asks what is it to learn, and proffers the following answer, “the question has always been fraught with difficulty but perhaps it takes on particularly added layers of difficulty in the modern age” (Barnett, 2011:5). Barnett’s comment is important, suggesting that “through learning one understands the world anew (or at least some aspects of the world) and so is better placed to negotiate one’s way through the world” (Barnett, 2011:5). Kolb’s learning circle supports Barnett, as the process of using Kolb’s model should help to uncover new information which if implemented correctly should have a positive impact. To have a model (figure 10) which helps question events, a process can help a researcher to step back and look from the outside in, reflective observation.

2.8.2 Kolb

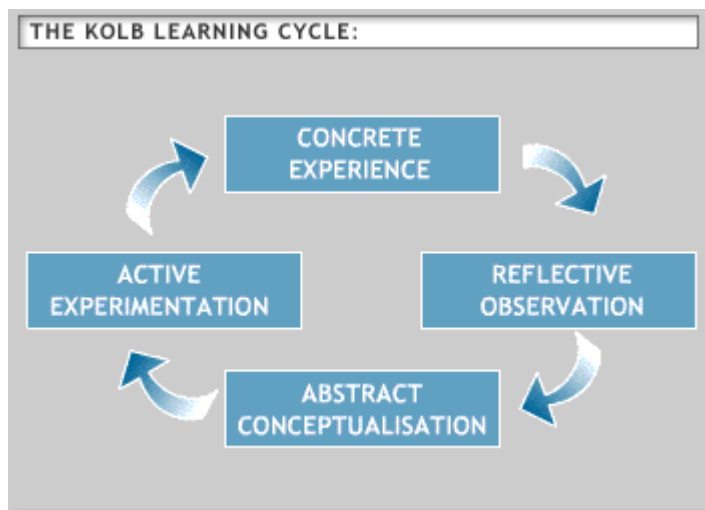


Figure 10: Kolb's Learning Cycle

(Mobbs,2010a)

Kolb’s learning circle works through a logical process, looking at what has occurred. “How we make sense of it all to find meaning, purpose, and direction in our lives is called learning from experience, or experiential learning (Peterson & Kolb 2017). It is a circular process which enables the onlooker to look at what is happening, make some adjustments (active experimentation) then arrive back at the top of the model. If the required outcome has not been achieved, then it is possible to work through

the whole process again. Kolb & Kolb (2013) consider “learning occurs through the course of connected experiences in which knowledge is modified and reformed” (Kolb & Kolb 2013:6). They continue on this theme stating that “conversation is the most ubiquitous and common form of experiential learning. Indeed, one could say that the purpose of conversation is learning (Kolb & Kolb 2017:35). Hasibuan et al (2016) considered that “Kolb’s learning styles is the embryo of Honey and Mumford learning styles” Hasibuan et al (2016:66).

2.8.3 Honey and Mumford

Honey and Mumford looked at learning styles ‘based upon the work of Kolb’ (Mobbs, 2010b). Honey (2006) states “despite your learning being largely responsible for who you are (you are what you learn) it is probably something you take for granted. Once we have left formal education, we continue to learn every day without necessarily realising it” (Honey, 2006:1). Baharudin et al continue the discussion when they say “Honey and Mumford define learning styles as a description of attitudes and behaviours that determine the likelihood of way of individual learning” Baharudin et al (2017:18). Aljaberi (2015) considers that “an individual learns in two ways: first, through the process of learning and secondly, through his experience.” (Aljaberi 2015:155). Honey and Mumford identified four distinct learning styles or preferences:

1. Activist
2. Theorist
3. Pragmatist
4. Reflector

Activists are those people who learn by doing, theorists learn by understanding the theories behind the action, pragmatists like to see things in the real world to see if they work, while reflectors learn by looking at what happens and by observing - they avoid involvement and collect data/information from the side-lines.

Rosewell (2005) looks at the negative side of the Honey and Mumford model. He suggests that activists learn least when:

1. Listening to lectures or reading long explanations
2. Reading, writing and thinking on their own
3. Analysing and interpreting lots of data
4. Following precise instructions

(Rosewell, 2005:1)

Reflectors adopt a different approach and learn the least when:

1. Forced to take a lead in a group
2. Doing things without preparation
3. Rushed by deadlines

(Roswell 2005:3)

Theorists learn least when:

1. They are in situations that emphasise emotions and feelings
2. Activities are unstructured or ambiguous
3. Asked to act without knowing the principles or concepts involved

(Rosewell 2005:3)

Pragmatists learn least when:

- 1 There is no immediate practical benefit
- 2 There are no clear guidelines on how to do it.
- 3 It appears to be all theory.

(Rosewell, 2005:4)

Acculturation explains the process of cultural and psychological change that occurs when a meeting occurs between people from different cultures. This may be within one large country or from different countries around the world. It is unlikely that someone from Asia would wear the same clothing in the UK as worn in their home country (different climates). They would also have to master the English language to be able to communicate. Wikipedia discusses four acculturation strategies:

1. Assimilation – assimilation occurs when individuals adopt the cultural norms of a dominant or host culture, over their original culture.
2. Separation – Separation occurs when individuals reject the dominant or host culture in favour of preserving their culture of origin. Separation is often facilitated by immigration to ethnic enclaves.
3. Integration – Integration occurs when individuals are able to adopt the cultural norms of the dominant host culture while maintaining their culture of origin. Integration leads to, and is often synonymous with, biculturalism.
4. Marginalization – Marginalization occurs when individuals reject both their culture of origin and the dominant host culture.

(Wikipedia acculturation)

Rudmin (2003) includes in his list of reasons for the importance of acculturation “new technology for high speed, high-volume transportation and communication make it increasingly easy for cultures to be in contact worldwide” (Rudmin, 2003:3).

Berry (1997) states that “the central aim of the field of cross-cultural psychology has been to demonstrate the influence that cultural factors have on the development and display of individual human behaviour” (Berry, 1997:6). He goes on to discuss, “what happens to individuals who have developed in one cultural context, when they attempt to live in a new cultural context” (Berry, 1997:6). Berry then examines adaptation, stating “In its most general sense, adaptation refers to changes that take place in individuals or groups in response to environmental demands” (Berry, 1997:13).

2.8.4 Sense Making

Fellows and Liu (2016) talk about uncertainty and state that “Individuals are continuously concerned with the question, ‘what is going on?’ Hence whether people are involved in social networks, organisational settings, or in life in general, they are individually engaged in the processes of sense making” (Fellows and Liu, 2016):247). They develop this thought further by stating “Thus in academic terms, sense making is a process of social construction that occurs when discrepant cues interrupt individuals' ongoing activity, and involves the retrospective development of plausible meanings that rationalise what people are doing” (Fellows and Liu, 2016:247). This is a real challenge for UK companies when operating overseas if they have not researched the local culture. Referring back to Enron in India, the area of local culture was a contributory factor and cost them dearly as they did not follow the Indian way of operating. Holden (2002) states that “sense making is an important consideration both in the preparation and the analysis of the case studies, especially in cases where informants come from several countries and discuss highly subjectively their experiences and impressions of a multiplicity of contrasting cross-cultural interactions” (Holden, 2002:92).

Holden defines sense making as “a social process taking place within a community that is viewed as a network of intersubjectively shared meanings sustained through the development and use of a common language and everyday social interaction. Thus, studies of actor’s cultural sense-making should focus on collective negotiations and discussions. Such an approach would highlight features of the very processes in which cultural interpretations are created, legitimized and institutionalized” (Holden, 2002:93). Murnighan (1993) suggests “it is the job of the sense maker to convert a world of experience into an intelligible world. That person’s job is not to look for one true picture that corresponds to a pre-existing, performed reality. The picture of sense making that emerges is not one of the tidy world of Mastermind. Instead, the picture that is suggested is ‘that there is nobody here but us scratching around trying to make our experience and our world as comprehensible to ourselves

in the best way we can” (Murnighan, 1993:15). The matter of sense making is complicated, as the world does not stand still and although at one moment in time events might suggest the matter has been resolved, the world moves on and the variables change, so this one eureka moment has gone as other challenges arrive. Weick (1995) explores the difference the same comment can have in the East and the West. He refers to a conversation involving two people, one Japanese and the other he categorises as a Westerner. He discusses the impact of the phrase ‘making a decision’ and suggests that in the West the goal is to answer the question whereas in the East it is to define the question. He goes on to say “The whole process is focused upon finding out what the decision is really about not what the decision should be” (Weick, 1995:15). Murnighan (1993) defines what sense making is stating “it’s the job of the sense maker to convert a world of experience into an intelligible world” (Murnighan, 1993:14). Klein et al.(2006) explain that “sense making has been defined as how people make sense out of their experience in the world” (Klein et al., 2006:70). They suggest that sense making has been carried out for years, using concepts which have been in existence for years and include five areas in their discussion: creativity, curiosity, comprehension, mental modelling, and situation awareness. However, they then indicate that, although it includes all the five areas “sense making is a motivated continuous effort to understand connections (which can be among people, places and events) in order to anticipate their trajectories and act effectively” (Klein et al., 2006:71). They then suggest that “sense making does not always have clear beginning and ending points” (Klein et al., 2006:72). Klein et al. looked at weather forecasts and some of the maps employed to convey the information to television viewers. They say “SatRad (satellite-radar) images are perhaps adequate to convey to the public where rain might occur, but if you asked a forecaster to generate a forecast on such an image the most likely response would be show me the data” (Klein et al., 2006:71). This would suggest there are different levels of sense making.

Ancona (2012) provides another definition of sense making. “Sense making involves—and indeed requires—an articulation of the unknown, because, sometimes trying to explain the unknown is the only way to know how much you understand it” (Ancona, 2012:4).

Ancona uses a model to try to give an indication as to how sense making is used in a gambling casino situation as follows:

Imagine you are milling about in a large casino with the top figures of high tech. . . . Over at one table, a game is starting called Multimedia. Over at another is a game called Web Services. There are many such tables. You sit at one.

"How much to play?" you ask.

"Three billion," the croupier replies.

"Who'll be playing?" you ask.

"We won't know until they show up," he replies.

"What are the rules?"

"These will emerge as the game unfolds," says the croupier.

"What are the odds of winning?" you wonder.

"We can't say," responds the house.

"Do you still want to play?"

This could be considered similar to the business world, being involved in the unknowable, unpredictable and at the same time trying to make some sense of what is occurring.

Cultural sense-making model

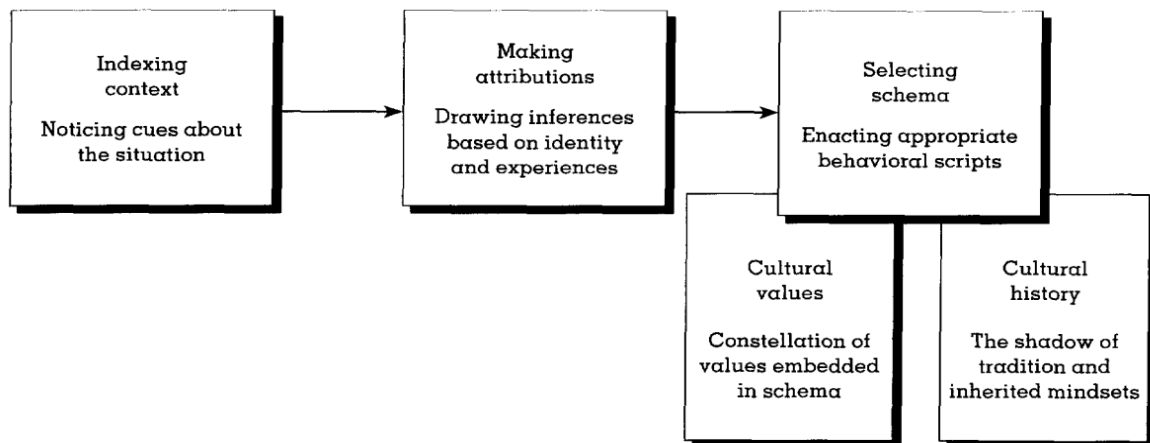


Figure 11: Cultural Sense-making Model
(Osland and Bird, 2000:70)

The first phase of this model begins when you start to notice that things are not quite as expected, and clues to the reason why start to appear. It then moves into phase two, where experience has an input, and finally to the cultural values and history. Osland and Bird talk about this model, starting with the indexing context. They explore the relationship an American executive involved in the Second World War would have with a Japanese executive at that time compared to today's young Japanese and American executives who had not had any experience of the war. In box two, making attributions.

they suggest “by watching and working with bosses, for example, we develop scripts for how to act when we take on that role ourselves” (Osland and Bird, 2000:71). In the final phase, selecting schema, they state “schemas are cultural scripts a pattern of social interaction that is characteristic of a particular cultural group” (Osland and Bird, 2000:71). Cultural values and history relate to embedded values which may go back many years.

Louis (1980) suggests that when someone is faced with a nonsurprising situation in their normal day to day workings, they just act. She says “in familiar, nonsurprising situations, individuals seem to operate in a loosely preprogrammed, nonconscious way, guided by cognitive scripts” (Louis, 1980:239). In the early days of my company, when we started to communicate with overseas clients we would just assume they acted like business people in the UK, and it was not until something unexpected happened that we began to look deeper into this area, in effect trying to make sense of what was occurring. Louis continues, saying “the discrepancy between predicted and actual outcomes, that is between anticipations and experience, produces a state of tension” (Louis, 1980:240). She goes on to state that activities are repetitive and that it is only when something unexpected occurs that further investigation as to why is instigated, saying “discrepant events, or surprises, trigger a need for explanation, or post-diction, and correspondingly, for a process through which interpretations of discrepancies are developed” (Louis, 1980:241). She suggests that when making sense of the unexpected people rely on a number of inputs which include, their past experience and “general personal characteristics, including predispositions to attribute causality to self, others, fate etc” (Louis, 1980:241). Louis then goes on to talk about “the individuals set of cultural assumptions or interpretive schemes, that is internalizations context specific dictionaries” (Louis, 1980:241) and states that “In addition, information and interpretations from others in the situation contribute to the sense making process” (Louis, 1980:241).

2.8.5 Summary

Kolb’s research into the learning cycle impacted upon the author as he worked in the Far East constantly reflecting on the new knowledge gained and revising his way of working. Honey and Mumford looked at learning and stated that we learn every day without realising it. Making sense of this new knowledge is a new challenge. The goal was to adapt to a new culture when necessary, acculturation while overseas.

Cultural Intelligence incorporates this new knowledge as it is understood as the ability to behave appropriately in different environments.

2.8.6 Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Many individuals are exposed to different cultures due to the ease of travel to foreign countries and the use of modern day technology such as VOIP (Voice over the internet protocol). Ng et al. (2012) state that “although these challenges were largely constrained within the expatriate population 1 to 2 decades ago, rapid globalization has resulted in a much larger group of employees being faced with cross-cultural issues in daily work” Ng et al. (2012;29). According to Crowne (2013) “Additionally, organisations often initiate expatriation, which is where an individual lives and works outside his or her country of citizenship” Crowne (2013:5). National culture was defined by Hofstede as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1994:1). Blasco et al. (2012) suggests that CQ is a similar system to Hofstede’s model. They state that “CQ is also conceptually closer than is immediately apparent to frameworks such as Hofstede which seeks to classify cultural differences in advance of intercultural encounters” (Hofstede, 2001, cited in Blasco et al., 2012:230). Trompenaars and Hampden–Turner (1998) state that “a useful way of thinking about where culture comes from is the following: culture is the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas” (Trompenaars and Hampden–Turner, 1998:6). Crowne (2013) states that natural culture exposure is defined as “experiences related to a region that aid in developing a familiarity or understanding of the norms, values and beliefs of that region” (Crowne, 2013:7). Crowne goes on to say that “It seems highly plausible that being exposed to other cultures through experiences abroad enhances cultural and emotional learning” (Crowne, 2013:7). However, Ng et al. (2012) warn against friendship networks comprising people who tend to form connections only with others who are like them in characteristics such as socioeconomic status, values, beliefs, or attitudes overseas. They state that it was found that “CQ negatively predicated homophily in friendship networks” (Ng et al., 2012:43). However, in more formal networks, where there is a tendency of individuals to collect in diverse groups “heterophily was influenced more by indicators of competency such as rank and tenure than by CQ” (Ng et al., 2012:43).

As Hall emphasized, “mental capabilities for cultural understanding and motivation must be complemented with the ability to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions, based on cultural values of specific settings” (Hall, 1959 cited in Ng et al., 2012:33). The impact of international trade has grown over the years as companies look overseas for possible customers, so gaining an understanding of other cultures has become important to ensure misunderstandings do not arise. Dyne et al. (2012) claim that cultural Intelligence (CQ) “has gained increasing attention from researchers and practitioners due to its contemporary relevance to globalization, international management and workforce diversification” (Dyne et al., 2012:295). Thomas et al. (2008) define CQ as “a system of interacting knowledge and skills, linked by cultural metacognition, that allows people to adapt to, select, and shape the cultural aspects of their environment” (Thomas et al., 2008:127). Rose

and Subramanian (2008) state “CQ is defined as a persons capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts” (Rose and Subramaniam, 2008:506). Sternberg proposes four “interrelated ways to understand individual-level intelligence: metacognitive intelligence, cognitive intelligence, motivational intelligence and behavior intelligence” Sternberg (cited in Dyne et al., 2012:297). Metacognitive intelligence reflects the awareness and understanding of one’s own thought process, whether it is possible to learn something, change or forget it and stay in one’s comfort zone, and therefore “The simplest strategy is to hold onto our beliefs even though new experiences challenge them” (Blasco et al., 2012:238). Rose and Subramaniam (2008) states that “meta-cognitive CQ reflects the process individuals use to acquire and understand cultural knowledge” (Rose and Subramaniam, 2008:506). Cognitive intelligence is a mental capacity that includes involving the ability to reason, plan and solve problems, thinking and reasoning. Rose and Subramaniam continue that “cognitive CQ reflects knowledge of norms, practices and conventions in different cultures” (Rose and Subramaniam, 2008:506). Dyne et al. (2012) add to the dialogue by saying “metacognition and cognition are mental capabilities that represent cognitive functioning of the individual” (Dyne et al., 2012:297). Motivational Intelligence is the study of what causes people to act and/or react when they find themselves in certain life situations/experiences. In the current research the focus relates to cultural situations. Rose and Subramaniam (2008) state that motivational CQ “reflects magnitude and direction of energy applied towards learning about and functioning in cross-cultural situations” (Rose and Subramaniam, 2008:506), while Dyne et al. (2012) suggest that “motivation is another mental capability and acknowledges the cognitive processes of drive and choice as another important locus of intelligence” (Dyne et al., 2012:297). This leads us to the final form of intelligence, that of behavioural intelligence. Behavioural intelligence is a set of skills and abilities used to select and execute, at will, the right behaviours in different situations related to cultural differences. Rose et al. (2008) describe this ability as involving “the capacity to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions when interacting with people from different cultures” (Rose and Subramaniam, 2008:506). Dyne et al. (2012) comment that “behavioral intelligence refers to the behavioral capacity to flex motor skills and display a range of verbal and nonverbal actions” (Dyne et al., 2012:297).

To summarise, as people sojourn around the globe, greater importance should be placed upon gaining an understanding of local cultures. Just because a procedure works in the UK does not mean it will have the same impact/outcome in another country, with its own culture. Dyne et al. (2012) talk about the different levels of importance put upon time and relationship-building in different parts of the world, and suggest that it might be necessary that a “high CQ manager would plan for and allow extra time for the decision making process” (Dyne et al., 2012:300). They go on to state that “managers in multicultural business context need to know how to motivate people from different cultures” (Dyne et al., 2012:302). These two examples indicate the potential for misunderstandings to arise and the

consequences that may follow. Blasco et al (2012) suggests that “culture is a set of real and shared rules, norms and values that goes beyond the individual and that is passed on from generation to generation. Cultures do change but their core remains the same” (Blasco et al., 2012:236). They also say that CQ “is understood as the ability to behave appropriately in cross cultural settings” (Blasco et al., 2012 :230). Social skills learnt in one country may be ineffective in another, thus CQ is considered a step forward “because it supposedly enables its bearers to transcend place-specific knowledge and behaviours” (Blasco et al., 2012:231). Rose and Suramaniam (2008) continue this theme by suggesting “the international assignee has to be able to switch easily from one strategy to another, because the familiar ways of handling things will not necessarily work in a new cultural environment” (Rose and Subramaniam, 2008:513). Ng et al. (2012) propose that “a firm’s global cultural capital, including global mind-set and organisational routines that promote global mind-set, should promote the development of employee CQ” (Ng et al., 2012:39). Thomas et al. (2008) introduce a word of warning when they talk about CQ and cross-cultural dialogue, stating that it does not preclude some “highly culturally intelligent individuals from being otherwise motivated, for example for individual gain at a partners expense” (Thomas et al., 2008:127).

If you were able to imagine the perfect international executive, one of the many qualities they would possess would be the ability to adapt to every imaginable culture context. “Like all good chameleons, s/he would blend effortlessly into the surroundings, knowing what to wear and how to behave to fit in” (Blasco et al., 2012:232).

2.8.7 Summary.

According to Deardorff (2009) “Every serious account of the major forces transforming our world today includes the word globalization” (Deardorff, 2009:ix). As the gurus such as Hall, Trompenaars, Hofstede etc. indicate, cultures across the globe set a pattern as to how activities should be processed in each country. There may even be subcultures within a country, but for the purpose of this research the focus has been on a country, ignoring the subcultures, as this is outside the scope of the current research and would have to be the focus of a separate research project. Although some of the examples in the existing research are a little dated, such as Hall talking about the Americans in Japan in the Second World War, the information helps to explain why people in Japan behave in the way they do.

Continual advancements in technology have enabled people to communicate from almost anywhere in the world. Thanks to this technology, when an email arrives or the telephone rings in our UK office it can be from someone located close by or from a person thousands of miles away. Deardorff (2009) gives the example of how development has helped hospitals in the USA, stating that “Polish doctors

can analyse CAT scans for hospitals located in New York City" (Deardorff, 2009:ix). Advancement in travel including faster trains, planes etc. has increased the possibility of personal contact across national borders. Tourism has increased over the years, and you only have to look at the figures publicised by the different countries to see that more people are travelling to other countries each year and experiencing the different world the people live in (culture). Thailand for example had a considerable number of visitors in 2016, with one Thai tourist website stating that "2016 saw further, but less prominent increase in arrivals to 32,58 million" (Thailand Tourists 2016).

This interaction, whether via technology or by physical presence, brings some surprises to those uneducated in culture. As a person develops from birth they are indoctrinated/programmed by their family into the local 'does and don'ts'. As they grow, they then move into their local community, and the unwritten and written rules appear which in the main are adhered to by the population and are, in effect, moulded and patterned by culture. Hence, people who grow up in different parts of the world accept different ideas and cultures. When two people of different cultures interact, each uses the information that has been programmed within them, which in turn can lead to misinterpretation.

Hall attempts to understand why this misinterpretation occurs. He looks at many aspects, including the use of space. The Japanese have a word for space 'ma' whereas in the UK a space is just what it says, 'a space'. Wikipedia defines 'ma' as not being "something that is created by compositional elements; it takes place in the imagination of the human who experiences these elements" (Wikipedia negative space). During overseas travel and meetings with people from overseas I have noticed some people like to stand well away from me while others like to get remarkably close. In some cases, I find this very close proximity uncomfortable, but that is just my English cultural programming. Hall uses the term 'proxemics' to explore this area (Hall, 1969:1). His research has found that people from different cultures consider that you enter someone else's territory at a different time. For instance, some cultures consider that you enter someone's office as soon as you open the door, while others believe you enter it only once you are fully inside.

Trompenaars et al. also looked at culture, but from a different stance. They contacted 50,000 managers around the globe and developed a model to try to present the facts they had gathered. Hofstede et al. completed a similar exercise but used the worldwide organisation IBM. They investigated why a manager in one country acts differently to a manager of a similar level in a different country. Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) built on the Hofstede model.

Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumford (1986) reviewed the way people learn. The Kolb learning cycle shows how people build on existing knowledge. Honey and Mumford (1986) identified four distinct learning styles or preferences.

Having looked at the models, the question then arises as to how you make sense of all the information. Yagi and Kleinberg (2011) suggest that “the interpretive ethnographer seeks to comprehend the ‘lived experience’ of members of a given group of people, to grasp ‘insider’ cultural knowledge or sense-making that helps guide observed recurrent patterned cultural behaviour” (Yagi and Kleinberg, 2011:11).

A misunderstanding in culture can have a major impact. Even Bill Gates with his wealth and advisers can, on the odd occasion, make a mistake as he did in South Korea. The Americans (Enron) in India also fell into the culture trap. The Indian negotiators wished to get to know the people they were potentially going to work with and wanted time to establish the relationships whereas the Americans adopted a time-is-money approach which led to a collapse in negotiations.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is defined by Thomas et al. (2008) as “a system of interacting knowledge and skills, linked by cultural metacognition, that allows people to adapt to, select, and shape the cultural aspects of their environment” (Thomas et al., 2008:127). Cultural intelligence is an important aspect which can be helpful to individuals who interact with people from different cultural backgrounds and aid in the management of cultural differences. The vignettes provided later in this document show how cultural intelligence can help to prevent misunderstandings. Vignette 1 reflects how a lack of understanding can create an unfortunate incident. Vignette 2 goes on to describe floor numbers and the importance of numbers in different parts of the world. What we see in the West and what someone from the Far East will see when looking at the same scene is discussed in Vignette 3. The vignettes continue by looking at cultural differences East to West. Vignette 7 was one of the last times I travelled to the Far East and I had already been exposed to the idea of ‘saving face’. The knowledge gained from the previous exposure had an impact upon the action taken and appeared to be well received. The final vignette highlights the lack of understanding of foreign culture here in the UK. Crowne (2013) talks about people who travel overseas and are exposed to different cultures saying “Individuals who are exposed to foreign cultures may likely learn what is emotionally and culturally accepted in that culture” (Crowne, 2013:7). This being ‘exposed to foreign culture’ is shown in the actions taken in vignettes 1 and 7.

The Oxford Business Group reported on an address given by the King of Thailand. It is interesting to see a different emphasis from focusing on growth to survival. This was partly due to the King’s Buddhist beliefs.

In December 1997, the king's birthday address to the nation took issue with the then-fashionable description of the South-East Asian economies as the 'Asian tigers'. What was important, he said, was not being a tiger, but having 'a sufficient economy'. What this meant was that Thailand should aim to have enough to meet its needs, without being extravagant. This became known as a foundation speech for the idea of the sufficiency economy. Drawing on Thailand's deep Buddhist tradition, this concept emphasises the 'middle way' – the importance of balance. In Buddhism, this middle way, or path, advocates the avoidance of the extremes of sensual pleasure on the one hand, and ascetic denial on the other. The middle, or eight-fold, path steers the individual to calm and enlightenment through a world in which everything is in a constant state of change and flux.

(Oxford Business Group, 2017)

The King was a highly revered person and going against his beliefs would have created a major barrier to working in Thailand.

Chapter 3

3.0.0 Methodology

3.1.0 Introduction and Overview

At large events in the UK such as musical evenings and sports events, where large groups gather to see an activity, the people in attendance feel that there is a common bond, they may not all be supporting the same team but they are all there for the same reason, i.e. to watch a sporting event or listen to music. When the orchestra finishes playing a piece of music everyone claps simultaneously, and when your team scores you cheer at the same time. There is a type of bond, whether it is music or sport. You know how to behave if you need to move from your seat, perhaps an excuse me will suffice. However, this can all change if you attend an event overseas. On a recent visit to Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, my wife and I were exploring the city, wandering along the streets and alleys in no really planned way when suddenly we heard a commotion further along the street. Our immediate thoughts were that it must be a carnival procession or something similar although we both considered it odd that no one at the hotel we were staying at had mentioned the event as all the staff we came into contact with spoke excellent English and appeared friendly, suggesting places to visit. Then, we both noticed the police becoming quite active, which gave us a little cause for concern. It was our first visit to Prague, so we were a little uncertain what to expect from the police but we both agreed their activities were making us feel uncomfortable. However, like an Englishman abroad I stood my ground waiting for the procession, which we could now see in the distance, to pass by. By now we had also been joined by other tourists all wondering what was occurring. As more police arrived, I suggested to my wife that we should move a little way down the road to where there was a side street which was connected with other streets, an escape route if necessary. Perhaps I was being over-cautious, but better safe than sorry. The procession got closer; yes, it appeared to be a carnival as there were people on floats, music, lots of people walking around the floats and generally a lot of noise - but why the rather large number of police? We were still not happy! Then the procession was in front of us and all was revealed. It was a large demonstration against the government's policy on drugs, including cannabis, wanting them all legalised. Although the whole thing was very peaceful, we were glad we had the escape route, and it was not long before we were finding our way around the back streets of Prague. So, from our expectations of a nice carnival procession we found ourselves almost getting embroiled in a demonstration supporting the legalisation of drugs. The Open Stax College discusses a similar situation when talking about being in a foreign country, stating that "finding yourself in a crowd moving down the street. You may have trouble figuring out what is happening" (Open Stax College, 2013:10). This event was one of the factors that led me into the area of sociology,

deciding to study people and societies, and trying to figure out why they acted as they did and what was the outcome. The Open Stax goes on to state that “Sociologists try to identify these general patterns by examining the behaviour of large groups of people living in the same society and experiencing the same societal pressures” (Open Stax College, 2013:11).

3.2.0 The research problem and selecting the methodology.

The aim of this chapter is to describe and justify the research methodology to be used, in order to probe cultural differences and how they impact upon the business community in the UK and the Far East. The goal of the research project is to identify some cultural phenomena that have an impact upon the business processes when comparing the UK workplace with that of the Far East, and to determine why misunderstandings occur. The focus of this review will be the author, in effect self-ethnography, as he examines a selection of business experiences involving people from overseas countries presented via the use of vignettes which all relate to cultural differences. The methodology evolved, and is informed by, self-reflection both in the moment and afterwards. Quicke (2010) discusses his research journey and his reflection on his experiences into his own practices. He states that “as a critical reflective practitioner, I saw myself as writing an auto ethnographic story” (Quicke, 2010:1) and this thesis will echo his experience which will be illustrated via the use of vignettes “based on fieldnotes taken as events happen” (Humphreys 2005:840).

Gill and Johnson (2003) state that “despite the variety of approaches to management research they all in essence share a problem-solving sequence that may serve as a systematic check for anyone undertaking research at whatever level” (Gill and Johnson, 2000:3). To try to achieve the goal, the research will be carried out through rigorous collection and analysis of data using qualitative case study methodology. The two major accepted approaches to exploring different activities use qualitative or quantitative methodology. In this research a qualitative approach is taken which is discussed. The chapter moves on to look at the research design and methodology, focussing on the means of triangulating the data collection. The selection of the people chosen to take part in the data collection and the management of data are discussed. The chapter then describes the researcher's role and position dealing with the ethical issues that arise in the study. The final section provides a chapter summary and conclusion.

3.4.0 Why the problem is difficult to research

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner state “culture is like gravity: you do not experience it until you jump six feet into the air” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:5). If you cannot see culture, how do you know there is some force at work impacting upon the way people operate? In some Far Eastern countries you can see some cultural differences, perhaps the way people dress or approach each other, but there is a lot more going on hidden away; like an iceberg, you can see some of it but there is a considerable amount of the iceberg below the water. Hofstede, Hofstede and Monkov (2010) suggest that people are programmed by the environment they grow up in. Therefore, a person who grows up in Malaysia, for instance, will receive a different internal programming to someone who grows up in the UK. They state that “the sources of one’s mental programs lie within the social environment which one grew up and collected one’s life experiences” (Hofstede et al., 2010:5). Marx (2001) explores the introduction of western management styles into other cultures. She states “other fundamental problems were caused by the application of western management procedures to other cultures. Examples included performance-related pay in Spain and empowerment in the Far East” (Marx, 2001:40). As the findings of this research will show, at times what I expected to happen and what happened were both interesting and frustrating.

Hall (1959) discusses the topic of time and the impact it has. In the UK time plays an important role, so if a meeting is scheduled to start at 10.00 hrs everyone is expected to be ready to start at 10.00 hrs. However, as this research will demonstrate time does not necessarily have the same importance in the Far East. Hall also talks about the term ‘long term’, stating that “for us a ‘long time’ can be almost anything – ten or twenty years, two or three months, a few weeks or even a couple of days. The South Asian, however feels that it is perfectly realistic to think of a “long time” in terms of thousands of years or even an endless period” (Hall, 1959:8). Hofstede et al. (2002) state that “cross-cultural misunderstanding is a much-underestimated cause of trouble” (Hofstede et al., 2002:xviii). Meyer (2014) supports this comment when she states “unless we know how to decode other cultures and avoid easy-to-fall-into cultural traps, we are easy prey to misunderstanding, needless conflict, and ultimate failure” (Meyer, 2014:12).

One of the main problems with researching culture is that you ‘don’t know what you don’t know’. Reflecting on my business and private experiences it is possible to see areas where I have totally misread some situations; some of these are discussed in the vignettes. As this research has developed, I have begun to understand how my overseas colleagues are likely to respond to me; however, the learning will never stop as different situations arise each day which have to be addressed and processed.

3.4.1 Method appropriate for management research

Saunders Research Onion

Saunders developed a model which he argues will help with the way data is collected to answer a research question. His model was named the 'research onion'.

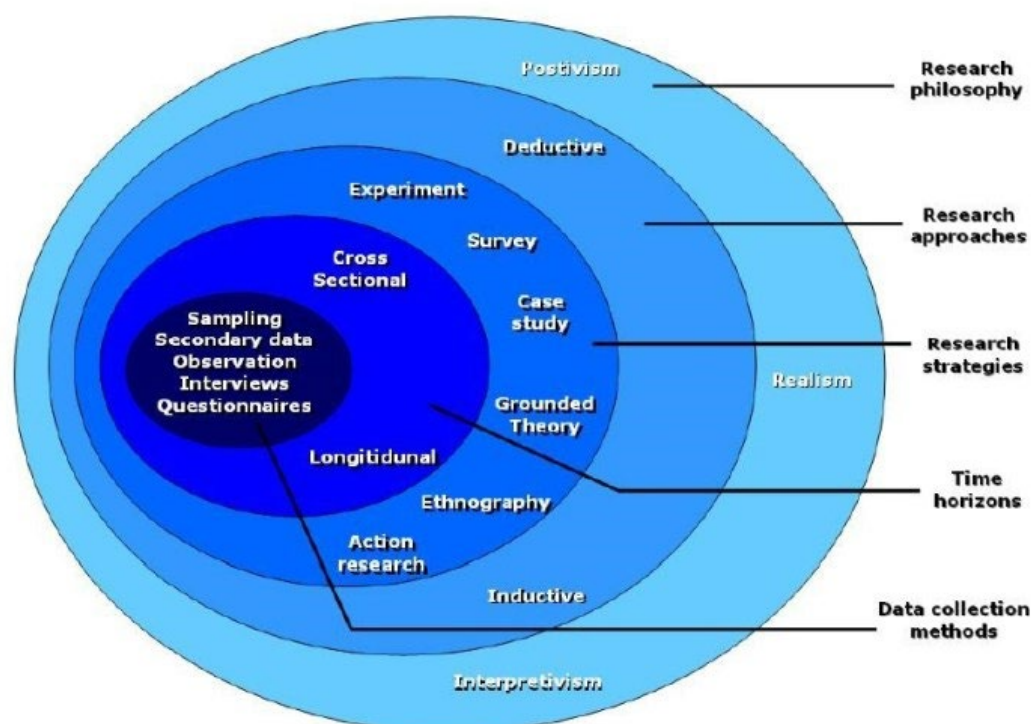


Figure 12. Saunders Research Onion. (Saunders et al 2003:83)

The concept of the onion came from the idea of the structured process of peeling. You start at the first layer peeling away each layer until you arrive at the core. The first layer is concerned with the set of beliefs being investigated in the context of ontology and epistemology. The second layer demonstrates the approaches examined when considering how to structure the research, deductive or inductive. Moving to the third layer it considers the research strategy. How to collect the data. The fourth layer is concerned with qualitative or quantitative methodologies. Moving to the penultimate section it requires looking at whether a longitudinal or cross-sectional approach should be taken. The final layer of the onion looks at the data collection and analysis. These areas are explored further in the following pages.

3.5.0 Research Philosophy

3.5.1 Ontology

Defining ontology, Al-Saadi (2014) states that “ontology concerns our beliefs about the kind and nature of reality and the social world (what exists)” Al Saadi (2014):1. The word is derived from two Greek words Onto = existence of being real and Logia = science or study. For example, what exists? Stars yes, unicorns no. Lofgren (2013) discusses the topic of ontology on YouTube and states “ontology is the study of what exists in general”. He goes on to give an example, “are physical parts more important than immaterial concepts, for example are physical objects such as shoes more real than the concept of walking. In terms of what exists what is the relationship between shoes and walking”? (Lofgren K 2013). The video continues and gives a second example which relates to social ontology and states it is “to understand and describe the underlying structures that affect individuals and groups” which is similar to what this research has done.

This research was instigated as my business developed, in order to try to obtain an appreciation of how overseas colleagues would react to different requests, and it was not long after starting the research I realised that, in effect, I was the one under the microscope as I tried to understand what was happening as the business grew in the Far East. In this case my ontological approach would be to socially construct and understand the outcomes by examining my actions in response to these events which were new to me, as they involved this new sticky substance called overseas culture. Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence or reality, as well as the basic categories of being and their relations. Hussey and Hussey (1997) state that “with the ontological assumption, you must decide whether you consider the world is objective and external to the researcher, or socially constructed and only understood by examining the perceptions of the human actors” (Hussey and Hussey, 1997:49). Ontology refers to what sort of “things” exist in the social world and assumptions about the form and nature of that social reality. It is these “things” I will be exploring during this research.

3.5.2 Epistemology

Epistemology poses the following questions? “What is the relationship between the knower and the known? How do we know what we know? What counts as knowledge?” (Tuli F 2010 : 99) From an “interpretivist constructivist perspective, the theoretical framework for most qualitative research see the world as constructed , interpreted and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and with wider social systems” (Tuli F 2010:100).

Al-Saadi (2014) suggests epistemology refers to “the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired” (Al-Saadi 2014 :9). As the research developed it became clear I would take an interpretivist approach which as Al-Saadi states would result in a “close relationship between the researcher and the social world i.e. the two are not totally independent but impact one another” (Al Saadi 2014: 9).

The epistemological approach taken in this research shows that rather than adopting the stance used in natural science, where knowledge is considered hard and real, it will be conducted in the social science arena where knowledge is considered a softer experience.

Eldabi et al. (2002) discuss this area. The term epistemology refers to beliefs about the way in which knowledge is constructed. When considering knowledge, it is important to recognise that there are two kinds, one being hard and real such as that found in the natural sciences as against the softer experiences found in the social sciences. According to Eldabi et al., “The view that knowledge is ‘hard’ objective and tangible suggests that a researcher adopt the role of observer. However to view knowledge as personal, subjective and unique in nature, requires that researchers become involved with their subjects” (Eldabi et al., 2002:64). Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and ways of knowing and learning about social reality and it is expected this new knowledge will help me understand what occurs in the Far East.

3.5.3 The grounded theory controversy

Grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) is often thought of as the best example of the inductive approach, although this conclusion would be too simplistic. It is better to think of it as “‘theory building’ through a combination of induction and deduction” (Saunders et al., 2003:93).

It is important in developing any research project that the deductive and inductive approaches are reviewed, as this will have a direct impact on the research and the research strategy. From a deductive position the researcher will use existing theory to develop a way forward for the research project and the way the data is collected and analysed. In the case of an inductive approach the researcher will develop the theory as the project progresses.

3.5.4 Deductive approach

A deductive research methodology entails the development of a structure, both conceptual and theoretical, at the start of the field research. As the action taken in this thesis did not follow these guidelines an inductive approach was explored and is discussed in the following sections.

3.5.5 Inductive approach

The process adopted for induction is the reverse of deduction in that it involves moving from the field research, the analysis of the data, to see if there are any similarities which can then be turned into a theory. Therefore, theory is the outcome of induction.

One position put forward to support the use of inductive studies is that “.....persons are distinguished from things in that persons experience the world, whereas things behave in the world” (Laing cited in Gill and Johnson, 2000:41). Johnson and Duberley (2000) develop this theme further when they state:

Because the subject matters of the natural sciences do not have subjective capacities, the natural scientist can quite legitimately impose a priori external logic upon its behaviour in order to explain it – a process called ‘erklaren’. But the social world cannot be understood by excluding the subjective basis of action. It follows that social science research must entail analyses of human action generated inductively from a posteriori understanding of the interpretations deployed (i.e. culture) by the actors who are being studied (Johnson and Duberley, 2000:34).

Laing and Johnson and Duberley highlight the difference between the subject matter in the natural and social sciences. They indicate that in the natural science ‘things’, as Laing states, behave in the world and can in some circumstances be explained by previous research or a person’s experience in the world and therefore this has to be considered in any research.

At an early stage in the research it became apparent that an inductive approach would be implemented which is where the researcher begins with as few preconceptions as possible, allowing theory to emerge from the data. Inductive reasoning can be referred to as a bottom up approach. This is where I will use my observations to create a picture of the phenomenon being studied.

3.5.6 Review of Qualitative Strategy

Saunders et al summarise qualitative data in the follow matrix.

Qualitative data

Based on meanings expressed through words

Collection results in non-standardised data
requiring classification into categories'

Analysis conducted through the use of
conceptualisation

Table 10 : *Qualitative Data* (Saunders et al., 2003:378).

This research study will be conducted using a qualitative methodology. The data will be collected predominantly via situations the author has had to address during his normal business week, and visits to countries located in the Far East. It is expected this approach will enable the researcher to be able to demonstrate the differences in working practices between the two cultures and contribute to the existing knowledge on this topic. Elwell (2003) makes reference to Durkheim's research when he states that "traditional cultures experienced a high level of social and moral integration, there was little individuation, and most behaviours were governed by social norms, which were usually embodied in religion" (Elwell, 2003:2). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) assert that "the province of qualitative research, accordingly, is the world of lived experience, for this is where individual belief and action intersect with culture" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018:2).

Eldabi et al.(2002) purport that the debate on which methodology to use is continuing stating that "So far there is no 'perfect' research methodology, as there is no universally agreed methodology" (Eldabi et al., 2002:64). Saunders et al.(2003) suggest that "to be able to capture the richness and fullness associated with qualitative data they cannot be collected in a standard way, like that of quantitative data" (Saunders et al., 2003:378).

The interpretative approach tries to understand the subject from the participant's point of view, looking at areas which in many cases would include the softer issues and using a qualitative stance. Therefore, data collected from experiments which can be replicated would be expected to be reported using a quantitative format, whereas data collected from interviews would be presented in a qualitative format.

Eldabi et al. (2002) comment that, "quantitative research places emphasis on methodology, procedure and statistical measures of validity. Quantitative research methods also rely on the measurement

and analysis of statistical data, to determine relationships between one set of data to another” (Eldabi et al., 2002:65).

This research will study human behaviour and the findings will be recorded using a qualitative format. In support of the use of a qualitative methodology, Eldabi et al. (2002) state that “Furthermore, quantitative research is considered unable to take account of the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences. Thus, the principle of applying a scientific method of the study of people is questioned, which suggests the suitability of a qualitative approach” (Eldabi et al., 2002:66). Guba and Lincoln (1994) support the use of a qualitative approach when they say “human behaviour unlike that of physical objects cannot be understood without reference to the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities” (Guba and Lincoln 1994:106).

The field research contained in this document is based on desk research, interviews, observations, and conversations which would suggest that the epistemological stance should be that of a qualitative approach.

3.5.7 Emic V Etic

Emic and etic are terms used by anthropologists when referring to human behaviour. They are used in cultural anthropology when looking at the fieldwork completed, and the results obtained. The emic approach recognises that people from a culture are often too close to what they are doing to be able to process the information impartially. Morris et al (1999) state that “The emic or inside perspective follows in the tradition of psychological studies of folk beliefs (Wundt, 1888) and in cultural anthropologists' striving to understand culture from the native's point of view" (Malinowski, 1922 cited in Morris et al (1999) :781). The emic approach looks at how people think, how they see their world, the rules they live by and how they imagine and explain things. Lu (2012) states that “Emic researchers assume that the best way to understand a culture is as an integrated system. The endeavour of cultural anthropologists to understand culture from ‘the native’s point of view’ was the main foundation of the emic approach” (Lu, (2012):109).

The etic approach recognises that people from a culture are often too close to what they are doing to be able to process the information impartially. The etic or outside perspective follows in the tradition of behaviourist psychology (Skinner, 1938) and anthropological approaches that link cultural practices to external, antecedent factors, such as economic or ecological conditions, that may not be salient to cultural insiders” (Harris, 1979 in Morris et al., 1999:781). In this research I have adopted the etic approach as I try to obtain an understanding of what is occurring overseas. Lu (2012) goes on to say that “the etic approach involves comparing different cultures. Behaviour is studied from the

perspective of an outsider, the criteria for evaluating behaviours are viewed as 'universal' and the structure is created by the researchers" (Lu, 2012:109).

3.5.8 Weaknesses in qualitative methodology

Weaknesses in qualitative methodology include matters relating to survey instruments, which once issued are difficult to amend should it be found that a pivotal area has been omitted or is vague. The ability of the researcher to observe something, and at the same time remain outside that environment and not have any impact on the process, can be exceedingly difficult to achieve. An implication that a researcher must consider when conducting their research is whether the interviewee is giving the correct answer or the one that he thinks the researcher wishes to hear (or has a hidden agenda). Handy (1999) when looking at the Hawthorne experiment touches on this issue when he says "At this point, the researchers were forced to look for factors other than those which had been deliberately manipulated in the experiment" (Handy, 1999:156). When completing any anthropological research, it is a challenge for the researcher to try to record the facts without error or personal bias leading to misrepresentation. Hussey and Hussey (1997) discuss the impact an interviewer can have on any interviewee. They state, for example, that "There may be an element of class, race or sex bias" (Hussey and Hussey, 1997:157). They continue "interviewees may have certain expectations about the interview and therefore give what they consider to be a correct or acceptable response" (Hussey and Hussey, 1997:157).

Supporting the use of a qualitative methodology Eldabi et al. (2002) continue, "Furthermore, quantitative research is considered unable to take account of the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences. Thus, the principle of applying a scientific method of the study of people is questioned, which suggests the suitability of a qualitative approach" (Eldabi et al., 2002:66). As the field research contained in this document is based on interviews, observations, and follow-up conversations this would suggest that the epistemological stance should be that of a qualitative approach.

3.6.0 Reflecting on the move to auto -ethnography.

Ethnography is the study of social interactions, practices, and events. The study is done as fieldwork: the ethnographer typically embeds themselves in settings and observes what is going on. In effect we turn ourselves into a research instrument. Brewer (2000) considers "ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the settings, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed

on them externally” (Brewer 2000:10). In my case this group of people were new business clients and I needed to break into this group so I could study their practices. In auto-ethnography the researcher turns themselves towards themselves. Eriksson (2010) suggests “a way to emphasize this essential difference is that in ethnography you are a stranger, while in self/auto-ethnography you are not a stranger” (Eriksson 2010 :92). Autoethnography is typically defined as an approach to research that puts the self at the centre of cultural analysis. Ellis (2004) continues the dialogue when she states “autoethnography refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture” Ellis 2004:37). Reed-Danahay (1997) gives a definition of autoethnography as “ a form of self-narrative that places the self within the social context (Reed-Danahay 1997:9). “Autoethnography has both an ontological dimension, as it constructs our positioning in the world, through our telling of stories to ourselves and others about ourselves, and an epistemological dimension, as a means by which we understand and know the social world” (Haynes 2006 cited in Haynes 2019:10). Humphreys (2005) defines autoethnography as “a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context. It is both a method and a text and can be done by either an anthropologist who is doing ‘home’ or ‘native’ ethnography or by a non-anthropologist/ethnographer. It can also be done by an auto biographer who places the story of his or her life within the story of the social context in which it occurs” (Humphreys, 2005:841). Haynes (2019) definition is that “autoethnography is a methodological approach to research and a genre of writing where the researcher is the focus of reflexive inquiry” (Haynes 2019:2). Boylorn et al (2016) continues this theme stating” autoethnography is a method that allows for both personal and cultural critique” (Boylorn 2016:17). Haynes (2019) supports the afore when she states “autoethnography is that it allows for the examination of the self, emotions and experience as they are affected by social and cultural structures” (Haynes 2019:4). Denejkina (2017) defines autoethnography as “an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)” (Denejkina (2017:2).

The action of looking back on events and then recording them, in this research in the form of vignettes can introduce a eureka moment. Haynes (2019) states “often the narrative centres on some form of critical event, turning point or epiphany which has shaped or formed the writer in some way, or caused them to reflect on their own life” (Haynes 2019:4). All the above definitions support Haynes (2019) comment when she states “autoethnography allows for an understanding of personal experience intersecting with a social and cultural context” (Haynes 2019:2).

As the research evolved, I read reports, books, newspapers, academic papers etc., and experienced life in the Far East. The picture that was evolving informed me that the research had moved into auto-ethnography, and through this continual reflection I could compare what is considered convention in a particular country, reflect on my actions, make any alterations then move around the cycle again; in

effect a double loop. Argyris (1997) suggests this second loop is more comprehensive and helps get a greater appreciation of the differences between the cultures of the UK and the Far East. Simons (1995) discusses Foucault's texts which he states are episodes in his autobiography. He continues "Whenever I have tried to carry out a piece of theoretical work, it has been on the basis of my own experience, always in relation to processes I saw taking place around me. It is because I thought I could recognise in the things I saw, in the institutions with which I dealt, in my relations with others, cracks, silent shocks, malfunctions.... That I undertook a particular piece of work, a few fragments of an autobiography" (Simons, 1995:8).

Simons (1995) continues, "thus the 'major work' of a writer is, in the end, himself in the process of writing his books...the work includes the whole life as well as the text" Simons (1995). Mumby and Putnam (1998) look at critical research and the possible connections across discourses. They state that "current organisational theory, then, is not simply used to examine existing structures, but rather it also contributes to the very nature of modern organisations" (Mumby and Putnam, 1998:465). This research will use a critical approach to try to establish where improvements in operational processes can be made in my business.

This research and the methodology exploration have introduced a way of reflecting on events/activities, reviewing what occurred, and taking action, in effect the Kolb learning cycle. However, to build on Kolb's model the double loop can be considered. For the purpose of illustration of events/activities vignettes will be developed. Thomas (1993) talks about critical ethnography and suggests that it "is a type of reflection that examines culture, knowledge, and action" (Thomas, 1993:2). He goes on to suggest that critical ethnography uncovers areas which would lie below the surface which could be beneficial as you try to fit in with the local culture. In effect it will enable me to get an understanding of what is occurring as events unfold overseas. Berry (2013) supports this idea when he states, "of particular interest is how reflexivity enables a transformation of selves, or how autoethnography can change autoethnographers" (Berry 2013:210).

"Autoethnography has a narrative component, though that may take a number of different forms such as stories, poems, performance or vignettes" (Haynes 2019:3). To present the findings of this research which will focus on the author and his business experiences in the Far East I will be using an autoethnographic approach presenting the findings in vignettes.

3.6.1 Why this is difficult

According to Hussey and Hussey (1997) "Ethnography is a phenomenological methodology which stems from anthropology. Anthropology is the study of people, especially of their societies and

customs” (Hussey and Hussey, 1997:69). As this research develops it uncovers many areas which helps to develop a better understanding of Far Eastern patterns of human activity. The goal is for me to be able to interpret the social world and gain an understanding of their society. Saunders et al. (2003) assert that it is an “attempt to get to the root of what is going on in a wide range of social settings” (Saunders et al., 2003:222). Pitard (2019) supports the views that autoethnography is a valuable tool and purports “it is a research tool for writing from the heart about the researchers experience of being part of or studying a cultural experience” (Pitard 2019:1829). While I am in touch with overseas contacts via different communication modes, face to face interaction is limited, therefore my research is restricted to vignettes based on my overseas meetings and observations, together with situations which occurred in the UK. Hannabuss (2000) discusses the way data is collected and that the fact the researcher is there in the midst of the arena under investigation adds credence to the outcome. He states “for, whatever else is happening when research takes place, the researcher is actually there: being there is an inseparable part of research” (Hannabuss, 2000:100).

One of the challenges I faced was that I do not speak any of the Far Eastern languages. This has meant the research is based on conversations held in English, thus some of the cultural nuances which may be passed via the use of language have had to be excluded. Hannabuss (2000) states that “ethnographic research allows us to regard and represent the actors as creators as well as executants of their own meanings. The very way in which they tell us about what they do tells the researcher a great deal about what is meaningful for and in the research” (Hannabuss, 2000:100).

Autoethnography presents a concern which must be recognised and borne in mind when conducting research. It is important that the researcher does not become too involved and ‘go native’. Hannabuss (2000) describes how a researcher got to know a family and then one day one of the young members of the family died, concluding that “for the researcher and his wife it was a personal tragedy” (Hannabuss, 2000:102). This example shows that it is possible to become too close and perhaps lose the role of unbiased researcher. This therefore creates a challenging factor: how close should the researcher get to the area under review? Irvine and Gaffikin (2006) discuss this area and state “finding the right distance between him/herself and the group being studied is thus a dilemma for the ethnographer and involves conscious work” (Irvine and Gaffikin, 2006 :119).

3.6.2 Self-reflection and reflective practitioner

As the research project developed, I was introduced to the Conscious Competence Learning model, which I realised could be applicable to this research.

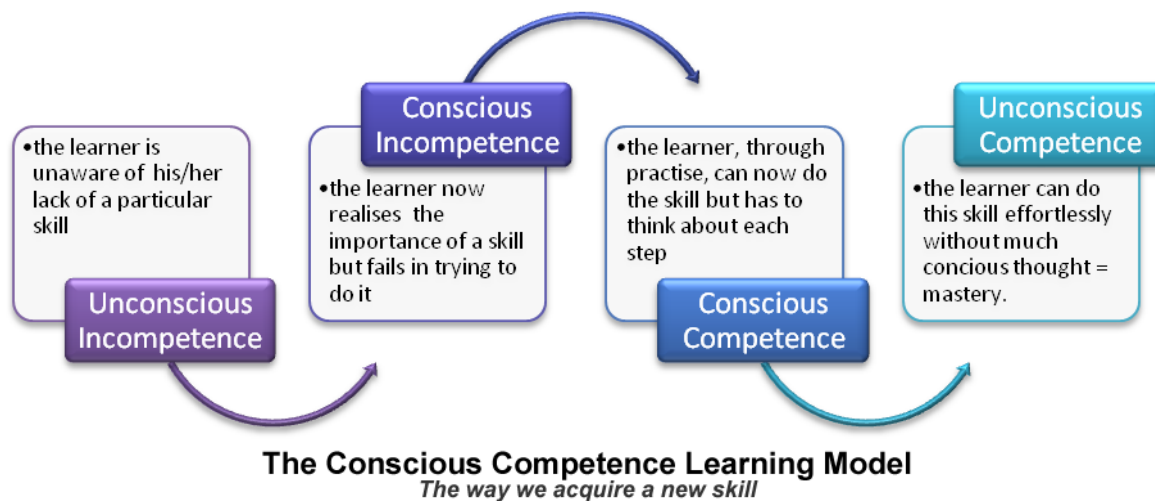


Figure 13: Conscious Competence Learning Model

Mehay (2010) included the above diagram (figure 13) which tries to explain 'how we get better at acquiring a skill'. Reflecting on my own experience, I can see that I was rather naïve in not researching my new working environment. This would relate to the unconscious incompetence part of the model. At the start of the new venture I was unaware of all the new skills I would have to learn if I was to become proficient at my role within the company. As the company started to trade it soon became obvious that we were not getting the results expected, and I needed to investigate why.

This moved us into the conscious incompetence section of the model. I was now being faced with tasks, but unsure how to deal with them, especially in the communication area. Some basic research highlighted the fact that different countries require different formats; some require the use of titles some do not; some require a little information dialogue (e.g. the weather is nice in London) whereas other do not. I felt certain if I gained a greater understanding of the process required for each country our impact and effectiveness would improve.

Keen to improve my skills, I started to read books and talked to people from overseas in an attempt to understand the different operating procedures, in effect the different cultures. This model indicated that: it is impossible to have one standard email for everyone; you could stand close to some people when talking, others you had to give a greater amount of space; some cultures were tactile, others were not. We had now arrived at the conscious competence section of the model.

The final section, unconscious competence, is the area I find the most challenging. As the company deals with so many different countries, therefore cultures, we are concerned that this area can lead to mistakes, so we are constantly trying to reflect, to ensure this unconscious competence area is operating correctly. When talking to a person who does not come from the UK, I will try to adapt my way of operating to their way. Since starting the research, I have been using the Conscious

Competence Learning Model as I try to gain an understanding of where my overseas colleague cultural traits and mine differed.

This research was instigated to support me as I enter a new trading arena, that of global trading. The methodology that I have chosen has made me examine my own working processes (culture), those that I have been brought up in.

The next step is to review the processes and cultures of the person that I am working with and try to see what the differences are, which should enlighten me as to why events do not always unfold as I expect. This type of research is considered by many to be auto- ethnographical. Ferdinand (2009) states that “lived experiences lie at the heart of auto-ethnography. Auto ethnographies delve into personal life of the researcher, thereby summoning rich and contextualized information from his or her personal life to the lives of others, or extend understanding about a particular culture or society” Ellis and Bochner (2002) cited in (Ferdinand, 2009).

Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumford (1986) completed a considerable amount of research into the area of learning and how people learn.

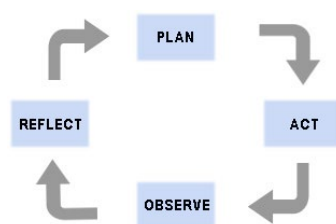


Figure 14: Kolb's Action Research Model

Kolb's action research model is in effect like the methodology adopted in this research.

3.7.0 Research Design finding evidence

When I embarked upon my new business venture which involved communicating with people based overseas, I did not appreciate the minefield I was entering.

Having lived and travelled overseas I had realised that different countries have different ideas (cultures), an obvious example being that people in France drive on the right. So, I already knew there were differences, but it was not until I started to develop relationships with my contacts in the Far East, when events did not unfold as I expected, that I realised the significance of those differences. In reality, one of the first pieces of evidence, which will be mentioned in greater detail later in this report,

arrived on my desk in the UK in the form of an email. It was this unusual email that started me on the research trail, wanting to find out more. What was I not understanding?

Having taken the decision to combine this investigation into a research project I faced the challenge of analysing the best way to gather evidence with the opportunities that were available. Yin (2003) offered an approach in this self-ethnographic project, that of case studies presented in vignettes which offered the framework needed.

Yin states that the “case study is but one of several ways of doing social science research” (Yin, 2003:1), and goes on to explain that case studies are used by many in situations which contribute to the knowledge of “individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena” (Yin, 2003:1). Hussey and Hussey (1997) state that “case studies are often described as exploratory research, used in areas where there are few theories or a deficient body of knowledge” (Hussey and Hussey, 1997:66).

The central aim of ethnography is to provide rich, holistic insights into people’s views and actions, as well as the nature (that is sights and sounds) of the location they inhabit. The use of vignettes will enable the recording of the events via a reflective model. The goal of each model will be to ‘get inside’ the way each group of people sees the world. Reflexive approaches come from a social construction paradigm that contains data that can help paint a picture of a social context. The vignettes will focus upon the author, but played out through practice, and the differences that occur mainly due to a cultural difference between East and West.

The data which is a record of my findings of others and their practices has helped me over the past months as I have looked at the way our business was operating compared to overseas colleagues.

Kincheloe, et al. (2011) explore the workings of the bricolage. The word French word *bricoleur* describes a “handyman or handywoman who makes use of the tools available to complete a task” (Kincheloe et al., 2011:168). Kincheloe et al. go on to look at the different research knowledges and come back to bricolage saying, “in a contemporary sense, is understood to involve the process of employing these methodological processes as they are needed in the unfolding context of the research situation” (Kincheloe et al., 2011:168).

When I started this research, I thought that the picture would become clearer. However, although it has resolved many of my early issues it has also uncovered other areas which now need clarification. In effect it is like the double loop, but the loop continues on and on. Where does it stop?

Phenomenology is essentially the study of lived experience, in this research my lived experience dealing with people from a different culture to mine. Pitard (2016) asserts that “all knowledge begins with experience, but not every experience produces knowledge. How we interpret the lived experience determines whether developed knowledge will result” (Pitard, 2016:2). Working under a phenomenological framework, the use of autoethnography to support the research exploration then places the self at the centre of the research. Pitard asserts that “Autoethnography retrospectively and selectively indicates experiences based on or made possible by, being part of a culture or owning a specific cultural identity” (Pitard 2016:3). She goes on to suggest that vignettes can be used to gain an understanding of a particular circumstance especially for someone from “one cultural identity in a setting of different cultural norms” (Pitard, 2016:3). Vignettes can help to paint a picture (metaphorically speaking) of the events under review.

3.7.1 Diary

As the research developed, I was encouraged to keep a diary of events. This advice proved to be a real challenge as the research was being completed part time, and I had my normal day to day activities competing for my available time. Unfortunately, it was the diaries that suffered. At the start of the exploratory journey into culture I could not see any rationale for keeping diaries, but as time went by many of my rough notes in effect changed role/importance as they contained dates in the top right-hand corner which allowed me to arrange them in chronological order; in effect they became a diary. Bytheway (2012) suggests that “Some participants may be put off, believing that they do not have the time or skills to keep a diary; Some diarists may drop out, believing that what they are recording is not worth the effort” (Bytheway, 2012:1). These comments were something I could relate to at the start, but as time went on my views changed. Then the question became about what I should record – what is important and what is not, and hence my dated rough notes became valuable documents. Sheble and Wildemuth (2009) comment on diary keeping and state that “Diary studies impose a significant burden on participants and researchers alike. It is generally time consuming to pre-test diary methods, train respondents, keep diaries, and analyse the data. Many potential participants assume diary studies will be time-consuming” (Sheble and Wildemuth, 2009:3).

3.7.2 Story Telling: Observations

Observation is essentially about trying to understand how processes within an organisation or people impact/interact with each other. This may require trying to be invisible, although obviously it is impossible to achieve complete invisibility. However, the goal is to try to have as little impact upon the area under review. Yin (2003) talks about two methods, direct observations, and participant observations. It is expected that using both methods, watching how people react and also observing

how they function will help to gain an understanding of their culture, their way of operating. Yin (2003) states that “observational evidence is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied” (Yin, 2003:93). This method of gathering data, observation, is derived from the work of anthropologists. However, while observations can be used it must be recognised that different events overseas may have a different meaning than they do here in the UK. For instance, Morrison and Conaway (2006) explain that “people in Malaysia may smile or laugh to hide embarrassment, shyness, bitterness or discord. Malaysian businessmen may laugh during the most serious part of a business meeting: this may be an expression of anxiety, not frivolity” (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:300). It would be unusual for people to laugh at the most serious part of a business meeting here in the UK, therefore this difference sets a challenge for the researcher – as I must be ready for the unexpected. When something occurs, which is not the same as in the UK, I will need to investigate further to try to establish why.

The ethical issues relating to the ways of collecting data are discussed later in the chapter. The issue of bias holds a number of problems. These can include tiredness and the recognition of the participants that a review of ‘what is occurring’ is being completed. This can result in actions being taken which the observed thinks the observer will wish to see. Denscombe (2003) states that “when humans become aware that they are the focus of attention for research, there is the very real possibility that they will act differently from normal” (Denscombe, 2003). In 1924, at the Hawthorne Plant in Chicago, a project was instigated to see what impact certain variables, such as temperature, lighting and working conditions, had on production. A group of workers were set the same tasks as their fellow workers, in what could be considered a laboratory environment but with different conditions, perhaps warmer, more lights (illumination) and the output at the end of a set time was compared. However, the result was rather unexpected as the “output in the experimental group increased regardless of how illumination was manipulated. Even when the light was dimmed to a flicker, output still increased” (Gill and Johnson, 2000:59). The researchers concluded they were also “inadvertently researching employees’ attitudes, values and norms, which were mediating the effects of the experimental treatments” (Gill and Johnson, 2000:59). This research made many researchers go outside into the field “thereby avoiding the artificiality of the laboratory by investigating social phenomena in their natural everyday context “ (Gill and Johnson, 2000:64).

According to Schon (2003) “Storytelling represents and substitutes for first-hand experience” (Schon, 2003:160). Once a story has been told, the information can be stored in the form of a digitally recorded format, notes taken at the time, and reflective article to name three. The data can then be juxtaposed with other information to enable it to be examined to see if there are any trends. During the telling of the story, the interviewer can ensure the topic does not stray outside the predetermined research boundary set by asking questions which they consider central to the area under research. When

interviewing, it is essential that the data is recorded as accurately as possible and that the terminology is checked to ensure that both parties are communicating about the same issue. This involves the discipline of careful listening, something which is not always an easy task. Harris and Barnes (2006) state that “in medical school, they teach that if you just listen to the patient, the patient will tell you what is wrong” (Harris and Barnes, 2006:351). However, as the research has shown, although the patient/interviewee may think they have a problem in one area it may in fact be as a result of another symptom. There is a saying that ‘a picture paints a thousand words’; thus, the debate as to whether to adopt a qualitative or quantitative stance when compiling a report on an abstract picture would normally suggest a qualitative approach be adopted.

The debate continues between qualitative and quantitative methodology. However, it is interesting to note that even quantitative reports have an element of qualitative methodology as they explain what the different diagrams and figures represent.

I find that as the research continues it is taking over more of my life. In effect, I find myself a participant observer. I am constantly looking at what I am doing and the response. Denscombe (2003) comments on the area of participant observation saying, “this is mainly associated with sociology and anthropology, and is used by researchers to infiltrate situations, sometimes as an undercover operation, to understand the culture and process of the groups being investigated” (Denscombe, 2003:192). Remenyi (2005) records that “our ability to understand the world and thus create knowledge was originally through verbal expression and this predates our numerical facility by many millennia” (Remenyi, 2005:134). However, over the years, as science has become more complex the need to introduce a different process has been identified and hence the appearance of the qualitative approach. To attempt to record soft issues, such as motivation, moral in a qualitative format would be extremely challenging. Even in a qualitative stance the writer would have to be extremely careful not to lose some of the richness of the data. Remenyi concludes that, “In short a story or a narrative (or indeed a picture) can sometimes deliver a much better and clearer message than any other form of communication” (Remenyi, 2005:135).

3.7.3 Reflections: how to capture

The use of vignettes in this research will help with the recording of specific events. Ellis (2009) states that they seek “to keep the past alive in the present” (Ellis, 2009). Furthermore, Hughes (1998) suggests that “vignettes are stories generated from a range of sources including previous research findings. They make reference to important factors in the study of perception, beliefs and attitudes” (Hughes, 1998:381). For me, writing as an auto ethnographer I can record past events and establish how this knowledge has impacted upon my way of operating in the Far East. Barter and Reynold (2017)

state that “Vignettes provide a valuable technique for exploring people’s perceptions, beliefs and meanings about specific situations” (Barter and Reynold, 2017:4). Barter and Reynold (2000) state that when referring to vignettes “what the available literature does clearly demonstrate is the ability of this technique to capture how meanings, beliefs, judgements and actions are situationally positioned” (Barter and Reynold, 2000):308). They also refer to Hughes (1998) who emphasizes the capacity of this method (vignettes) saying. “vignettes are stories generated from a range of sources including previous research findings. They make reference to important factors in the study of perception, beliefs and attitudes” (Hughes, 1998:381). However, Hughes also issues a word of warning when regarding the use of vignettes, stating that “No research tool can truly reflect people’s real life experiences” (Hughes, 1998:383).

The vignettes are designed to bring out my ‘action based’ experience as I reflect on what occurs and why. Mizzi (2010) reflects on his experiences and the use of vignettes in qualitative research, and writing the vignette “through a reflective first-person lens so that readers can learn vicariously through my experience and try to imagine themselves in the encounter” (Mizzi, 2010:2). Jenkins et al. (2010) state that “Vignettes thus collect situated data on group values, group beliefs and group norms of behaviour” (Jenkins et al., 2010:2). Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) suggest that “the purpose of the telling and interpreting is to enable the reader to experience the narrative as if they lived it with the insight of the interpretation” (Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001:16).

Pitard continues the discussion on vignettes and researcher involvement stating that “within a phenomenological framework, the use of auto ethnography as a research tool places the self at the centre of a cultural interaction, as it explores the impact of an experience on the writer” (Pitard, 2016:3), and goes on to say that the use of vignettes can assist in the examination and analysis of lived experiences which can help gain an insight into the differences which may have appeared. Ellis et al (2011) expand on Pitard’s observations when they say “auto ethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience (Ellis et al., 2011:1). Pitard (2016) refers to the way we interpret the lived experience. She states that it “determines whether developed knowledge will result. Generally we can see the experience as something that happens to us (beyond our control)” (Pitard, 2016:2). Furthermore, Gould (1997) suggests that, “Humans are story telling creatures pre-eminently. We organise the world as a set of tales” (Gould, 1997 cited in Remenyi, 2005:136).

3.8.0 Portfolios and Artefacts

3.8.1 Archive records - historical data

Yin (2003) discusses the area of documents and their limitation when used in case study research, stating that “you have to remember that every document was written for some specific purpose and some specific audience other than those of the case study being done” (Yin, 2003:87). However, this information still helps to paint a picture of what occurred in the past and can help to show how we arrived at the current situation.

3.8.2 Interviews

Practical considerations regarding gathering the data to support the findings resulted in them being collected via unstructured interviews. Whenever possible incidents would be recorded, such as a chance meeting at the Indonesian embassy London (recorded in the vignettes below). Hussey and Hussey (1997) consider that “the questions raised and the matters explored change from one interview to the next as different aspects of the topics are revealed” (Hussey and Hussey, 1997:156). However, as the findings of the research are presented in standalone vignettes it is not considered that this will have any impact upon the findings. Saunders et al. (2003) suggest that unstructured interviews would be used “to explore in depth a general area in which you are interested” (Saunders et al., 2003:247). The goal was to try to establish what happened in different cultures in the Far East. In the incident at the Indonesian Embassy the goal was to start the conversation on a certain topic, in this case the importance of time, then let the young lady I was talking to explain what occurred in her home country. Denscombe (2003) expands on this area when he says “the researcher’s role is to be as unintrusive as possible – to start the ball rolling by introducing a theme or topic and then letting the interviewee develop his or her ideas and pursue his or her train of thought” (Denscombe, 2003:167).

The task of asking questions and getting answers can be quite time consuming. Fontana and Frey (1994) suggest that an interview, as an event, “can be a one time, brief exchange, say five minutes over a telephone, or it can take place over multiple, lengthy sessions, sometimes spanning days, as in life history interviewing” (Fontana and Frey, 1994:361). Cisneros-Puebla et al. (2004) state that Kvale (1996) sees the interviewer as a travelling companion of the interviewee trying to elicit his or her “stories of the lived world” (Cisneros-Puebla et al., 2004:2).

They claim that “interviews have become part of our daily lives. We read interviews in the press, we see people interviewed on the television” (Cisneros-Puebla et al., 2004:1). One of the reasons given

for interviews is to gain knowledge and that over time it “became commonplace for ‘strangers’ to ask questions of one another” (Cisneros-Puebla et al., 2004:2).

Interviewing is still one of the approaches many researchers use to gather data. It enables the researcher to acquire rich data, consistent with the nature of the phenomena being investigated. Saunders (2003) states “interviews may be highly formalised and structured, using standardised questions for each respondent or they may be informal and unstructured conversations” (Saunders et al., 2003:246).

Denzin (2001) states that “the interview is a way of writing the world, a way of bringing the world into play” (Denzin, 2001:3). To gain the required knowledge, the interviewee must have direct interaction with the researcher. It is important that any data gathered via interviews are not subject to problems of poor recall, bias, and inaccurate information. To try to overcome these pitfalls the data gathered will, where possible, be confirmed through data collected via other methods.

3.8.3 Reflection – how to capture

As the research developed and new data started to appear, I realised there was a need to formalise the presentation of the information in the thesis. A comment by my supervisor introduced vignettes. My exploratory venture into this methodology led me into the education and medical sector where vignettes were used to present research findings. Hunter (2012) states that “the styling of vignettes became a creative way to story self-reflexivity within academic writing” (Hunter, 2012:90). There was a synergy in this statement with what was being considered within the thesis. Therefore, it was decided to use vignettes as a way of capturing and presenting the information gained.

3.8.4 How to capture the learning moments

Friends who knew that I was spending so much time exploring the topic of culture quite often asked what drove me on, and my response would be along the lines that I was intrigued as to why problems arose around the world when at face value there was no problem. For instance, the Islamic religion promotes peace, but looking at the world today that religion is far from peaceful. As you start to examine that religion, so you arrive at explanations. This is like dealing with people from the Far East. Although they may, in some instances, physically resemble someone from the UK, the way they operate can be quite different and it is not until you delve deeper into their world that some of the answers appear. Having explored the literature, it became apparent that the research suggested adopting an inductive approach, and the findings would be of a qualitative style.

3.8.5 Time Horizon.

The longitudinal time approach was adopted for collecting the data. The research was completed over many years on a part time basis as work and home life allowed.

3.9.0 Research design and methodology

3.9.1 Triangulation

The use of triangulation helps to support the validity of the findings revealed during the research. According to Yin (2003) “findings or conclusions in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information” Yin (2003:98).

3.9.2 Review of documents – Analysing case study evidence.

Yin (2003) states that, for first time researchers analysing case study evidence can be a really challenging experience. He asserts that “the experienced case study investigator is likely to have great advantages over the novice at the analytic stage” (Yin, 2003:110). It is envisaged the study will involve desk research to try to obtain a basic understanding of the situation under review. This will include books, papers, the internet, and government documents. Data collected from interviews will have to be interrogated. Guba and Lincoln (1981) conclude that the case study is the best reporting form for evaluations as it provides thick description, stating that “It was also grounded and was holistic and lifelike” (Guba and Lincoln, 1981:8).

3.9.3 Research Design & Methodology

a. Approach

To be able to explore the different ways people see the world, and then take the action they do, it soon became obvious that this exercise essentially involved human interaction and came under the domain of a cultural study, and therefore it was dependent on the social sciences. Based on this assumption, the researcher therefore looked at previous studies to develop a framework for this project. Gill and Johnson (2000) state that “.... our concern in this review is with a substantive domain, management that is essentially dependent upon the social sciences in that its concern is primarily with the macro/micro-behaviour and activities of human beings” (Gill and Johnson, 2000:33). Johnson and Duberley (2000) develop this area further when they state that “Here Laing draws attention to how human action has an internal logic of its own which must be understood in order to make it intelligible.

The rightful aim of social science is to understand this internal logic – a process called *verstehen*” (Johnson and Duberley, 2000:34).

Possible Methods

When starting out on this research journey I was concerned that my own influence would impact upon any findings. One of my understandings of completing a research project was that the researcher would try to distance themselves from the matter under review and then constantly monitor the situation to ensure any findings were as unbiased as possible. Denscombe (2003) states that “researchers need to approach things without predispositions based on events in the past, without suppositions drawn from existing theories about the phenomenon being studied and without using their everyday common-sense assumptions” (Denscombe, 2003:102). He goes on to suggest that researchers should be isolated so that they are “able to describe things not through their own eyes but through the eyes of those whose experiences are being described” (Denscombe, 2003:102). However, once I started to look at the area I wished to investigate, it soon became apparent that I was in fact the pivotal part of the research. I was completing the exercise to get a better understanding of how people operated around the world so I could try and fit in with the way they operated. Hopefully, the knowledge gained via this research would enable me to become better at communicating and working with them. As I started to consider this area, a comment by my supervisor pointed me toward Jack Whitehead and Jean McNiff. In their book *Action Research, Living Theory*, they discuss action research and describe the book as having been “written for practitioner action researchers who are committed to improving their learning” (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006:1).

Whitehead and McNiff had been looking at the impact of action research and had been involved in debates about the nature of pedagogy and the professional status within the teaching world. This concern was highlighted at a conference in May 2005. According to Whitehead and McNiff (2006), “The social sciences had well-established procedures for identifying what counts as quality and validity, and its very credibility as a tried and trusted research methodology which made it attractive to policy makers” (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006:12).

Whitehead and McNiff suggest that the difference between social science and the living theory approach to action research is that in social science the researcher’s goal is to try to generate new knowledge. They study people in their environment, record their findings, and try to explain what is occurring. They try to remain detached, not getting close to the area being researched. “The researcher observes, describes and explains what they are doing, so the theory is generated and owned by the researcher, and is about other people” (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006:13).

In action research, however, the focus changes, and the practitioner investigates their own practice. Whitehead and McNiff (2006) state that “practitioners investigate their own practice, observe, describe and explain what they are doing in company with one another, and produce their own explanation for what they are doing and why they are doing it” (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006:13). Ferguson (2011) defines action research as “a practical way of looking at your own work to check that it is as you would like it to be. Because action research is done by you, the practitioner, it is often referred to as practitioner based research; and because it involves you thinking about and reflecting on your work, it can also be called a form of self-reflective practice” (Ferguson, 2011:8).

Argyris (1997) looks at the way organisations learn. His research indicates that “organisational learning is a process of detecting and correcting error” (Argyris, 1997:116). However, if they only complete a process which could be called a ‘single loop process’ there is a strong possibility nothing will change. Argyris suggests that to have a greater impact a second loop process should occur implementing the outcome of the first loop. He uses the example of single loop learning, comparing it to that of a thermostat. He states “single loop learning can be compared with a thermostat that learns when it is too hot or too cold and then turns the heat on or off” (Argyris, 1977:116). He then goes on to say if the thermostat could question itself as to whether the temperature was at the correct level it would in effect be completing two functions, the first controlling the temperature and the second questioning whether the temperature chosen was correct. He suggests that this “second and more comprehensive inquiry might be called a double loop learning” (Argyris, 1977:116).

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) discuss methods of collecting empirical material. They suggest “the research process constitutes a (re)construction of the social reality in which researchers both interact with agents researched and actively interpreting, continually create images for themselves and for other” (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009:10). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) talk about how researchers capture the individual’s point of view. They argue that “qualitative investigators think they can get closer to the actors’ perspective by detailed interviewing and observation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018:9).

To present the findings of the empirical research vignettes have been developed. These vignettes reflect events that have occurred while this research has been completed and explore situations which relate to cultural differences.

Chapter 4

4.0.0 Presentation of vignettes; The Vignettes.

I have set out a structure that explains the context of the reflective account and my position, to allow the reader to relate to this and to understand the picture painted. The vignettes have been developed to try to bring alive the situation at the time and the impact it had. Why was a void appearing between the third party and my company, and why were events not unfolding as expected?

The vignettes follow the following structure:

- I. Scene setting – an introduction the country
- II. My role and the issue I was having to address
- III. What was happening
- IV. My reflection in action, the gap identified and the contribution to knowledge.

The vignettes aim to convey my relationship with a third party, what was happening or what was not happening, and attempt to understand why it was not happening. They were used to try to enable a selection of events to be presented, together with other supporting information, to enable the cultural differences between the UK and the Far East to be highlighted. In effect they aimed to provide a contribution to knowledge. The vignettes are a representation of the fieldwork and observations and were used as platforms to reflect via action research – double loop to look at how I have had to revise my way of working to try and build long lasting relationships with people from the Far East. Corrado and Weeks (2010) discuss the use of vignettes across country boundaries. In their research they state that they utilised vignettes “as identification instruments in comparing life satisfaction across eleven European countries” (Corrado and Weeks 2010:16). Their paper discusses several surveys that employed vignettes to record the data/information in different country comparisons, including organisations such as the World Health Surveys, Health Ageing and Retirement in Recruitment. Barter and Reynold (2000) develop the discussion in regard to using vignettes when they state that “within qualitative research vignettes have been increasingly employed to elicit cultural norms derived from respondents’ attitudes to and beliefs about a specific situation and to highlight ethical frameworks and moral codes” (Barter and Renold, 2000:310). Hunter (2012) talks about the possible ways a researcher can try to distance themselves from their research, which she considers is not possible. She states “the narrative writing was conceptualised as a layered bricolage of academic socialisation, engagement with theory, and academic work. Accordingly, it proved unworkable to distance the author’s lived experience and pedagogic identities from the narrative, for these lay at the heart of the

research” (Hunter, 2012:90). She continues her dialogue by stating that vignettes became a creative way to story self-reflexivity which is the approach taken with most of the vignettes that follow.

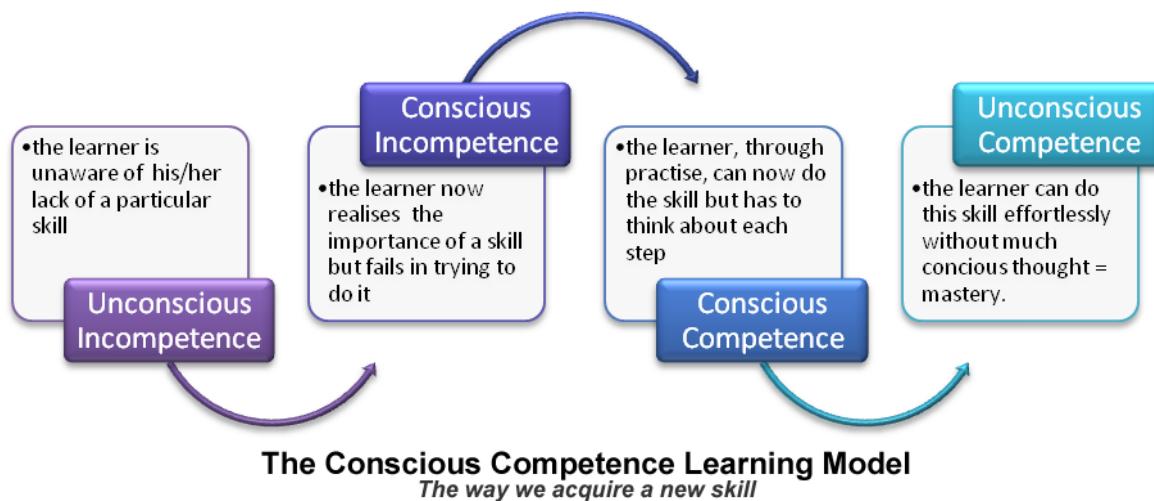
Auto ethnography is about your own lived experience, you need to have lived and had some experiences and, of course, you also have to recall your lived experiences. The vignettes used in this thesis record my experiences as I attempt to recognise the differences in the way people act in the Far East compared to the UK. Humphrey (2005) states that auto ethnography is a:

form of self-narrative that places the self within the social content. It is both a method and a text and can be done by either an anthropologist who is doing ‘home’ or ‘native’ ethnography or by a non-anthropologist/ethnographer. It can also be done by an autobiographer who places the story of his or her life within a story of the social context in which it occurs
(Humphrey, 2005:841).

Humphrey goes on to explain how he was aiming to connect himself both as a writer and subject with the reader via an autobiographical account. He envisaged that the account would enable him to engage with the academic community.

4.0.1 What did I capture during the period 2012-2018?

One of the challenges encountered during the development of this research and the writing of this thesis was being able to recognise what new knowledge the author had uncovered and the way that this has impacted upon his way of working. This report discussed acculturation and how a person can move through four stages, assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. This can be used to measure the degree to which a person has changed his approach to life when moving to a new country as they try and fit in with the local culture. The impact of completing this research has moved the author into the assimilation stage even though UK based. As one of the vignettes shows, the knowledge acquired while completing this research has had an impact upon his approach to business and social encounters when traveling out in the Far East. Being aware that there is a difference could be considered the first step to try and blend into the local culture. As the author delved deeper into the area of culture so he became fascinated and began to realise the importance of this fuzzy thing that cannot always be seen (culture). Mehay (2010) suggests a person may be unaware of his lack of particular skills. However, once they become aware, they start to move through the model. This model can be used when looking at cultural differences, going from unaware to unconscious competence.



(Mehay, 2010)

Researchers such as Hall, Trompenaars, Hofstede, Globe, Kolb and Honey and Mumford, to mention a few, all provided useful research data which this current project was able to incorporate in its quest to understand Far Eastern culture.

However, a negative side to this research project is that it has triggered an inquisitive side which has impacted on events outside this research. For instance, programs watched on the television which the author found had a simple story line are now becoming a challenge; he is now asking why did they take that action? The inquisitive side is coming to the fore.

4.0.2 Selection of participating organisations

Miles and Huberman (1994) state that “the aim is to find people who are more knowledgeable, reliable, and accurate in reporting events that are usual, frequent or patterned” (Miles and Huberman, 1994:29). While developing the research instrument the focus was on the ‘who’ and ‘what’ which then excludes other issues from the review. The research will include people who will add to the existing knowledge. Denscombe (2003) states that “sites to be included in the research are deliberately selected by the researcher for what they can contribute to the research” (Denscombe, 2003:117). The criteria for those people to be included in the research were decided by the author. As the research developed over time, in reality many of the instances recorded below were taken from author’s own experiences. Quite often, the question was asked, who did this or what happened here?

4.0.3 Ethics Approval.

In accordance with the Anglia Ruskin University regulations, ethics approval has been obtained from the ethics committee.

4.0.4 Analysis of vignettes – presentation of findings.

The events included in the vignettes were chosen from a selection of events that occurred over the years. In effect, when the author came across certain events/activities and situations he would record them, presenting them in the form of a vignette. The vignettes would include some background information, and in some cases some other cultural examples to highlight the cultural differences. Each vignette is designed to supply a contribution to the thesis title 'Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn: an Investigation into Local Customs/Cultures' and add to the existing knowledge on the subject.

4.0.5 Vignette 1.

Introduction.

This first vignette relates to one of my early ventures to Thailand. Unfortunately, my lack of understanding of the Thai culture created an uncomfortable situation which had the incident been handled differently would have resulted in a happier outcome.

My overseas travels have taken me too many Far Eastern Countries including Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam Indonesia, and Singapore. In the early days of my travels I thought if the locals spoke English, looked English and even acted as you would expect an English person to act then as French (2009) says “If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it probably is a duck. So goes a pithy observation, undoubtedly as old as English itself, that provides a quick-and-dirty way to recognize ducks” (French, 2009:1); but in this case we did not have a duck. Vathansri (2013) discusses the different situations a visitor to Thailand may encounter which he classifies as culture shock. He then looks at a situation like that recorded in Vignette 1 below, which occurred while in Thailand. Referring to Thai culture, Vathansri (2013) states that “some culture has become exciting to learn something new in their life, such as meetings, greetings, perception of time and so on” (Vathansri, 2013:6). A highly valued trait in Thai culture is that of saving face or ‘Krengjai’. Baczek (2013) refers to this as “‘Krengjai’, one of the Thai values that encourages conflict avoidance” (Baczek, 2013:11). Knutson et al. (2002a) also discuss the area of conflict avoidance when they state, “the Thais are keen to avoid conflict... and adverse to criticizing other in their presence” (Knutson et al., 2002a:71). This value “conflict” is important in Thai culture and must not be forgotten when operating in Thailand and is reflected in the thesis title ‘Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn.

History of Thailand.

Kirilmaz (2014) writes that “Thailand is the only nation in Southeast Asia to never have been colonized by European powers. In its foreign policy, however, it is closely connected to the United States” (Kirilmaz, 2014:4). The political situation is that the country has a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government. The king is a highly revered figure and any adverse comment about him can have profoundly serious consequences. He is also the “head of the Royal Thai Armed Forces and holds the prerogative of royal assent and the power of pardon. He is also the defender of the Buddhist faith, Thailand’s predominant religion” (UKTI, 2011a:50). The predominant religion of Thailand is Buddhism, but there is religious freedom. Amongst the beliefs held by the Thai population is that people have always lived in “peace and harmony” (UKTI, 2011a:50).

When Thais meet, they greet one another with a ‘wai’, i.e. they put their hands together at chest level and bend their heads down towards their hands. Age is considered important and normally the

younger person 'wais' the older. Handshakes are accepted practice when a Thai meets a foreigner. "However, since body contact in Thai culture is kept to a minimum, handshakes tend to be brief and not especially firm, especially with women" (UKTI, 2011a:51). When looking at body language and gesture UKTI suggest that "unrestrained behaviours or emotions tend to be frowned upon as immature or a call for attention. These include raising your voice, showing excessive frustration/ joy and public displays of affection between men and women" (UKTI, 2011a:53). Touching or getting close to someone's head is considered taboo, as the head is viewed as the most sacred part of the body. As in many Asian countries, passing things with your left hand should be avoided as this is considered unclean, and avoid showing the soles of your feet, which are also unclean. Do not point at people or things, as this is considered rude.

Climate.

These temperatures, if not respected, can have an impact on a traveller in Thailand. During one of my previous trips to this area of the world I had failed to drink sufficient water and had to curtail some activities while I corrected my liquid intake (water). So, I had learnt my lesson and this time I was not taking any chances.

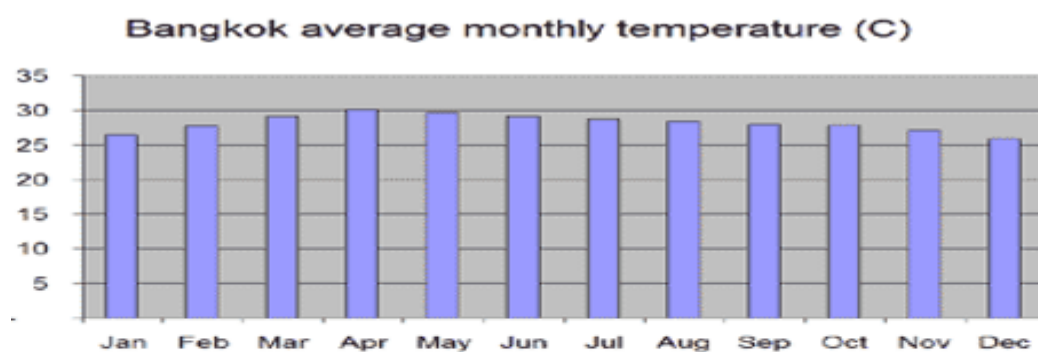


Figure 15: Bangkok Temperature (Travelfish)

My role and the issue I was having to address.

The following vignette will show how my lack of appreciation of these values took me into an uncomfortable situation. During one of my trips to Thailand my wife and I stayed in Bangkok at one of the main hotels. The hotel was of an exceedingly high standard and could be compared to a five-star rated hotel in the UK. The room was exceptionally large, and the décor was to a high standard and included many extras, some of which incurred an extra payment. One of these extras was bottles of water. As Thailand is not far from the equator the temperature in the country can be quite hot and humid as Figure 15 indicates.

Lived Experience

In the hotel room there were four bottles of water, two with blue tops and two with red tops, which all stood on the same tray, on a table close to the fridge. The two bottles with blue tops had a label on them stating the water was for the use of the guest. Close to these bottles was a list of all the other products which were chargeable and the prices.

During the day, when we returned to the room, we had a drink of tea or water and even asked for some more water to be supplied when we ran out. We also took a couple of bottles out with us one day when we went off to see one of the sights a few miles outside of the town of Bangkok.

Following a wonderful stay, the day came to check out. Our taxi was waiting outside to take us to the airport, so I was keen to complete any paperwork as quickly as possible. We duly presented ourselves at the reception desk in the main lobby to return the key, and as neither my wife nor I had drunk any of the alcohol provided in the fridge in the room I thought there would be nothing to pay as we had pre-booked and paid for the room in advance. However, I was presented with a bill for water. I was a little surprised and in what I would consider a typical British way I suggested the bill was incorrect. I was told it was not, that although the blue topped water bottles were free, the red tops were chargeable. I stated that it did not indicate that and the very polite gentleman behind the counter continued to insist that they were chargeable. The amount really had vanished into the distance as it was a pittance; it was the principle. I eventually realised I was going to have to pay so I got my credit card out and in effect threw it at the member of staff who had been discussing the matter with me, paid and left. I was mad with the hotel not the member of staff.

What was happening

Reflecting on this incident, I can now see what I did was wrong, and although I was mad with the hotel my action may have impacted on the employee himself. I just wish I could turn the clock back and apologise to him. Morrison and Conaway (2006) talk about some of the don'ts in Thailand which include "never losing control of your emotions, and don't be overly assertive, that is considered poor manners" Morrison and Conaway (2006:510). They also go on to say that Thais avoid confrontation at all costs. In this case I had really got it wrong; I was not in England I was in Thailand.

Kirilmaz (2014) states that "For human beings, culture is like water for fish. It's always there, but you never apperceive it. Only if the fish leaves the water it becomes clear that something is missing" (Kirilmaz, 2014:3) In the above vignette I had certainly left the water, well the UK water and I was now in another pond where communication between people had changed. The behaviours that were accepted in the UK and were quite natural to me (my internal programming) did not seem to fit in with the current situation. But why was this?

This vignette describes the interaction whereby a misunderstanding occurred because local cultural nuances were not included in the dialog. When reflecting on this incident I realised that my lack of consideration for the local culture had caused an unintended scene. I had used my UK programming while in Thailand. As Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) say “when in Rome, do as the Romans do” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:4). They go on to suggest that a Japanese company had taken this saying further and revised it to “When in Rome, understand the behaviour of the Romans, and thus become an even more complete Japanese” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998:4). The use of the UK approach to resolve differences in Thailand did not help to reach a compromise. “It has been said that there are those things that we don’t know; and those things that we don’t know we don’t know” (Hallinger and Leithwood, 1996:100). Culture would appear to be included in this statement. In the vignette, the problem arose because of a lack of knowledge, but having addressed this situation this now makes you aware that there are things that we do not know we do not know.

Intercultural Communications

Brannen (2004) discusses the way communication between two parties occurs, stating that “communication is achieved by encoding and decoding messages between transferor and transferee. The source and the target of reception are the central thought processes that register meaning for the transferor and transferee respectively” (Brannen, 2004:598). This is especially relevant when looking at interlocutions involving overseas entities. When looking at the Thai cultural values Knutson et al (2002). state that “the highest Thai cultural values are those associated with social harmony” (Knutson et al., 2002b:63). When reflecting on and reviewing my UK approach to highlighting my displeasure at an unexpected charge for water, it can be seen the approach was totally wrong. As Hall (1959) states “when it becomes apparent to people of different countries that they are not understanding one another, each tends to blame ‘those foreigners’ for their stupidity, deceit, or craziness” (Hall, 1959Xii). Knutson et al (2002). state that “the emphasis of the high–context collective Thai culture on social harmony and pleasant relationships strongly suggests that Thai people will exhibit high levels of rhetorical sensitivity and reflection and low levels of noble self in their interpersonal communication” (Knutson et al., 2002a:66). Knutson continues “Thai interpersonal relationships demand that no one be placed in an embarrassing or shameful situation and criticism is seen as a social affront or a personal insult” (Knutson et al., 2002a:71). They also go on to assert that “Thais expect people to be mild and modest” (Knutson et al., 2002a:70).

Rogers et al (2002) comment on Hall’s book that “An important appeal of *The Silent Language* to its readers, was its illumination of previously hidden dimensions of human communication, particularly proxemics (how space affects communication) and chronemics (how time affects communication)”

(Rogers et al., 2002:12). As alluded above, the action I was keen to achieve was to complete the billing transaction as quickly as possible as the taxi was waiting outside. In Thailand, time does not appear to be such an important factor and keenness to complete the transaction as quickly as possible may have not had a positive impact.

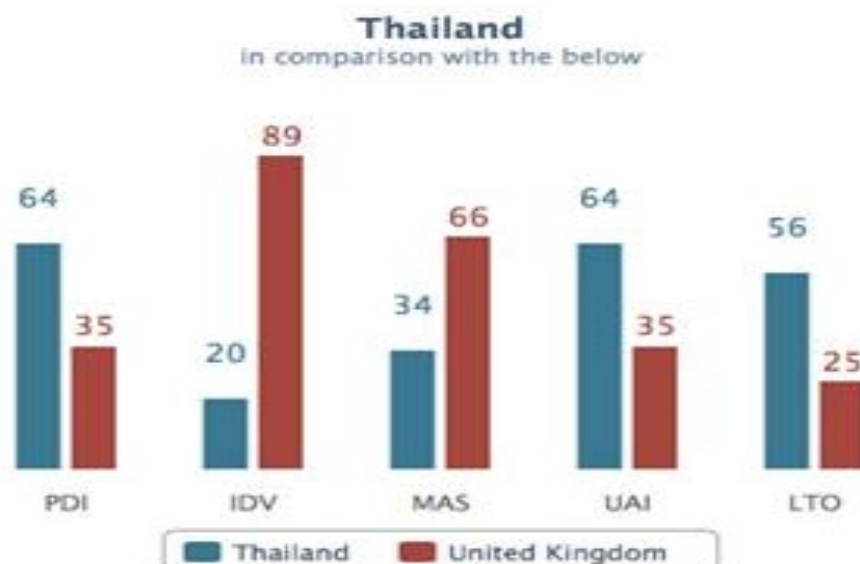
Hall(1959) talks about a person's own culture and how it is difficult to forget it when he says, "it is this difficulty that human beings have in getting outside their own cultural skins" (Hall, 1959 Xii). In the above example the UK approach did not help to resolve the problem.

Cultural Differences

Thailand's education structure is determined by central government. Hallinger and Leithwood (1996) explain that "Virtually all educational decisions regarding policy, curriculum, goals, standards and funding are made by centralized bureaucracy. Centralized decision making even decided the size and acceptable load of a backpacks students may use to carry their books to school" (Hallinger and Leithwood, 1996:104). In Thailand, this structure reflects the traditional beliefs that those at the centre have greater expertise and knowledge to make the best decisions. "The belief reflects cultural norms concerning status and age" (Hallinger and Leithwood, 1996:104). Hallinger et al. continue, stating that in the appointment of staff (head teachers and teachers) the decision is based on bureaucratic criteria. "These selection criteria include age, years of experience, size of prior school and test results on administrative exams. Principles routinely are rotated among schools every two years. The decision is made at the Ministry, again primarily on bureaucratic criteria" (Hallinger and Leithwood, 1996:104). This highlights the differences that exist between the Thai educational sector and that of the UK. Much of Education in the UK is now left to the head teachers to interpret central government guidelines. Referring to backpacks, I have often thought my eight-year-old grandson's backpack was far too large for him. However, the school do not have any limitations as to what he can carry.

Hofstede et al. (2010) looked at the different areas they had developed in their model for Thailand. If we compare them with the UK (see Figure 16) we can see that some differences exist between the two countries, and this may impact upon the way people act because of cultural programming from birth.

Figure 16: Thailand Cultural Programming



If we consider the Power Distance index (PDI) we can see that the Thai relies to a greater extent upon his manager whereas someone from the UK is likely to have more freedom to act. Hofstede et al (2010) state that “power distance can therefore be defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede et al., 2010:61). I was too concerned with the matter in hand, the extra charges, to give any consideration to the person behind the desk and the authority he had.

When comparing the Individualism Index (IDV) there is a vast difference between Thailand and the UK. Hofstede (2010) relates the story of a Swedish and a Saudi businessman. They state, “for Swedes, business is done with a company; for the Saudis it’s done with a person whom one has learned to know and trust” (Hofstede et al., 2010:90). Vathansri (2013) states that “Thailand is characterised as a collectivism culture” (Vathansri, 2013:4). This would suggest that the staff at the hotel would emphasise teamwork and group orientation. Reflecting on the action taken as described in the vignette it may have had the unintentional effect of impacting upon everyone, due to the group approach that the Thais work to.

The uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) shows that Thailand is strong in this area (Figure 16). This would suggest that organisations have a lot of rules and consideration for the future (possible unknown) and that there are guidelines in place to follow. They consider anything that is different to what is known/planned to be a potential danger. When someone then challenges the rules, such as described in the vignette (why pay for the water), and then takes a UK cultural stance, this may have a major impact upon how a Thai employee will respond.

Vathansri (2013) discusses long term orientation and supports Hofstede's findings when he states that Thai people "often invest in long term personal networks. To live together with relatives who are married into the family is normal" (Vathansri, 2013:5). The paper then states that the population will "respect traditions, protect the face, and personality stability" (Vathansri, 2013:5).

Acculturation.

Acculturation is defined as

The process of cultural change and psychological change that results following meeting between cultures. The effects of acculturation can be seen at multiple levels in both interacting cultures. Acculturation is a direct change of one's culture through dominance over another's culture through either military or political conquest. At the group level, acculturation often results in changes to culture, customs, and social institutions. Noticeable group level effects of acculturation often include changes in food, clothing and language

(WIKIPEDA Acculturation).

Natarelli (2003) talks about what happens when two cultures are encountered, perhaps a person's home culture (their inbuilt programming from birth) and an overseas culture. "A culture-mutant is a product of interaction of two or more cultures; in other words, intercultural dynamics set off acculturation, which may come to play in a peaceful, seamless way or, very often, as brutal confrontation and wrestling between biological energy fields" (Natarelli, 2003:16).

Schwartz et al. (2010) state that "As migrants acquired the values, practices and beliefs of their new homeland, they were expected to discard those from their cultural heritage" (Schwartz et al., 2010: 238). They then describe four types of acculturation, "assimilation (adopts the receiving culture and discards the heritage culture), separation (rejects the receiving culture and retains the heritage culture), and integration (adopts the receiving culture and retains the heritage culture), and marginalization (rejects both the heritage and receiving culture)" (Schwartz et al., 2010:238).

As Natarelli (2003) and Schwartz et al (2010) indicate, when someone leaves their homeland and travels to a different country (for the purpose of the discussion this research looks at countries rather than micro cultures within a country such as the Native American within America) there is a strong possibility that although life continues, the processes to achieve moving forward differ from those of the person's homeland, and if these nuances are not recognised then problems can arise.

Masgoret and Ward (2016) assert that

There are numerous aspects of nonverbal communication, including activities such as culture-specific gestures, display of gaze, adoption of preferred body postures, the expression of emotions and the performance of ritualized routines such as greetings and leave-takings. Such nonverbal acts often carry implicit messages that define the nature of relationships within a culture, and these messages can vary widely across cultures (Masgoret and Ward, 2016:63).

As a visitor to Thailand, in effect a sojourner although a very short-term, temporary resident, I am confident my UK approach would be considered a 'bull in a china shop approach' to an issue which in effect was a Thai issue. No consideration was given to the nonverbal communication of the local culture or as Ntarelli would describe it I arrived at a 'brutal confrontation' Ntarelli (2003:16).

Reflecting and making sense of cultural differences and helping in a small part to address the research question.

This vignette has shown that a lack of appreciation of local customs and cultures can result in an undesirable outcome for all parties. If, as the thesis title indicates, "Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn: An investigation into local customs/cultures" had not been considered unexpected outcomes may appear. Hofstede et al.'s (2010) model helped when considering how local Thais operate and Vathansri's (2013) contribution saying the population will respect tradition and protect the face was supported in the vignette.

Reflecting on my handling of the charge for the water, the research explains why the incident was handled very insensitively. The approach taken was a UK cultural one, straight and to the point, with no consideration given to the local culture. However, the event occurred in Thailand, and although everyone spoke English a clash between the Thai and UK culture occurred. Thais like peace and harmony, and to adopt a confrontational approach made it difficult for anyone to save face, another particularly important area of Thai culture. Then, to make things worse, the process of throwing the credit card at the hotel member of staff just exacerbated the situation.

This event took place just as I was becoming aware that although commerce continues around the world, and processes and procedures to support commerce are in place, the approach people take to achieve their goals can be different. The environment/culture that a person has grown up in will impact upon how they interact. For me this could be considered a 'eureka' moment, one of the factors that set me on this research project to find out more. Morrison & Conway (2006) advise to "never lose control of your emotions and do not be overly assertive; that is considered poor manners" (Morrison and Conway, 2006:510). They add that Thais avoid confrontation at all costs. Future dialogue with

Thais would have to appreciate that differences must be handled diplomatically to ensure that the Thai was never forced to lose face.

According to Brannen and Thomas (2010:6), a bicultural person is someone who is trying to “identify with two (or more) distinct cultures”. They also state that “a person can have knowledge of another culture without identifying with it. For example international students, expatriate workers and even tourists may be able to acquire knowledge about a different culture and apply this knowledge to guide their behaviours without actively identifying with that culture” (Brannen and Thomas, 2010:6). The vignette tells the story of one of my early ventures to the Far East. It is difficult to reflect and imagine what I felt at the time as my knowledge on the topic of culture has increased over time. However, frustration entered the dialogue as it became obvious there was a problem, as the two parties did not fully understand each other’s stance. At this point I had not realised there was another way to handle the problem. This was my early introduction to a person who Brennan et al. described as someone who is trying to identify with two (or more) distinct cultures; it was, in effect, my first introduction to the topic of bicultural Individuals.

You do not know what you don’t know!! This is a statement which, when applied to overseas culture, I find most frustrating. Unless you have grown up in a country how can you fully appreciate all the nuances. In some countries some processes/procedures are taken as the norm, such as Japan, whereas in other countries such, as the USA, everything must be clearly spelt out.

Opening Pandora’s Box – lifelong learning.

Barnett (2011) suggests that “learning has its place in a world in which, the more one learns, the more one is aware of counter positions and perspectives” (Barnett, 2011:5). Most people are lucky enough to start out as learners and continue through life coming across new ideas in their day to day lives. Many consider when babies are born, they start life as an empty vessel and as they grow, they gorge themselves on the feast of knowledge. Barnett (2011) also looks at learning conundrums. One conundrum is that “It has been remarked that the more we come to know, so our ignorance in turn grows” (Barnett, 2011:7). When this research project commenced, I thought it would help to clarify the area of overseas culture. As it grew, the knowledge bank developed which helped in understanding world affairs but at the same time it also became obvious that rather than the knowledge pool getting smaller, it in fact grew as more doors opened, a little like Pandora’s Box. To add to this challenge, events change, so keeping up to date produces another issue. As Barnett (2011) states “our knowledge of the world has put the world beyond our full understanding for it permanently recedes before us” (Barnett, 2011:8).

This vignette demonstrates that I had completely overlooked that I was not in the UK. I had adopted the UK approach with little consideration for the Thai culture. Hofstede's model highlights the differences in the way they approach different situations and if these are not taken into consideration as in my situation you risk offending people.

Conscious competence learning model

At the start of the example above, using the conscious competence learning model I had started in the unconscious incompetence stage. I had completely overlooked the fact I was in Thailand and should have considered the Thai culture. Immediately after the conversation I had realised the discourse had not ended well. In effect I had moved to the conscious incompetence. Reflecting and using the information gathered while completing this thesis I realised the errors of my way. In effect I had moved into the conscious competence stage and hopefully should a similar situation arise I will be able to deal with the situation. In effect I had moved into the conscious competence stage. This then took me to the next challenge, and I found myself at the start of another cycle in effect the unconscious competence.

4.0.6 Vignette 2

Introduction

A recent visit to Indonesia highlighted another local cultural difference. The outcome was that I nearly lost my wife in a massive shopping complex. This vignette is designed to show the importance of having knowledge of the numbering system when in the Far East. As the thesis title, Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn: an investigation into local customs/cultures, indicates without completing any investigations you are operating without the knowledge of what is occurring around you, a potentially dangerous situation.

The Republic of Indonesia is an emerging country with a population of around 250 million. To a local Indonesian, the country is called “‘Tanah Air Kita’, meaning our land and water” (Bosrock, 2007:169). Geographically located close to Australia, it comprises an archipelago of 17,508 islands (Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board, 2011:3) although this figure is subject to fluctuation as some of the small uninhabited islands disappear and others appear.

While religious freedom is stipulated in the Indonesian constitution, the government officially recognizes only six religions: Islam, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, at 87.2% in 2010, with the majority (99%) being Sunni (Wikipedia Indonesia). Schiller (2001) states that the “official moto of the Republic of Indonesia, ‘Unity in Diversity’, distinctly acknowledges the heterogeneity of its populace” (Schiller, 2001:415). The state acknowledges the difference and seeks to ensure that the citizens work together. However, this research focuses on the macro culture rather than local cultural nuances.

Although many parts of the country are very vibrant, economically speaking, poverty still exists, and there are still a high number of people on extremely low wages. The way these people look at earning money can be quite ingenious.

Although the country is a major player in the Far East, its expansion has resulted in major issues as far as the infrastructure within the country is concerned, especially with reference to the roads and the number of vehicles trying to navigate their way from one destination to another. The result: gridlock! At the time of my visit at the end of 2015, one of the ways the government was trying to overcome this problem was to have toll roads. These toll roads have a set fee which is reduced when carrying passengers – the more passengers in the vehicle the lower the fee (to the legal carrying limit of the car). The entrepreneurial locals have seen this as an opportunity to generate income. On one of the main roads just outside Jakarta, as you approach the toll booth you can see several people standing

at the side of the road. Cars with perhaps one person in them will stop to pick up one or two passengers and then proceed through the tolls. As they have passengers, the fee is reduced. A little further down the road the car will stop, the driver will pay the passengers a small sum, and they will get out and return to their original location to start the process again. These people are known locally as jockeys and are recognised by many of the public.

As my time in Indonesia went by, I began seeing differences between what occurred in the UK and Indonesia. When we landed at Jakarta airport, we left the aeroplane and were directed to the arrival hall where everyone was required to stand in a line (queue) while waiting for the necessary paperwork to be processed. While in the arrivals hall I noticed a person on one side of the building gesturing to a group of people on the other side that they should walk over to him. Rather than the hand movement used in the UK (hand movement fingers in an upwards figuration moved towards the palm) he held his arm out the palm of his hand faced the ground and he gently moved his fingers. I was advised the UK method had a different connotation in Indonesia and could upset people. A similar situation could occur when pointing with one finger; the UK style is also frowned upon with the locals using all their fingers when pointing.

Indonesian or 'Bahasa Indonesian', a standardised dialect of Malay, is the main language of the country. It was introduced after the declaration of independence from the Netherlands in 1945. However, there are in the region of 700 indigenous languages spoken across Indonesia. Fortunately, English is generally spoken in the main towns and cities through the country.

Lived Experience

When we arrived in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, my wife and I duly presented ourselves at the apartment block in which my son lived. To get to the correct flat visitors had to go to a reception office and someone from this office would then show you to the correct lift. On entering the lift, I was faced with several interesting phenomena. While en route to the 22nd floor in the apartment block where my son lived, I was busy studying the buttons trying to make sense of them (see figure 18).



Figure 17: Missing Floors on Floor Indicator in Lift. (photograph permission of N Wilkinson)

The first thing which caught my attention was that there was no ground floor. I was advised by a local, who happened to be in the lift with me and could see the puzzled expression on my face, that P1 to P9 were parking levels. So, it would appear that the living accommodation started at level 5 and went up to level 39. I was fascinated with the buttons so took a photograph. It was not until I was studying the picture later that I noticed there were no levels 4, 13, 14, 24, or 34. A further conversation with a local in the lift at a later date seemed to resolve this issue. They said 13 is an unlucky number so we do not wish people to live on an unlucky floor. The number 4 in Chinese is represented by a symbol which is remarkably like the symbol used for death so again this floor number is not used. In the Chinese culture 14 is also considered unlucky. In fact, it can have a greater impact because 14 sounds

like ‘will certainly die’ in both Putunghua and Cantonese. (Wikia Elevation) Similar traditions apply to 24 and 34. I wondered if this meant that signing business contracts on the 4th of the month would not be a good idea. Bosrock (2007) states “In some Asian countries the ‘first floor’ is generally a building’s second level. The ground floor is labelled ‘0’ or ‘ground floor’. The second level is labelled ‘1’, the third level is labelled ‘2’ and so on. For superstitious reasons, some Asian buildings label fourth floors or thirteenth floors with other numbers” (Bosrock, 2007:32).

My stay in Indonesia continued and proved to be very fruitful, full of new activities to observe. A day later we headed off to one of the major shopping centres, the Grand Indonesia, and I agreed to meet my wife outside a department store on the 4th floor in this exceptionally large modern shopping centre. Just before the agreed time I hopped into the lift and looked at the buttons – there was no fourth floor. I exited the lift at the first opportunity and looked at the indication board (figure 19).



Figure 18: Missing Level 4. (photograph permission of Nicholas Wilkinson)

Although there was a level 5 there was no level 4; in its place there was a level 3a. It would appear the local culture, which dictates that 4 is an unlucky number, has had an impact. Who would want a shop on an unlucky floor? Having recognised that different countries had different thinking about beliefs (cultures) this trip was one of the first in which I had purposefully tried to program my mind to recognise these differences. According to Miall and Misted (2013) the English are “superior to all other nations” (Miall and Misted, 2013:3) I wondered if I had been tarnished with this English upbringing; something which could be difficult to break away from!

What was happening.

Until my visit to Indonesia, I had underestimated the importance that superstition had on business decisions and general life. In the UK, the lift goes from ground (maybe further down into the basement) up to the top floor with consecutive floor numbering. Although there is a superstition about the number 13 in the UK, you still have the 13th floor or houses numbered 13. (In the past I live in one numbered 13). For me 13 proved to be a lucky number, bringing me good fortune as I bought it at the right time and sold it when the price was very favourable to me.

While completing this research I have realised how my subconscious is operating all the time, perhaps without me being fully aware, and this could be one of those times. I have discussed how the number four is considered unlucky and how the Chinese community think 8 is a lucky number. However, I wonder what an Indonesian would think of the results of a research project carried out by Professor Richard Wiseman from the University of Hertfordshire, on the topic of UK superstition. For example, how would you explain to an Indonesian the action of 'touching wood'?

Listed below are some of Professor Wiseman's findings:

Percentage of people endorsing each superstition

- 1 Touch wood 74%
- 2 Fingers crossed 65%
- 3 Avoiding ladders 50%
- 4 Smashing mirrors 39%
- 5 Carrying charm 28%
- 6 Number 13 26%

(Wiseman, 2003:2)

The whole area of cultural history (superstition) must be treated with great respect. As explained above, the number 4 is connected to death in Indonesia, and therefore this needs to be considered when signing a document; perhaps moving the suggested date for the signing of a document by a day would have a better reception. As China has in the region of 1.2 billion people, and has been in existence for many years, their influence within Asia is quite significant. The opening of the Olympic Games on the 8th day of the 8th month at 8 pm shows the importance of this number within Asia.

When I started to explore the area of culture relating to the Far East, in this case Indonesia, I had not yet realised the importance of these small nuances; however, as the research started to uncover these differences, I began to appreciate how a number can have such a major impact upon a business decision. However, it also made me realise that perhaps an Indonesian may wonder what I am

doing/saying when I say, ‘touch wood’ or everything will be ok, ‘fingers crossed’. As Wiseman’s (2003) research showed, a UK programmed person may also have some inbuilt superstitions. Growing up, I can recall my grandparents and parents making mention of all six of Wiseman’s superstitions.

One of the many facts I discovered while completing this research is that my investigations just scratch the surface. Unless you move to Indonesia and live there for some considerable time, you will not get to know how to blend in with a local and adopt their way of operating. However, for someone who had not been born in the country and from birth been programmed by locals (mother, father etc.) it would mean they would still have the potential of not fully understanding the local culture.

Intercultural communication

Intercultural communications is defined as a “discipline that studies communication across different cultures and social groups, or how culture affects communication. It is used to describe the wide range of communication processes and problems that naturally appear within an organization or social context made up of individuals from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds” (Wikipedia Intercultural communication). Bosrock (2007) states that the cultures on the islands of Indonesia are as numerous as the islands. It is also “the world’s largest Muslim nation” (Bosrock, 2007:169).

Hofstede et al. (2010) included Indonesia in their research and if we look at the model they developed and compare that with the UK (see figure 17) we can see that differences exist between the two countries. In some cases, the differences are quite considerable. This model can be used to help compare the way people act in Indonesia with those from the UK.

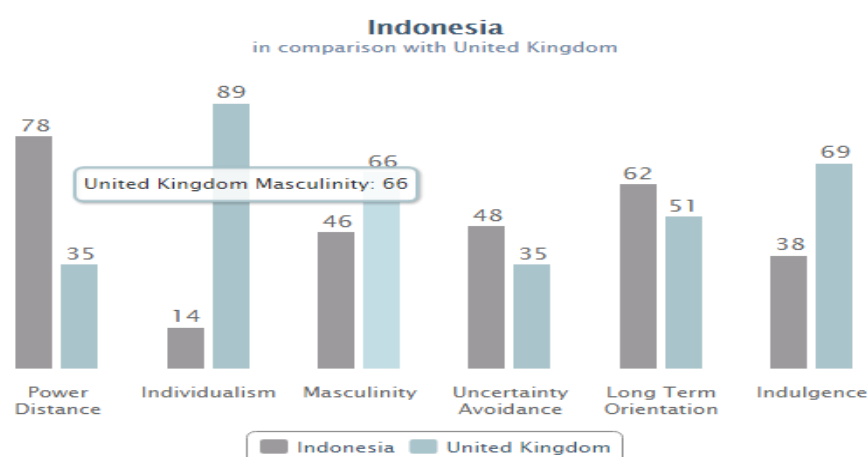


Figure 19: Comparison between Indonesia and UK (Culture) (Hofstede G Indonesia)

The graph indicates that there are some quite large differences. These graphical measurements will give an indication as to how a person is programmed and will help in understanding how they will carry out communications/functions, compared with someone from the UK. In the case of power distance, the score of 78 against 35 indicates that Indonesia is dependent upon hierarchy where leaders direct. Power is centralised, and employees follow instructions from those above in the command chain. The UK is nowhere near the same structure. Individualism is the area with the biggest difference between the UK and Indonesia. In the UK, 'I' would be used rather than 'we', whereas in Indonesia the group takes greater importance. This is shown in the following example:

For example, in Indonesia, if one wishes to marry, it is important to meet a woman's family because the family is so important to her. If a man wants to be taken seriously by a woman, he has to visit the latter's family and introduce himself formally to the parents of the girl. It is inappropriate to court a woman and formalize the relationship without informing the parents of the girl first.

(Hofstede G Indonesia)

Hofstede et al. continue the topic of family values quoting the saying in Indonesia that "You can get another wife or husband but not another mother or father". While in the country I was introduced to one of my son's friends and observed this strong family bond. An unfortunate incident happened to the brother of a young female friend of my son; his house burnt down. Within a short period of time the whole family had been mobilised and was en route to help with the reconstruction of the building.

The masculinity figures indicated that Indonesia could be considered to be a feminine society. While walking around the city of Jakarta, my wife and I noticed that the body language of the locals was different to the UK, which made us realise we were no longer in the UK where a much higher masculinity index was recorded. Uncertainty avoidance looks at how the future is dealt with. In Indonesia they have a low preference for avoiding uncertainty. The Indonesians have a strong preference towards the Javanese culture of separation of internal self from external self. During my visit to the country I did not see any conflicts even when we went away from the main areas with my son and his friends.

Long term orientation is demonstrated in much of the country's past heritage and traditions. While in Indonesia I was taken to see children being taught and playing the Angklung at a school that promotes time honoured traditions. Hofstede's index indicates there is a close similarity between the UK and Indonesia. Indulgence is the last of Hofstede index. Hofstede states this is the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses. In effect, the score indicates the Indonesians have a culture of restraint. In this case people feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong.

Although the above gives a general overview of the country, as Hofstede's research was completed around 1970 it is now a little dated, nevertheless it does give a base from which to work. From my observations the Indulgence scale may have changed, as in the major cities there are many top branded cars driving around, and new housing developments are growing. Jakarta has a massive shopping mall selling all the latest branded goods, and on the days when I visited the mall it was full of local people. However, at the other end of the scale there was a second mall close by which appeared to be of the old traditional style, with rows and rows of units selling clothes and related items. The units were around 20 feet square and would contain all the items the owners had produced. I was advised by one of my local contacts who was showing me around that the owner would live, sleep, and eat in the unit; in effect it would be open 24 hours a day. My wife wanted to purchase an item from one stall, and she had to wake the owner up to conduct the transaction.

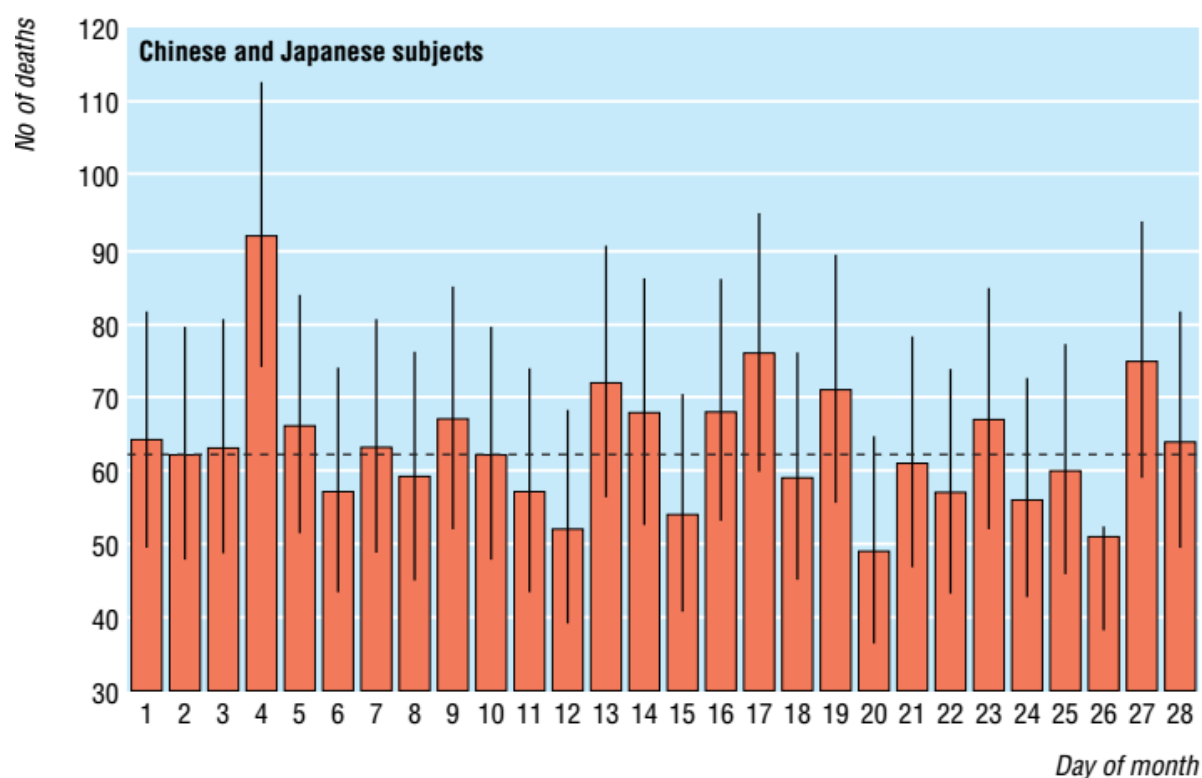
Further research into why Chinese culture had entered the Indonesia way of life produced some interesting information. A local newspaper, the Jakarta Globe, ran an article which looked back at the history of the country, and in turn supplied an insight into some of the local culture. The article stated:

Chinese traders first began commerce with Indonesia in the 15th century after the famous voyages of Admiral Zheng He to Southeast Asia, India, Arabia, and Africa. These traders established a large Chinese presence in port cities such as Malacca, Palembang and Surabaya and began a process of cross-culturalization that continues to this day. Even though for more than three decades of Suharto rule Chinese-Indonesians were banned from practicing their traditions — most notably not being able to celebrate Chinese New Year and being forced to adopt Indonesian names, as well as being banned from politics — the presence of their descendants is still strong in Indonesia today, with influence in everything from cuisine to the medicines and elixirs that Indonesians take when they are ill.

(Jakarta Globe)

This could help to explain why many Chinese traditions, including floor numbering, are respected in the country. Phillips et al. (2001) conducted research to try and establish if there was any correlation between the number 4 and the timing of deaths. As the following graph (Figure 20) indicates, the 4th day in the month peaked then fell back.

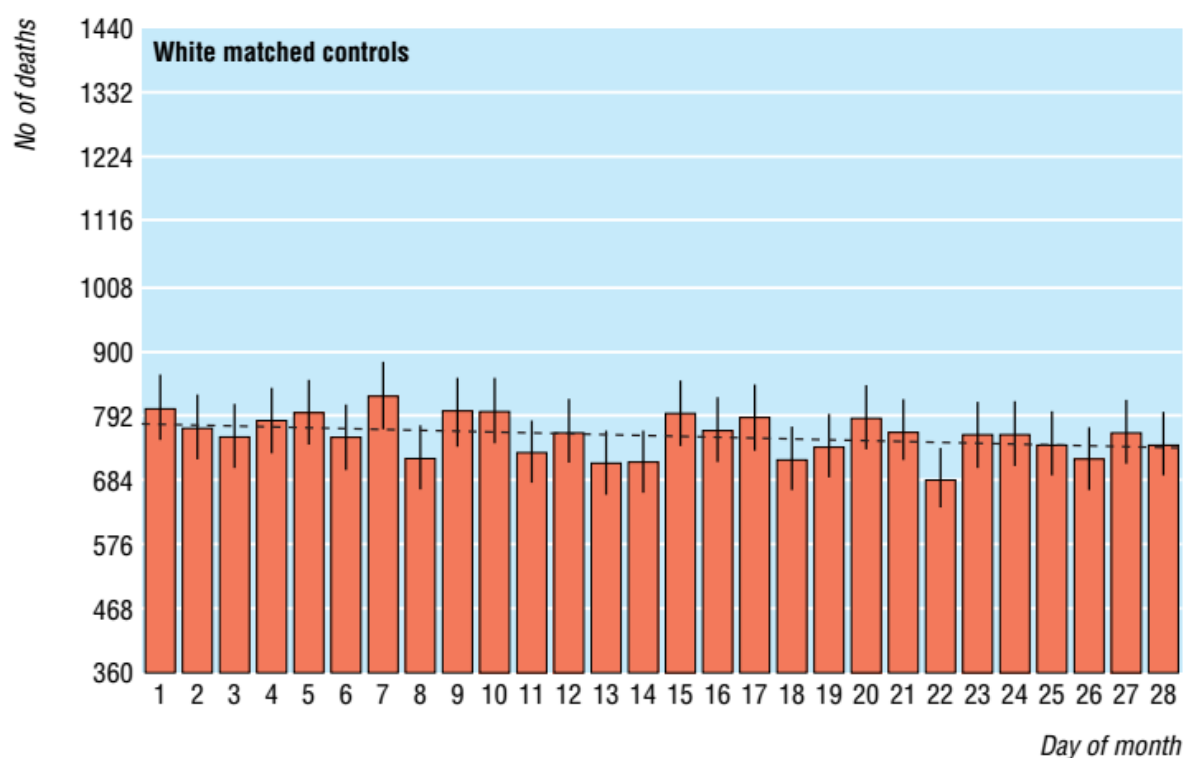
Figure 20: Number of Deaths per Month (Chinese and Japanese Subjects)



(Phillips, 2001:1445)

They contrasted their results to a sample they called white matched controls (figure 21) in which the results stayed constant, no peaks on the 4th.

Figure 21: Number of Deaths per Month (White Matches Controls)



(Phillips, 2001:1445).

Phillips et al. (2001) suggest the reason for the peaks on the 4th on the Chinese and Japanese subjects is cultural stress. They state, “at present the only explanation consistent with the findings is that psychological stress linked to the number four elicits additional deaths among Chinese and Japanese patients” (Phillips, 2001). This trend is not reflected in the white subjects.

Block and Kramer (2009) investigated the impact lucky numbers have on marketing exercises. Regarding the lucky Chinese number 8, They state that in the “government auction of licence plates in Guangzhou, China the most expensive plate (AC6688) went for 80000 yuan” (Block and Kramer, 2009:161), which at the time was a considerable amount of money. It is also interesting to note that when the Beijing Summer Olympic games opened it was at 08.08.08 pm on the 8th day of the 8th month of 2008. This supports the idea that the Chinese take the auspiciousness of the number 8 seriously. However, Agarwal et al (2014) suggest that “the premium for ‘8’ could also be interpreted as conspicuous spending to signal wealth or status” (Agarwal et al., 2014:6).

Torgler (2007) conducted a survey of companies and how superstition affects their way of operating. The outcome of their survey indicates that “63.8% of the companies had used the services of feng shui experts” (Torgler, 2007:717). The article continues discussing the process of employing new staff in Hong Kong, and states that in “many major local banks in Hong Kong, a fortune-teller takes part in the interviews with new candidates for managerial positions. The Economist (1993a) reports that few Taiwanese companies purchase a property or open a new business without consulting feng shui experts, and every big company in Taiwan has called in feng shui experts (sometimes repeatedly)” (Torgler, 2007:717).

Learning from experience and using this new knowledge to help answer, in part, the research question.

Geert-Hofstede’s comparison research shows that there are some interesting differences between how an Indonesian and a UK person are conditioned (programmed). The biggest difference is seen in the Individualism index, with Indonesians working as a group whereas the personnel in the UK work mainly on their own.

The impact of this difference may result in frustration to a UK person. In the UK prompt decision making is possible, whereas in Indonesia the locals may wish to refer any questions/uncertainty back to the team to get their support. This in turn may impact on the speed at which decisions are made. Power distance is another interesting area. In Indonesia, the boss is the boss. In the UK, some power

is delegated down the line, and it is therefore important that when working with people from the Far East you recognise who has the power to influence/make any decisions.

The impact that a number may have is another area which needs to be monitored. Signing a contract on the 4th of the month may not be a good idea. As Phillips (2001)' graph above indicates, the 4th of the month has an impact upon the Chinese, who have operated within Indonesia for many years and therefore have an influence on the culture of the country. In China, the start of the Olympic Games on the 8th would further support the importance of making sure that positive and negative impact numbers were known by anyone operating in that area. As a local person asked me in the lift as I travelled up to my son's flat in Jakarta: who would wish to live on the unlucky 13th floor or even worse the 4th floor which is connected to death?

Before starting this research, I had no idea of the importance that the Indonesians put on all these local superstitions/cultures. Although my visit was relatively short, it was not long before I started accepting these local customs; for instance, when meeting my wife, we would arrange to meet on level 3a not 4.

Geert-Hofstede's comparison research showed people in different countries are conditioned differently. Phillips (2001) graph provided a pictorial representation of his findings which suggested certain numbers such as 4 were best avoided. Block and Kramer's (2009) research into lucky numbers suggested that the number 8 was a lucky number. Torgler's (2007) survey of companies and how superstition affects their way of operating provided more information on cultural differences.

This research has helped me to gain an appreciation of what to expect while travelling in Indonesia. However, although the research has helped to increase my knowledge on Indonesia culture, the adage – you don't know what you don't know - still haunts me! Returning to the iceberg model, the research goes just below the surface.

This vignette has looked at superstition both in the UK and the Far East. In Indonesia, the locals have their own traditions and working in this country without an understanding of the different nuances could be challenging if not costly to any company.

Conscious competence learning model

Using the Conscious competence learning model, at the start of this vignette I had little appreciation of the importance of certain numbers in effect I was in the unconscious incompetence stage. My trip in the lift and at the shopping centre made me realise how important it was to understand which number to use and which ones to avoid. In effect I had arrived at the conscious incompetence stage.

Referring to the shopping centre I now knew if I wanted to meet my wife on what in the UK would be the 4th level, I would say 3a. I had arrived at the conscious competence stage.

4.0.7 Vignette 3

Vignette 3 was developed following my visit to a museum in Jakarta Indonesia. At the time of my visit I did not appreciate what was going on. It was only when I reflected, I realised that when I was looking at the same picture as the locals what we saw could be different. This made me investigate this area further and my findings are recorded below.

Lived Experience

My son's work required him to remain in Indonesia to complete a project, and therefore his stay in the country was longer than envisaged. My wife and I decided to take advantage of this change and set off for Indonesia, this time just for a holiday. My son had arranged a trip through part of the country, starting with Bali and finishing in the capital city, Jakarta. As Indonesia is an archipelago, the journey involved air, sea, and road travel. When we arrived back in the capital my son was required to return to the office to ensure his staff had completed the tasks he had set before we left. He had left us with a list of places to visit in the capital, which included the Bank of Indonesia museum which is where we set off to explore.

While looking at all the excellent exhibits I came across a picture which depicted a Dutch couple getting married in the 1930's (figure 22). At the time it did not have any major impact on my thought processes. Although I did take some pictures at the museum of different artefacts, I did not include one of the wedding couple.



Figure 22: Dutch Wedding. (photo permission of Museum Bank Indonesia)

However, at a later date when I had what could be considered a eureka moment, I began to realise that I had been looking at the picture through 'western lenses' whereas the majority of the people in the museum at that time were local school children who would have been looking at it through

‘eastern lens’, and would possibly have been thinking how odd the couple looked. To me the picture looked like the type of picture I would expect of the 1930’s. As the importance of the picture grew on me, I realised I needed to get a picture of the bride and groom and this was duly arranged after I returned to the UK. Further research showed that Indonesian weddings were quite different to UK weddings.

Below is a picture of a bride and groom in traditional Indonesia wedding attire:



Figure 23: Indonesian Wedding
(Wikimedia Commons)

Figure 23 is a picture of an Indonesian wedding dress. Wedding Folk in Indonesia, Kepulauan Riau

My visit to Indonesia had made me realise that weddings take on different forms. From my own observations and discussions in Indonesia, I began to see that for most weddings, formal traditional wear is recommended. The local population love to have a reason to dress up. The bride and groom will dress in a way that makes them stand out from their guests. Also, weddings are large affairs; it is not uncommon to receive an invitation just days before a wedding which may be a verbal invitation, or even one via SMS or email.

Although wedding regalia and receptions in the Far East are quite spectacular and involve a considerable number of people, due to the hot climate the material used to make the garments is quite often noticeably light.

Hofstede’s (2010) research shows Indonesia as a collective society. This would indicate that the population would be expected to conform to the local social structure to which they belong, and this is highlighted in family relationships. When considering a marriage, the man would firstly be expected to meet the woman’s family “because the family is so important to her” (Hofstede G Indonesia)

This meeting would be a formal event. In Indonesia it is considered inappropriate to date a girl without the approval of her parents. This family relationship goes further. “Indonesian children are committed to their parents, as are the parents committed to them all their growing lives” (Hofstede G Indonesia). In return the children take care of their parents in old age. Hofstede goes on to quote an Asian saying

that is accepted in Indonesia, "You can get another wife or husband but not another mother or father". Adawiyah (2014) talks about the different types of weddings in Indonesia which have developed over the years, influenced by the different tribes which are influenced by family and country values. He states "as we know that Indonesia has many tribes and cultural, so do not be surprised if we often see traditional wedding are unique. The wedding ceremony is a traditional ceremony that included we must keep, for out of it will be reflected in our identity, the union of a family can reflect a country's unification. Custom weddings in Indonesia so many various, some big traditional wedding custom that is often used for sacred weddings in Javanese traditional wedding" (Adawiyah, 2014:7).

Intercultural theory

Kuchler & Were (2005) ask, "do new garments make a prince of a pauper? A woman of a man" (Kuchler and Were, 2005:4), and go on to question what we should expect from a change of clothes. They continue by suggesting "Transvestism, after all, is a serious business" (Kuchler and Were, 2005:4). In an area of Indonesia, the role of the Burginese bissu is to act as a link between the living and the dead and this requires mixed gendered dressing.

The bissu belong to an ancient tradition that predates the 13th-century arrival of Islam in Indonesia. These days, however, Engel is one of the last remaining. He worries that soon the bissu could be lost forever (Aljazeera 2015).

Over recent years in the UK the approach to the female versus male society appears to have shifted. After the 2nd World War there was still the attitude that men were men and woman were woman, but the change that had taken place regarding the demarcation of labour, with women doing men's roles as most males were in the armed forces, continued after VE day and still continues today.

Heywood (2002) suggests that interculturally literate persons, "possess the understandings, competences, attitudes and identities necessary for successful living and working in a cross cultural or pluralist setting" (Heywood, 2002:10). Intercultural competence is defined by Trompenaars and Wooliams (2009) as "the capability of successful communications and effective collaboration with people of other cultures through recognition of differences and respect for other points of view" (Trompenaars and Wooliams, 2009). Without doubt this research has opened the door to many Far Eastern mysteries with reference to culture, and the journey will continue once this research document is complete.

However, to get a complete understanding will be a real challenge, as the following BBC article indicates:

Most of us don't like to think or talk about death, but there are some people who do. In the Toraja region of Sulawesi, in Indonesia, the dead are a constant part of day-to-day life.

The plain wood-panelled living room, with no furniture and just a few pictures on the wall, is filled with chattering voices and the smell of coffee. It is an intimate family gathering.

"How is your father?" one guest asks the host, and the mood suddenly changes. Everyone glances at the small room in the corner, where an old man is lying on a colourful bed.

"He's still sick," replies his daughter, Mamak Lisa, calmly.

Smiling, Mamak Lisa gets up and walks over to the old man, gently shaking him. "Father we have some visitors here to see you - I hope this doesn't make you uncomfortable or angry," she says.

Then she invites me to step inside and meet Paulo Cirinda.

My eyes are fixed on the bed. Paulo Cirinda lies completely motionless - not even a blink - though I could hardly see his eyes through his dusty glasses anyway (figure 35). His skin looks rough and grey, dotted with countless holes, as if eaten by insects. The rest of his body is covered by several layers of clothing.

I have been staring for far too long when his young grandchildren playfully run into the room and snap me back to reality.

"Why is granddad always sleeping?" one of them asks with a cheeky laugh. "Granddad, wake up and let's go eat!" the other one almost shouts.

"Shhh... Stop disturbing granddad, he's sleeping," Mamak Lisa snaps at them. "You're going to make him angry."

Now, here's the surprising thing. This man, Paulo Cirinda, died more than 12 years ago - yet his family think he's still very much alive.

To outsiders, the idea of keeping a dead man's body on show at home feels quite alien. Yet for more than a million people from this part of the world - the Toraja region of Sulawesi in eastern Indonesia - it's a tradition dating back centuries. Here, animist beliefs blur the line between this world and the next, making the dead very much present in the world of the living.

(BBC Toraja.2017)

How will I adapt to this approach to life which is so different to mine?

Cultural difference

The visit to the Bank of Indonesia Museum provided another example of cultural difference. The comparison between the picture of the Dutch wedding and that of a local wedding was a eureka moment which highlighted the different approaches taken by the West and Indonesia. The research continued and uncovered another Indonesian tradition, that of the bissu. Although accepted by the

Indonesians, to Western observers this tradition may be difficult to accept. Acting as a link between the living and the dead, the bissu requires mixed gendered dressing which is considered quite acceptable to locals. The approach to the dead and Paulo Cirinda is another approach to death; however, it is quite different to the traditional way in the UK.

Learning Theory

As this research developed so more exciting new areas were uncovered, some of which were exceedingly difficult to accept. Most people who grow up in the UK are programmed in UK traditions, and to have a corpse in the same room or the next room as them for 12 years would not really bode well. What would visitors in the UK say if you adopted this approach? The main impact would be a loss of visitors. However, this does not appear to be the case in Indonesia.

That Eureka moment – there are differences which help to answer a small part of the research question.

My visit to the Bank of Indonesia Museum started out as just a normal day. As I would in the UK I had dressed as I thought would be appropriate and arranged transport to the location. From the drop off point at the museum I walked straight into the building. Up to this point, other than the weather being a lot warmer, it seemed that the journey had not been vastly different to one in London. However, what I had failed to realise, and what became apparent through my research, was that because this was not London it was Jakarta, Indonesia, things were similar but not the same. Reflecting on the trip from my accommodation to the museum, it had clearly not been the same as driving through London. One of the first difference I observed was that motor bikes were everywhere and going in all directions, sometimes even obeying the rules of the road. A few days earlier I had been standing on a pavement watching the traffic on a one-way street. The motor bikes were not concerned that it was a one-way street, and when they met a vehicle going in the opposite direction they just bounced onto the pavement and continued. I was really engrossed in the activities on the road and it was only when my wife pointed out that a bike nearly ran me over that I became aware that the pavements, to a motorcyclist, appeared to be just an extension of the road and great care was needed.

Reflecting on the time spent at the museum, following that taxi journey, I now wonder what else I missed as I wandered around looking at all the exhibits. It was not until I arrived home that I realised that the Indonesians were looking at the exhibits through their Indonesian eyes, and so were seeing things that I did not. The picture of the Dutch couple first aroused my curiosity. When I looked at the picture, I saw a picture of a local couple getting married. However, on reflection I began wonder what the local children might have thought about the Dutch couple and their attire. This led me to think

about the other items I saw, and again I was confronted by the phrase 'you don't know what you don't know'; so how was I to gain an understanding of what the local children (population) were seeing?

Hofstede's (2010) research shows Indonesia as a collective society, one which is very family orientated. Continuing in the same vein, families, and weddings, Adawiyah (2014) suggests that traditional wedding are unique, and some are quite different to the ones held in the UK. Trompenaars and Wooliams (2009) suggest that respect is gained through the recognition of other cultural differences. This then leads to the thesis title and the importance of when working in the Far East: carrying out an Investigation into Local Customs/Cultures. To walk into a room and find a dead body could be a shock for anyone not knowing the local culture/customs.

Travelling to different, wonderful Far Eastern overseas countries has let me practise as a novice anthropologist/*ethnographic* researcher and, with careful observation, I am starting to get an appreciation of what is happening. However, I am often drawn back to Hall's work, *The Silent Language*, and the Hidden Dimension. Local culture can be considered to be like an iceberg. You can see some but there is a lot underneath which cannot be seen, and for me I am just going beneath the surface; there is still a lot more of the iceberg to explore. My current research is helping me to gain a greater understanding, and just the fact I recognise that there is a difference in cultures is a major step forward. Exploring the culture of another country will be a life-long experience and I doubt if I will ever know everything. How can I when I was programmed in the UK?

Vignette 3 looks at the way people interpreted what they saw. In the above example what I thought was a nice smart wedding dress to an Indonesian may have been very unusual. It highlights what I see and accept may not be the same to a local. The example of the corpse being kept for several years highlights this cultural difference.

Conscious competence learning model

Reflecting back to the conscious competence learning model when I first saw the picture of the Dutch wedding couple I accepted it as the norm in effect I had arrived at the first stage of the model, the unconscious incompetence stage. When I had the 'eureka moment' and realised that to a local the wedding attire would look strange I had moved into the next stage of the model the conscious incompetence. This new knowledge helped me move into the conscious competence stage realising what I saw and what a local saw may be different.

4.0.8 Vignette 4

In the UK time has a high priority in people's daily life. When you agree to meet at a particular time that is the time everyone is expected to be there. In the UK you would expect people to be monochronic in their approach. However overseas the importance of time may rank lower on the scale of importance as the following vignette which show.

During the year I had been busy expanding my network with different people and organisations connected to the Far East, an area which my company wished to explore to establish if there was an opportunity to start a branch office. In the course of my networking I had come across an Indonesian organisation with which I had developed a good rapport, and I had kept in contact with a senior official of the organisation and received information on different events that the person thought would be of interest to me. One day I received an email which included an invitation to an event to be held at the Indonesian Embassy in London. When I looked at the event and the attendees, I realised that I had to attend as it could open doors to my target market. I duly responded that I would be delighted to accept their invitation.

I started to plan my trip to London. First, I thought that as the event was being held at the embassy it would be a formal event and a suit would be needed. Then I looked at the traveling times. The event was due to start at 18.00 hrs. Having attended other networking events in London before, I had learnt it can be beneficial to arrive a few minutes early so it gives you a chance to introduce yourself to those gathered before the official part of the evening starts. I therefore thought if I arrived at 17.45 hrs that would give me the opportunity to talk to other guests who arrive early. I then looked at the train times, factored in a little time for any delays, and the travel plan was developed.

Lived Experience

The day arrived and attired in a suit I set off for the embassy. Well it was one of those days when nothing went wrong, in fact, quite the reverse. I caught an earlier train than planned and as a result I arrived at my destination earlier than expected. I decided that it was too early to enter the embassy, so I went for a walk around the square. Having killed 15 minutes, it was now approaching 17.45 so I duly entered the building. I was met by the receptionist who directed me to a room on the first floor. As I entered, I thought something was not right. People were rushing around setting up banners and amplification equipment. I saw another UK person semi hiding in a corner, so went over to talk to them. They had arrived with the same idea as me, to talk to attendees who arrived early. By the official start time of 18.00hrs, a few more people had arrived, yet still nothing happened. People were still checking the PA equipment and power point slides were being tested on the main screen. Around the hour a young lady arrived and was sitting on her own, so I went over to her. During the conversation that ensued I discovered that she was from Brunei, and as I had visited that country, I was able to talk

about it, and she began to talk freely. The time went by, it was getting towards 18.20 with still lots going on, and by now there were quite a few guests in the room; however, there was still no sign of the event beginning. At this point I asked the young lady from Brunei, whether we were following UK time or Indonesian time. She laughed. She then told me that one of her earliest experiences in the UK was the issue of time and deciding to meet people. She said that in Brunei 18.00 hours would be an indication of the time to meet, whereas in the UK 18.00 meant 18.00. We both agreed that the event that night at the Indonesian Embassy was following Indonesian time. It would start sometime around 18.00 hrs - or in this case 18.30. The timing on the agenda I received was not followed as it normally would be in the UK – it would just happen during the evening. I should say that once I had acclimatised myself to the Indonesian time keeping, I had a wonderful evening. Morrison and Conway (2006) comment on time keeping by Indonesians, saying “they have a looser concept of time keeping” (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:239). I found this out at the embassy.

Intercultural communications

Time appears to take on a different meaning in the Far East. In the UK when an appointment is made to meet someone at 12.00, you would normally expect that person to appear at that time or as close to it as possible. However, as Morrison and Conway state, time is not so important in the Far East. Hall (1959) comments that “different parts of the day, for example, are highly significant in certain context” (Hall, 1959:2). He continues with the example of someone who is telephoned early in the morning while shaving or having breakfast, and states this would be taken as a message of the utmost importance. Hall also talks about the issue of length of time and the different definitions of ‘long term’. To someone in the United States, long term could mean “five or ten years” (Hall 1959:8) whereas in the Far East it may mean considerably more than ten years.

My introduction to the Far Eastern approach to time occurred at the Indonesian Embassy in London, where it would appear that the people working within the embassy, all Indonesian, had in effect a mini Indonesia within the four walls and were using Indonesian time. For the Indonesians, 18.00 hrs was an indication of the start time, in the above vignette the start time turned out to be 18.30 hrs.

Cultural Differences

Bosrock (2007) states that the Indonesian nation are “quick to smile and welcome strangers” (Bosrock, 2007:170). She then continues on the theme of time, stating “To us, Western business people often seem cold and impersonal; if you want to do business in Indonesia, we insist you invest enough time to build a solid relationship. The ‘time is money’ attitude will not succeed in our lovely nation” (Bosrock, 2007:170), furthermore, generally “Indonesians consider punctuality less important than establishing personal relationships” (Bosrock, 2007:177). It is also interesting to note that the word

tomorrow has a different understanding in the UK to Indonesia. In the UK tomorrow means as the word says, tomorrow, the next 24 hours; whereas in Indonesia “the word for ‘tomorrow’ in Bahasa Indonesian is *besok*, which does not literally mean ‘within the next 24 hours.’ It can mean the day after, or the day after that, or it might mean next week” (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:233).

In Indonesia, when a foreigner arranges a meeting with a business partner the Indonesian would expect them to arrive on time for any meetings, especially when meeting an important person. Morrison and Conaway discuss this area when they say, “as a foreign businessperson, you are expected to be on time for all business appointments” (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:239). However, they also point out that social events have different rules, stating that “social events in Indonesia involve different rules. In general, Indonesians arrive a half hour late” (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:239). Although the meeting I attended was located at the Indonesian Embassy in London, it would appear the culture inside was Indonesian culture. With this in mind, it makes me wonder if the event was considered a formal or social event, as this could explain the *laissez faire* approach to the time keeping.

Time keeping around the world varies considerably. For example, being late for an appointment, or taking a long time to get down to business, is the accepted norm in most Mediterranean and Arab countries, as well as in much of less-developed Asia. Such habits, though, would be anathema in punctuality-conscious USA, Japan, England, Switzerland, etc. In the Japanese train system, for example, ‘on time’ refers to expected delays of less than one minute, while in many other countries, up to fifteen minutes leeway is still considered ‘on-time’. A recent television program focusing upon a train journey across Africa, highlighted a different approach to the train timetable. When the train broke down in the middle of nowhere en route, the passengers just got off the train and set up tables and chairs and cooked food. It would appear that breakdowns were regular occurrences and people just accepted them. So, although in this case the train was hours late, the main consideration was that people got from A to B.

A different approach to time and how it impacts upon the person. How this helps answer, in a small part, the research question.

Bosrock (2007), Morrison and Conaway (2006), and Hall (1976) all refer to time and the impact it has on day to day life in different countries. Hall talks about monochronic and polychronic time. In the UK we tend to follow the monochronic style, completing one task at a time. However, in the Far East there is the possibility of the polychronic style being followed which, to someone who has grown up in a monochronic system could prove quite stressful especially if they are unaware of these differences. Hall (1976) in his book *Beyond Culture*, gives an example of people working in a polychronic style. He states that “Appointments just don’t carry the same weight as they do in the United States. Things are

constantly shifted around. Nothing seems solid or firm, particularly plans for the future, and there are always changes in the most important plans right up to the very last minute” (Hall, 1976:18).

Learning Theories Acculturation.

The introduction to the different way people approach time has been illuminating. Communications with people from other cultures can involve transitioning from following the lifestyle of your own culture and moving into that of another culture. This is where in the UK 12.00 hrs means 12.00hrs, but to some overseas cultures 12.00hrs means sometime around 12.00. This approach to time also has to include monochronic ways, where people do one thing at a time, as opposed to polychronic ways where people will have several tasks going at the same time. For someone programmed in the monochronic way, to then switch to polychronic style can be a challenging (and at times frustrating) time.

Conscious competence learning model

Vignette 4 has shown that time keeping around the world varies considerably. The vignette recorded an event which although held in London appeared to be run on the Indonesian culture – when it happens it happens!!! As I am a typical English person time plays an important part in my life. In the above vignette I used the same approach when attending a presentation at the Indonesian embassy. In effect referring to the conscious competence learning model I was in the unconscious incompetence stage. Talking to the young lady from Brunei about the way the evening was progressing made me realise the Indonesians do not place such a high importance on time, I had arrived at the conscious incompetence stage. Obviously there was little I could do at this event other than just follow the rest of the attendees but at future events I was now aware I had to check when a time was given what that really meant, exactly that time or sometime around the time. I had now arrived at the conscious competence stage.

4.0.9 Vignette 5.

This vignette looks at the impact of the sun on the population of the UK and Malaysia. In the UK when the sun shines many British people head for the beach or parks and sunbathe whereas in Malaysia many ladies reach for the parasol.

According to UKTI (2012), "Malaysia is situated in central South-East Asia, bordering Thailand to the North and Singapore and Indonesia to the South" (UKTI, 2012;24). It comprises mainland Malaysia and the two states of Sarawak and Sabah situated on the North coast of Borneo. The temperature remains constant during the year, ranging from 32c during the day to 22c at night. However, the hillier areas such as the Cameron Highland can be cooler.

One of the first differences I came across when in Malaysia was the formal but friendly way I was introduced to people at meetings. Normally, the most senior person would enter the room first. The recommended method of introduction is to "introduce older people to younger people and women to men" (UKTI, 2012:47). The book continues by recommending that attendees' correct titles are used. Hierarchy is important and senior staff should sit opposite each other. One of my early challenges was whether to shake hands with a member of the opposite sex. Recently I had to attend my son's wedding, which took place in a town just outside Kuala Lumpur. When we arrived at my son's in laws' house, I was very pleased to see a hand outstretched by both my son's fiancé's father and her mother, as some Malaysian women find it uncomfortable to shake hands with someone of the opposite sex.

Back in the UK, a few months ago our postman arrived with a letter addressed to Nur Sabrina Binti Romainor. At first, I wondered who it was for, then the name Sabrina gave me my first lead. On further investigation I found that Nur is associated with a female, and binti Romainor means daughter of Romainor. Further investigations revealed that this was for Roberts's fiancé. "Malaysian men use "bin" (meaning son of) and women use "binti" (daughter of) followed by their fathers name" (UKTI, 2012 :47). However, my research also revealed that females do not always take their husband's family name when they marry so it pays to be careful when talking to anyone in case an inappropriate comment is made while in conversation with people in Malaysia.

The national religion of Malaysia is Islam (55% of the population) but there are also a substantial number of Buddhists (17%), Taoists (12%) , Christians (7%), Hindus (7%) and other religions (2%) (UKTI, 2012):64.

Lived Experience

Returning to my experience of strolling in Kuala Lumpur on an extremely hot sunny day and seeing locals walking along with umbrellas up, my research revealed the following. There is a two-tier society appearing and the white/pale skinned people do not like to get sun burnt and become brown. The research showed that the white skinned people did not have to work outside in the fields and therefore did not go brown, hence the increased interest in not getting a tan. This would indicate that these white skinned people were wealthy as against the peasant farmers who had to work outside and face the weather elements which in turn caused their skin to go brown.

In an article produced by the BBC they discuss this topic and indicate that the wealthy spend a considerable amount of money on whitening creams to try and keep their white complexion in a very hot and sunny climate. These people are known as candle princesses

Candle princess

Have you ever heard of a candle princess? No, it isn't an obscure fairy tale.

In Malaysia, a "Puteri Lilin" is someone who can't stand being in the sun for too long. Just like a candle, she'd melt from the heat. It originates from an ancient Malay folktale.

The term is now used to refer to people who avoid the sun like the plague, for fear of getting darker. I've never been called one but I certainly know my fair share of candle princesses.

You can spot them easily with their talisman, the mini-umbrella, protector of fair-skinned girls everywhere. Outdoor sports like basketball and volleyball are taboo for them. They favour daintier indoor sports, like ping pong.

I had one "candle princess" friend who would walk out with me, but when it came to going out in the sun, would unfurl her umbrella. Growing up, I used to think it was funny, watching girls try to cross our school yard without even a ray of sunshine touching their skin.

It stopped being funny when I found out why it was much better to be fair than dark-skinned in Malaysia.

The Fairest of them all

In Asia, the preference for light skin has less to do with race and more with class.

Malaysia has the same prejudices as many societies around the world and just like the Evil Queen from Snow White, we are a nation obsessed with being fair skinned.

Among the Malaysian Chinese community, fair skin has long been considered 'pretty' And I'm sure many of Malay and Indian ancestry would agree.

Dark skin has historically been associated with peasants, farmers and labourers. The rich didn't have to work on the fields, and therefore, had fair skin.

And the media hasn't helped, often favouring light-skinned actors with so-called "pan-Asian looks". Whitening creams are also often best sellers." (BBC Candle 2017)

This article published by the BBC is quite contrary to what happens in the UK. In Britain as soon as the sun appears the media show pictures of people on beaches, in parks etc., all lying in the sun trying to get a suntan and go brown. This is quite the reverse to the Malaysians wealthy population approach to the sun.

Cultural Differences

Jones (2012) reminisces about a trip she made to Vietnam. She talks about a visit she made to Hanoi in 2001 and how the differences from her own country hit her as she left the airport. She continues, describing the trip from the airport to her hotel:

The drive from the airport to my hotel was fascinating and harrowing as cows, pedestrians, and seemingly thousands of bicycles, cars, and motorbikes all competed for the same small space on a two-lane "highway" that lacked any discernible (at least to my Western eyes) rules of the road. I was mesmerized by what was happening on the street as well as by the workers I saw toiling in conical non la, or traditional Vietnamese hats, in adjacent rice fields. Hanoi was blisteringly hot and almost as humid as a steam room at a luxury spa. I could feel the sweat dripping down my back as my body struggled to cool itself (Jones, 2012 1105).

I have visited Vietnam, and the differences between Vietnam and Malaysia, as described by Jones, are not that great. There are not as many motorbikes in Malaysia, and cars do appear to adhere to the rules of the road, but the heat can reach quite high levels with the humidity following.

Jones (2012) goes on to say that when people walk down the road in the exceedingly high temperature and humidity, they cover themselves to stop getting a suntan.

I observed that Vietnamese women were shielding their faces and hands from the caress (or the assault) of the blazing sun. When I asked why this was happening, I was told these individuals did not want to become too dark. When I further inquired "why not?" I was told that dark skin marked one as a laborer, as a person who toiled in the fields as opposed to one

who lived a more sheltered and privileged existence indoors. In other words, skin color functioned as an indicator of socioeconomic status.

(Jones, 2012:1114).

Jones (2012) supports my finding that some traits are followed in more than one Far Eastern country when she states "Importantly, the connection between skin colour and class status not only exists in Vietnam, it appears elsewhere in Asia" (Jones, 2012:1115).

Dr Chandra Muzaffar writes in the New Straight Times (March 13, 2016) that the obsession by some to have light skin is driven by local culture. The Straight Times is a newspaper published in Malaysia. His article states that the idea of white skin "is a craze in Malaysia and other societies partly because their consumerism is driven by a perverted notion of individual value. The idea of skin whitening has become a popular commercial tagline for products. Beauty, good looks, talent, and ability are erroneously associated with having fair skin. The preference for fair skin conditions relationships, influences marriages and shapes judgment about work performance" (Straight Times 2016).

Due to these perceptions, those who are dark-skinned, especially women, sometimes suffer from feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem. Their true value as human beings may never be recognised or rewarded.

Bosrock (2007) talks about skin colour and how many Asians consider "light-coloured skin beautiful and women spend vast amounts of money to achieve it. Perhaps the desire for white skin comes from a need to look educated and wealthy (only the skin of labourers and peasants is tanned because of exposure to the sun). Or maybe it's a lingering imperialist attitude, which equates light skin with power" (Bosrock, 2007:51). Bosrock makes mention that around 40% of women in Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Taiwan use some form of skin whitening creams, even though some may be dangerous.

The topic of skin whitening has been under review for many years as the following article from the CNN (Cable News Network) back in 2002 shows.

Skin whitening has a long history in Asia, stemming back to ancient China and Japan, where the saying "one white covers up three ugliness" was passed through the generations (CNN: 2002). A white complexion was seen as noble and aristocratic, especially in Southeast Asia, where the sun was always out. Only those rich enough could afford to stay indoors, while peasants baked in the rice fields. In their early bid to lighten up, the Chinese ground pearl from seashells into powder and swallowed it to whiten their skin, says Chinese University chemical pathology professor Christopher Lam Wai-kei, while across the Yellow Sea, Geisha girls powdered their faces with chalk white.

This obsession with whiteness has not faded over time. A survey by Asia Market Intelligence recently revealed that three quarters of Malaysian men thought their partners would be more attractive with lighter complexions.

Learning Theory: Acculturation

In the UK as soon as the sun appears some of the population head for the seaside or local parks to sit in the sun and try and get a suntan. There are even tanning salons in the UK where people can go to get a suntan. However, NICE (National Institute for Health Care Excellence) (2016) say there is “no safe way to suntan” (NHS:2016). Despite this UK warning you can still see people trying to get a suntan which is the exact opposite of the case in Malaysia, where for many of the population the appearance of the sun will require reaching for a parasol/umbrella and covering up despite the extreme heat so that they remain white.

Candle Princesses – a different approach to life and another small aspect in the quest to answer the research question.

Before I started my travels to the Far East, I did not consider the topic of sun tans, except for the health implication, to be high priority. However, this research has involved traveling to Asia where the sun can be quite intense, and the social implication of having a suntan does have a greater impact. The use of a parasol/umbrella is not an uncommon sight in Malaysia as people walk along under the sun’s sometimes fierce rays. This is contrary to the UK where many UK citizens will head for a park or open space to try to get a suntan when the sun appears. Pritchard and Morgan state “In western culture, tanned skin is one of many physical characteristics associated with beauty and physical appearance and since women are more likely than men to base their self-esteem and self-worth on their appearance” Pritchard et al., cited in Bramham and Wagg (2011:163). This would suggest that UK culture is in favour of sun tans or dark skin, which is the opposite culture to those upper-class/wealthy residents in the Far East, the ‘Candle Princesses’.

Vignette 5 has looked at the Candle Princesses and the reluctance of many Malaysians to get a suntan. This is quite a cultural difference when comparing to UK where many people try to get a suntan as soon as the warm sun appears.

Conscious Competence Learning Model

At the start of this research project I did not appreciate the implication the sun’s appearance had on ladies in Malaysia. I was in the unconscious competence stage. However, the research has moved me through the conscious incompetence to the conscious competence stage. I now understand the importance of parasols in the social society of Malaysian ladies.

4.0.10 Vignette 6

Vignette 6 reviews a video which explored the way people around the world looked at pictures and how they thought things should be grouped.

While completing desk research for this project, I discovered a YouTube video, uploaded by ebs.co.kr, which presented examples of cultural differences. Included in the video were respected academics from American universities who added observations on the research which gave the content some credibility. Although the empirical research was basic, and had to be accepted at face value, it did provide some interesting concepts about the East and West thought processes. This document will explore a few of the examples, chosen at random from the video, which will help to highlight some of the difference that arise when working with people from different cultures.

The first example involved a picture of eight flowers shown in groups of four (A & B). At the bottom of the page is a flower on its own. The question was asked 'Which group does this flower belong to?' Twenty-eight participants were involved in the study.

The respondents based in the West (UK and USA) chose one type (B) whereas the people from the Far East chose A. The reason given for the difference revolved around the picture the individual saw, and the way they had been programmed as they grew up in their country. The western population tended to look at the flower and stalk, and thought group B was right, whereas the eastern population chose the flowers that looked alike, in this case group A.

In the second example Denise Park, Professor of Psychology at the University of Illinois in Urbana Champaign, discussed how research had identified that when an Eastern person looks at a picture, they look at the whole picture whereas a Westerner when looking at the same picture will focus on one area. In this case they used a picture of a panoramic view with an elephant in the foreground. The results from the research completed showed that the Easterners looked at the picture as a whole whereas the Westerners focused on the elephant. The local culture had impacted upon the way people approached life and this case indicated that although everyone may be looking at the same picture, the eyes focused on different parts of the scene, on the whole picture as against a particular object. Hall's book *The Hidden Dimension* looks at people's sight and what they see. He states that "the concept that no two people see exactly the same thing when actively using their eyes in a natural situation is shocking to some people because it implies that not all men relate to the world around them in the same way" (Hall, 1969:69).

The third example explored taking photographs. The research showed that traditional pictures from the East have broad backgrounds whereas similar pictures in the West show just the head and

shoulders. The test showed that Easterners like to take pictures of themselves with different backgrounds whereas Westerners focus on the person's face, to the detriment of the background.

However, due to cultural differences, the way the camera is used may have to change when overseas. Failure to comply with local requirements can create an unwelcome problem for the uninformed. Eileen Maris Cohen is the official photographer for the Symphony Orchestra Association, the Moderator for the Venice Camera Club, and a teacher/lecturer at New College in Sarasota, Florida. On one of her web pages she states "In many, if not all, Islamic countries you may not take a photo of any religious artefact or engraved image, as this is strictly prohibited in the Koran. In both Asian and Islamic countries, it is quite rude and insensitive to photograph the bottom of anyone's feet since the soles of your feet and your shoes are always stepping on the lowest and most unclean things possible. Photographing the faces of Islamic women, particularly if they are unaccompanied, is strongly discouraged. In some mosques you can take photographs after obtaining permission, and only then of limited portions of the mosque". (Cohen EM 2016).

The last example discussed from this EBS research revolves around three pictures: the first was of a monkey; the second was of a bunch of bananas; and the third was of a panda. A group of 10 people were asked to say which two went together. The results showed that participants from the East paired the monkey and bananas whereas those from the west put the panda and monkey together. The logic presented for the choices was Eastern people looked at what monkeys ate (bananas), whereas the westerners looked at the fact pandas and monkeys were animals.

Understanding that differences exist.

The results presented in the above research highlight differences in the way the West and East approach challenges. Hall examines this area of differences and states "Americans are captives of their own time and space systems" (Hall, 1976:17). He goes on to look at monochronic and polychronic time systems, and referring to the differences between the American and the Middle Eastern Culture, he states that "Americans overseas are psychologically stressed in many ways when confronted by P-time systems such as those in Latin America and the Middle East" (Hall, 1976:17).

If this happens at this level, what happens in the more complex area of relations with different countries and cultural differences as people try to communicate messages? So far, we have looked at the macro picture rather than the micro, ignoring some of the cultural differences that occur within the same country, which is outside the scope of this research.

In the UK, road traffic control is mainly the prerogative of the police or associated organisations. However, one evening I was surprised by an incident as I walked back to my son's apartment which is located in the centre of the city of Jakarta. Close to his home there is an extremely dangerous road

junction, which at certain times of the day can become completely gridlocked. At this particular junction I was observing the traffic as it negotiated the different obstacles - other cars, people, bicycles, or holes in the road - which were causing everything to grind to a slow crawl/halt. Much to my surprise a young person arrived, who was probably in his 20's, put on a high visibility jacket, produced a whistle and proceeded to walk out into the middle of the road to direct the traffic. In one instance someone wished to turn right which involved cutting across the oncoming traffic. The young person walked up to the vehicle and the driver's window dropped and a hand appeared with a very low value bank note. The young person took the note then immediately stopped the traffic coming from the other direction, which allowed the person who had paid to proceed. When I mentioned what had occurred to my son, he told me that this was not an unusual sight and the police tended to turn a blind eye. It was a way for the very poorly paid to generate some extra income. Upon my return to the UK I attended a meeting in London at which the Indonesian Ambassador to the UK was in attendance. Mentioning the above incident to him brought a smile to his face, and he said it is not legal, but because of the terrible traffic congestion in Jakarta everyone turns a blind eye. What would happen if the locals adopted that approach in the centre of London?

While talking to a local Indonesian gentleman over a cup of coffee in Jakarta the conversation turned to the business community, and it was interesting to hear his observations concerning small businesses in Indonesia.

For sixteen years I worked alongside English businesses. One of the support services I had been trained in was the production of business plans, and I only encouraged budding entrepreneurs to embark on a business venture once they had looked at all the options, thereby hopefully ensuring they had the greatest chance of success. However, during my discussion in Indonesia, I mentioned a trip to a local shopping plaza which contained a clothing market, with well over a hundred traders all sitting behind their stalls selling their wares. Some of the traders were sleeping; others were having their lunch or playing on computers and so on. I asked how these traders made a profit, especially with all the competition, which elicited an interesting response. I was told it was better to have the locals at their stands trying to make money rather than being at home doing nothing. No business plan was necessary just go and do it! A totally different approach/culture to the UK!

Hall (1959) states that it is important to recognise that when a person is away from their home/country they must remember there will be differences. He says, "understanding the variations in order is a major factor in overseas work" (Hall, 1959:133). Hall's work is related to Hofstede's research, completed many years later, when he talks about the importance of rank. He highlights the way people are served in restaurants in the USA. The normal process is a first come first served approach.

However, “in most places outside of Europe ordering in situations of this type is unknown. Instead the laws of selection apply; that is, service is dependent upon a person’s rank” (Hall, 1959:133).

Hall’s book, *The Hidden Dimension*, looks at what people see. He states that “the concept that no two people see exactly the same thing when actively using their eyes in a natural situation is shocking to some people because it implies that not all men relate to the world around them in the same way” (Hall, 1969:69). This would seem to suggest that when I look at the pictures above, what I see will be different to what you, the reader sees, and this is further compounded when considering people from different cultures. Hall continues his story by relating an event that happened at one of his archaeological sites. He would see items on the ground which other members of his party would not see. He said he had been programmed to see some things and ignore others. Eyes produce three types of vision which work simultaneously to produce an image. Hall (1969) continues to explore the eye and its working and how it can impact upon what people see. As Hall’s research was completed many years ago, further research into the eyes will have been completed, but for the purpose of this research we can say each person interprets their own visual signals – what they see. Hall’s final comments in this chapter report that, “In the West, man perceives the objects but not the spaces between. In Japan, the spaces are perceived, named, and revered at the *ma*, or intervening interval” (Hall, 1969:75). To fully understand a foreign culture is going to be a challenge, a challenge which is constantly changing as time moves on.

We are looking at the same picture – aren’t we? A small contribution to answering the research question.

Although the above empirical research (ebs.co.kr.) would appear to be basic, and there is no mention of how the information was gathered, the results do appear to indicate that there are differences between different countries. During my travels in Indonesia I visited a temple in Bali. As you entered the grounds there was a large pond covered in green leafed plants, the majority with flowers. There were many visitors at this location, both local and from overseas. Reflecting on this, I now wonder if, although we were looking at the flowers, location etc., were the people around me in fact looking at the same scene? Were they seeing the view in a different way? There were wonderful flowers leaves, ripples on the pond, spaces between the flowers and of course fish in the pond, to mention just a few items. Example one, above, shows that people in the East and West look at plants from different perspectives, and base their assumptions upon what they see, how they have been programmed. This programming follows on in example two, when the research talks about panoramic pictures and how people see different images. How will this impact upon people working in the business world looking at day to day challenges? Example three continues the theme of picture taking and appears to answer part of the question as to why so many people from overseas take so many pictures with the person

in the pictures (selfies in today's terminology). The test showed that Easterners like to take pictures of themselves with different backgrounds whereas Westerners focus on the person's face, to the detriment of the background. The final example gave an indication as to how people were programmed to think. A monkey, panda and bananas were three items shown to a group of people, who were then asked them to pair two of the items. The results were interesting as the way in which participants paired the items giving an indication as to how they were programmed, with some looking at what they ate and others pairing animals together. This research is open to criticism, but its findings do appear to support those of the gurus, and they provide interesting supporting empirical research outcomes, which helps to understand the cultural differences that exist between countries. Kirilmaz states (2014) "for human beings, culture is like water for fish. It is always there, but you never appreciate it. Only if the fish leaves the water it becomes clear that something is missing. This is similar to culture" (Kirilmaz, 2014:3).

Have the above examples clouded the water rather than clearing it? The saying 'you don't know what you don't know' keeps coming back into my mind. The examples featured flowers, pictures, photographs, and animals. The research was found early on in this project, and it was not until the video was looked at that the idea that people interpreted what they saw in different ways around the globe was considered. In effect it comes back to where they were brought up and their local environment – their programming – their culture.

Conscious Competence Learning Model

This vignette has indicated that culture and customs impact on the way people act. Two people from different countries/ cultures may look at the same picture but may interpret what they are seeing differently. Hall (1969) suggests that the eye and its working can impact upon what people see. In all the above examples it produced information which helped me to move through the conscious competence model so I could get a greater understanding of what was occurring which would help me when dealing with similar situations in the future.

4.0.11 Vignette 7.

Vietnam, a country which has emerged from a bloody past is now encouraging tourists to visit, and we took the opportunity to accept this open invitation. Vignette 7 records a series of events I faced and learning from previous experiences how I responded.

I grew up in the UK in the 1950's/60's, at which time the news reports included items about the horrendous atrocities that were occurring in Vietnam. In effect I was being programmed by the UK press and the BBC and commercial television. The internet had not arrived.

Many years later, when my wife suggested a trip to Vietnam, I was a little hesitant but then I asked myself, why? The Vietnam War had happened from November 1955 to April 1975 which was many years ago.

Vietnam measures 1650km from North to South (UK Trade and Investment, 2012:30). "The national religion of Vietnam is Buddhism" (UKTI, 2011b:65). However, the UKTI publication continues that the "major religion is a mixture of Confucianism, Taoism and the Mahayana Buddhism, with elements of ancient animistic beliefs" (UKTI, 2011b:65). As of 2016 it is estimated that the population is around 95,000,000 people. "In 2014, according to the Vietnam General Statistics Office, the total international arrivals into to Vietnam reached 7874300, an increase of 4% compared to 2013" (Khuong and Khanh, 2016:140).

Vietnamese culture is heavily influenced by that of Southern China as I found out during my visit. However, it remains different to adjoining countries. It is interesting that the French involvement with Vietnam has left what appears to be a lasting impact, with baguettes and coffee still being a favourite with many locals. Bosrock (2007) states that "families are the foundation of Vietnamese society, and family can transcend economic and political differences. The Vietnamese worship their ancestors and revere elders. Especially in rural areas, several generations may live under one roof" (Bosrock, 2007:333). Morrison and Conway(2006) continue on the topic of families commenting, with regard to age, that "Older executives are viewed as more experienced, wiser, and should be held in high esteem" (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:572). Like many other Asian countries, the Vietnamese will say what they think you wish to hear. It is sometimes difficult to "tell the difference between honest agreement and a polite – but insincere 'yes'" (Morrison and Conaway, 2006:577).

My wife and I have always been impressed by the high standards of the hotels that we have stayed in while travelling in Asia. The hotel employees that we have come into contact with have always tried to make any visit special, and it would appear the image of the hospitality sector, and therefore the staff status, in Asia is different to that in the UK.

Lived Experience

We recently stayed in Da Nang, central Vietnam. The hotel was a Novotel and we understood it was slightly different to the normal Novotel. We later found out that at the time of our visit it was the only 5-star Novotel. We arrived in Da Nang by air and were met by a taxi that took us to the hotel. As soon as the taxi stopped outside the building the hotel service started. The door opened and we were helped out, shown to the main hotel entrance where someone else escorted us to the check in desk. While all this was taking place, our cases were being taken from the taxi into the main lobby. My wife had booked an executive room. Once the hotel staff realised this we were escorted to the executive reception where an official hand over took place. We were asked to take a seat while we were booked in and told about all the various services that were available. Once this had been completed, we were escorted to our room where we were asked to check everything was in order before the members of the hotel staff left.

Our suitcases had already arrived, so we decided to spend a few minutes unpacking some items of clothing before returning to the lounge, where we had seen you could get a cup of tea and some local light food. As soon as we entered the lounge someone was at our side. Were we happy? Could they help? You could not have asked for better service, but at times we felt it was becoming an overkill; however, we just 'went with the flow'. I was told during my stay that all the staff were keen to talk in English which explained why we seemed to be so popular. I used this to my advantage by getting information about Da Nang. I found I had to be careful what I said though, because if I indicated I wanted to go somewhere in Da Nang, the next thing I knew it would be all planned, just a telephone call away to confirm the taxi. We drank our tea and retired to our room.

When I awoke the next morning, before going to the lounge area where breakfast was served, I decided to have a shower. The towel was stored on a shelf under the sink and when I picked it up, I found my towel was wet. I investigated and found that where the towel had been stored was next to the waste pipe from the sink and there was a leak. I found another dry towel stored elsewhere and, following my shower, duly went to breakfast. Needless to say, as we entered the dining room the staff descended asking if everything was OK. I took this opportunity to tell them about the leak. They were immensely proud of their hotel and there was a fault! How was I to address the situation? I decided to relate the tale of a wet towel and ask them if, during the day, they could have a look and see if there was anything wrong (I already knew the fault to be a leaking pipe).

We had our breakfast, and as we left the dining room all the staff apologised for the leaky pipe. In fact, the deputy manager of the hotel found us and apologised. We returned to our room to find a plumber leaving; problem solved.

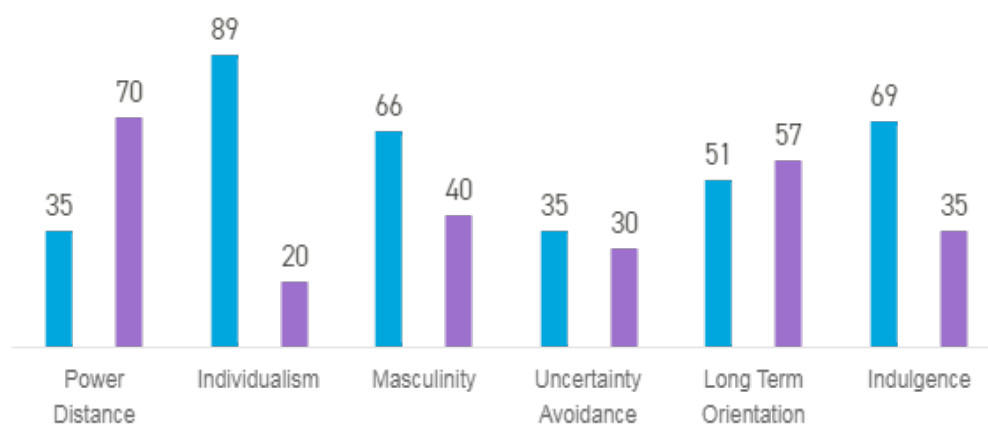
We then left the hotel to explore Da Nang. Later in the day we returned and as the humidity was extremely high, I decided to have a shower. After having the shower, I reached for the towel and it was wet. The pipe was leaking again. As the matter was not urgent, I decided to report the matter later that day. It was about 19.00 hrs when I returned to the reception area in front of the dining room. My wife was suffering from the heat and had decided to have an early night, so I was on my own. As I appeared on the hotel staff's radar, as I expected they rushed to welcome me and ask if everything was in order. I took the opportunity to diplomatically relate the story of the wet towel again, but suggested they got the plumber in the next day. They looked mortified smiled and carried on and served me my evening meal.

When I returned to my room, I found my wife had been joined by a plumber and a maid. Despite my suggestion to fix the problem the next day, service to them was everything. As the hotel staff left again, they were very apologetic and ask if everything was in order.

The next morning the towels were dry, so the problem had been fixed. However, as we arrived for breakfast the first person to meet us was the assistant hotel manager asking if everything was OK. Then the waiters/waitress all came up to us and asked if everything was OK. To me it was becoming excessive, but the staff were very enthusiastic and wanted to ensure our visit to their hotel was memorable, in a positive way, and it was.

Making sense of difference approaches through theory.

Figure 24: Hofstede's Comparison - UK and Vietnam



United Kingdom v Vietnam

(Hofstede G – Vietnam)

Hofstede's power distance dimension indicates that people accept a hierarchical order where the boss is the boss. People working for this person expect to be told what to do and rarely question the manager's requests/instructions. The individualism index shows the nation to be of a family type which leads to extended relationships and loyalty to others. 'Saving face' is important and relationships between employees are similar to family links. The masculinity score indicates that the dominant values in society are caring for other people's quality of life. In this society the term 'working in order to live' applies. Managers will try to gain agreement, and staff incentives such as free time and flexibility are favoured. Uncertainty avoidance score would normally indicate a more relaxed attitude and deviance from the norm is more easily tolerated. The penultimate indicator is the Long-term Orientation, and the score suggests that the culture of the country would encourage people to save and invest, and this investment could be in education. Indulgence is the final indicator. Vietnam is characterised as restrained. In these cases, people feel they cannot act outside the social norms and indulging themselves is not accepted by their peers (figure 28).

When I reflect on my tale of the leaky water pipe, I can see areas which would appear to support Hofstede's findings. When I first reported the problem to the staff there was immediate action. Apologies came from all directions; in fact, I was really surprised at how many members of the staff knew about the problem. Except for the two members of staff I had reported the problem to, I had not mentioned it to anyone else, but I had been accepted into the Novotel family and something was wrong. When the manager was alerted by the member of staff, he then took control and he only had to indicate something would happen and the staff implemented his requirements without question.

Reflecting on the way I approached the problem, it appeared to have been well handled, allowing the hotel staff to quietly fix the problem. I could have adopted the UK approach shouting and demanding the pipe be fixed immediately, but my story, front loaded by what I was doing and how I discovered the problem, seemed to be well received under the circumstances and enabled the staff to save face by having the leak fixed very quickly. When the problem recurred the next day, this did create an issue for me. While completing this research, I have been made aware that saving face is of major importance to many people in Asia. For this reason, I spent a few moments thinking how I should have addressed the problem when it recurred. As described above, I waited for someone to approach me as I knew they would on my appearance, and I now knew they would ask if everything was OK. When they did so, I took the opportunity to tell them about the recurrence of the problem, but suggested they left it until the next morning, thereby indicating it was nothing major. By now I should have realised what the outcome would be, and as I said the problem was fixed. Although this was really a minor issue the entire team at the hotel appeared to be really upset that my visit had been spoilt by this event.

Khuong and Giang (2014) talk about the importance of tourism in Vietnam with its contribution of 13.1% of gross domestic product towards the economy of the country in 2012, citing that the number of visitors were in the region of “6.84 million foreign visitors” (Khuong and Giang, 2014:503). They go on to talk about process innovation which encompasses “preparation and presentation of the services to the client” (Khuong and Giang, 2014:504). In their recommendations they return to the customer when they state that it is really important for the hotel establishment to find out customers’ needs and deeply understand their preferences in order to create high valuable services and convince them to visit the hotel for a second time or more if they return to Vietnam.

The above vignette would seem to prove they have been successful in their endeavours in customer service, but perhaps they have been a little too keen. However, I must remember the hotel is there for all visitors from all over the world, so their culture cannot just be geared for the UK. Khuong and Khanh (2016) discuss leadership guidelines which involve “behaviours including assigning tasks, setting rules, establishing communication method, controlling performance and giving feedback to followers” (Khuong and Khanh, 2016:140). These comments would seem to support Hofstede’s power distance model.

However, it is interesting to see that the authors also looked at other models of management which may be as a result of US occupation in the 1970’s, and the opening of its borders to tourists from around the globe, which is having an impact upon the hospitality culture. Barron and Arcodia (2002) talk about Confucianism, and its blend of secular and ethical mindfulness. The programming goes back many years and impacts upon many people in the Far East, including Vietnam. However they go on to say “In recent years it has been more favourably assessed as Asian states search for an identity and a set of values which is uniquely theirs which insulates them from some aspects of Western cultures but which still allows them to dialogue with and learn from the philosophical, pedagogical and political achievements of the West” (Barron and Arcodia 2002:3). One of the elements in Confucian approach is self-cultivation – education. Diem and Ha (2013) reviewed the training of students ready for working in the hospitality sector in Vietnam and one of their findings suggests that “the specialised subjects should be built closer to reality” (Diem and Ha, 2013:246). Lai and Vin (2012) also highlight the area of training when they say “there has been some modifications changing from the original demands of training product and technical skills to the current demands of ‘generic skills’ of communication, personality (aesthetic and emotional labour)” (Lai and Vinh, 2012:265). Nguyen (2016) in her review of the hotel sector supports Hofstede’s model, stating that Hofstede’s model relating to Vietnamese people is “subject to a high hierarchical system and accept being delegated to conduct the tasks. Similarly, Vietnamese prefer living in a group to staying individually and tend to maintain as many harmonious relationships as possible. Keeping the face for the other and reaching the consensus in every matter is the ultimate goal of Vietnamese society” (Nguyen, 2016:27). Having

travelled to many countries in the Far East I have observed many differences between East and West. Barron (2007) talks about challenges in Australia when teaching students from the hospitality sector. He asserts that a different culture can create problems in his discussion of CHC (Confucian heritage culture) and states “CHC students are required to get used to a more casual student/teacher relationship where the student is required to take the initiative, for example, regarding meeting with academic staff as opposed to be told specifically when a member of staff will be available” (Barron, 2007:5).

Testing some of my knowledge gained while trying to answer the research question.

My journeys to the Far East have really opened my eyes to a different approach to life. Until I started my company, and then began my research into different cultures, I had not really appreciated the differences and the problems that can arise if they are not respected. Reflecting on when I was working for the UK government, I now realise that my training had missed this important facet and I was advising small businesses to look overseas without any reference to culture.

Reflecting on my handling of the situation at the hotel during our short stay, I did appear to generate a good relationship with the staff, and my handling of the problem appeared to fit well into their culture. As I mentioned above, as soon as we appeared on the staff’s radar, we were acknowledged. As our stay continued, perhaps the focus on us did appear to decline slightly - or perhaps I moved into the Vietnam Culture and just accepted it as the norm.

Hofstede’s cultural model was developed quite a few years ago, and although now it is becoming dated, it does offer some interesting findings which I was able to recognise in the above vignette. One particular area that many researchers address is that of ‘saving face’, which is always at the forefront of my mind when I discuss a possible confrontational issue. Vietnam has gone through a turbulent time over recent years, and the current Communist government is providing some stability and slowly bringing what was two countries (North and South Vietnam) together. Barron and Arcodia (2002) introduce the Confucian approach which has had a major impact on many people in the Far East for many years. “Confucianism built on an ancient religious foundation to establish the social values, institutions, and transcendent ideals of traditional Chinese society” (Berling JA). This approach impacts on many countries in the Far East, but you can never take it for granted. Brannen (2004) explores foreignness and fit, as an area which, to a multinational company, is considered a liability that can add to the costs of a company if not handled correctly, stating that “Foreignness is broadly taken to mean the dissimilarity – or lack of fit” (Brannen, 2004:596) which, when I first started this research project, was unknown to me. Fortunately, early in my communications with colleagues in the Far East, I realised that events were not unfolding as I expected and so I looked deeper into the reason, and this project was started in an attempt to get an understanding of what was happening.

Hymer (1960) discusses the topic of international operations and states that many things must be considered. He says, “different nations have different governments, different laws, different languages and different economies; and communication between countries has, in the past at least, typically been far less than between regions within a country” (Hymer 1960:28).

Through Vignette 7 I have indicated how the staff at the hotel provided a service which they thought would be acceptable to someone from the West. Khuong and Khanh discuss leadership guidelines and Hofstede’s model supports their findings. As the visit to Vietnam occurred towards the end of this research, I was able to reflect on previous visits to countries in Asia and desk research which helped me to appreciate what was occurring and fit in.

Conscious competence Learning Model.

As this event occurred a few years into the research I consider I had passed the unconscious incompetence stage of the model. I consider I was in between the conscious incompetence and conscious competence stage. Experience had revealed saving face was an important factor and I tried to ensure I did not take any action which would result in any member of staff losing face.

4.0.12 Vignette 8.

This is the final vignette, which will be explored in the quest to get an understanding of the different ways people operate (cultures) around the globe. The event occurred while I was sitting in my office

in England, which is divided into two, one half which I use as my office for my company and the other which is devoted to one of my interests, that of amateur radio, which I have been involved with for many years. This hobby has many facets and involves communicating with people from both within the UK and worldwide.

Lived Experience

Recently, I was listening on the amateur radio bands to two people talking over the airwaves (QSO), both of whom were living in the South of England. During an initial meeting on the airwaves, it is normal protocol for each operator to give his name and location; the latter is needed if a directional antenna is being used. At the start of the QSO, the first person gave his forename and the town where he was living and then passed the transmission over to the second person, who started by giving his name and location. As you will observe, the origin of this person's family was not from the UK as he gave his name as Mr Singh, location London, then he passed the transmission back to the first station. The first person then responded, "no not your surname your Christian name". Again, Mr Singh responded as before "Mr Singh". With this the first person appeared to get quite agitated, until a third person joined in and said, "he has not got a Christian name, he is from India". This example of a culture clash here in the UK demonstrates how a misunderstanding can occur and highlights the importance of having an appreciation of culture differences when communicating with people from overseas. "Singh is the title, middle name or surname which originated in India. Derived from the Sanskrit word for Lion, it was adopted as a title by certain warrior castes in India" (Wikipedia-Singh 2020).

Conscious Competence Learning Model

This final vignette is a quite simple example of a cultural misunderstanding. It demonstrates how the cosmopolitan population of England is producing cultural dichotomies; something which it would appear will take some time for many to understand. This vignette shows how someone started in the unconscious incompetence stage, was then told what was wrong so moved to the conscious incompetence stage. Unfortunately at this point Mr Singh did not reply so the cycle stopped here although the person who kept asking for the forename (Christian name) was now aware of his error and could take the appropriate action should a similar situation arise in the future.

Chapter 5

5.0.1 Analysis

This section summarises the findings and contribution made to answer the thesis question ‘Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn’.

Our findings have shown that the way people think, and approach tasks can be different. It depends on the way they have been programmed as they have grown up, the local culture! Hofstede et al talks about a trip around the world and the purchase of three maps at different locations. He bought one map in Europe and this showed Europe in the centre of the map. He then purchased a second map in Hawaii, and this showed the Pacific Ocean in the centre and the third map was purchased in New Zealand and this focused-on Australasia in the centre of the map. They go on to say that they “believe that even today most citizens , politicians and academics in any country feel in their hearts that their country is the middle one, and act correspondingly” Hofstede G et al (2010: xiii). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) state that “culture is the way in which a group of people solve problems and reconciles dilemmas” Trompenaars & Hampden Turner (1998:6).

This chapter will start by summarising the vignettes and showing the key findings. It will then discuss the Conscience Competence Learning Model and how that was used in the review. Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and the impact that had is then explored. The penultimate section will look at Reflection in action and the last section will discuss the Contribution to Knowledge and the Iceberg.

5.0.2 Analysis of Vignettes

The vignettes have shown that unless you respect the local culture problems can arise. The analysis of the vignettes shows that there is a difference in the way people conduct their way of life in the Far East to the UK. The following matrix summarises the vignettes and from these results it is clear that differences do exist.

Analysis of Vignettes number 1 - 8

Level of analysis for the vignette	Vignette 1	V2	V3	V4	V5

Beginning: why is this important, the setting, the key question	This vignette looks at what can happen if local customs and cultures are not considered. I had overlooked that I was in Thailand and using the UK approach to deal with a problem just created a bigger cultural problem.	Numbers can have a significant impact in the Far East. For instance, the number 4 in Chinese is represented by a symbol which is similar to the symbol used for death.	Customs and cultures can differ country to country. A picture of a Dutch couple in wedding attire looked quite normal to me but it was only later I realised that to the local population the bridal couple would wear something different in Indonesia.	In the UK, the time recorded on a clock is important. This importance may not follow the same level of importance overseas. 18.00 hrs may mean 18.00 hrs or just an indication of a time slot.	In the UK as soon as the sun appears you will find someone out trying to get a suntan. For many in Malaysia the sun is the last thing they wish to see with Parasols appearing to protect people from the fierce rays. This is the home of the candle princess.
Middle: Plot, Characters, Voices, evidence, data	The case study tells the story of a misunderstanding involving bottles of water. It involved a member of hotel staff and how my UK approach gave him little chance to 'save face'.	When the Olympic Games in China opened it was on the 08.08.08 pm on the 8 th day of the 8 th month of 2008. I agreed to meet my wife on the 4 th floor to discover there was not a 4 th floor. Numbers can play a	This vignette highlighted two areas. The first different countries wear different wedding regalia and secondly when I look at a picture everything may appear in order but to a local who perhaps has not left the country	This vignette records an event that occurred at the Indonesian Embassy in London. I made an incorrect assumption. As it was in London, I assumed UK culture would be applied. However, as the case study indicates this	In Asia, the preference for light skin has less to do with race and more with class. In the UK outdoor sports like basketball and volleyball are played in the sunshine whereas they are taboo for many females in Malaysia. They favour daintier indoor sports, like ping pong.

		major factor in local life.	the picture may look wrong. In effect although we are looking at the same picture, we are getting a different picture.	was not the case.	
<p>End: Learnings, how this relates to literature and the research question</p> <p>What did I really learn?</p>	<p>Morrison and Conaway suggest that you should never lose control of your emotions while in Thailand and whenever possible you should allow Thais to avoid confrontation. Kirilmaz (2014) refers to culture being like water for a fish. In this example I was in a foreign pond where communications between people had changed and I had not adapted my UK cultural way of working to the local culture.</p>	<p>Torgler (2007) discusses superstition and how it impacts on the way locals operate. Phillips (2001) looked at death rates and suggested the reason for the increase on the 4th. Before this research I did not appreciate how superstition impacted upon decision making.</p>	<p>Hofstede's research shows Indonesia as a collective society. Family is important and therefore weddings are where bride and groom dress in a way that makes them stand out. Adawiyah (2014) suggests that weddings are traditional and unique. This vignette made me realize what I thought ordinary to a person standing next to me looking at</p>	<p>Bosrock (2007) states Indonesians consider punctuality less important than establishing personal relationships. In the USA, the time is money approach prevails. The vignette highlighted the importance time plays in different cultures. Morrison and Conaway (2006) suggest there are different rules in Indonesia for formal and social events. The vignette seems to be describing a social event.</p>	<p>Jones (2012) supports the suggestion that skin colour functioned as an indicator of socioeconomic status which explains why parasols appear when the sun's rays appear. Bosrock (2007) suggests that nearly half the women in Hong Kong and Malaysia use some form of skin whitening. This would support the suggestion that skin tans are socioeconomic. In the UK, many people like tans which is quite the opposite in Malaysia.</p>

			the same thing it may be quite the reverse.		
Level of analysis for the vignette	Vignette 6	V7	V8		
Beginning: why is this important, the setting, the key question	This vignette reviews the findings from surveys completed around the world. The research touches on different topics as it tries to tease out information on cultural differences.	The case study recorded in this vignette occurred late in this research project and I was able to reflect to previous events and use the knowledge gained to address the situation.	Vignette 8 happened in the UK and highlighted a lack of cultural understanding on the radio air waves.		
Middle: <i>Plot, Characters, Voices, evidence, data</i>	The research starts by asking a group of people located at different locations how they would group a selection of flowers. The results and rational for the decision suggested different cultures had different ideas (cultures) when making their choice.	My visit to Vietnam and stay at a hotel enabled me to implement some of the knowledge gained during this research project. The staff seemed over keen and overbearing. The leaky pipe did create an issue and when it started leaking for a second time that did give	Two people were talking on the radio. First one person gave his Christian name then he asked for the second person to give his name. When he responded Mr. Singh the first person said no your Christian name. This lack of cultural understanding terminated the conversation.		

		me some cause for concern.	
<p>End: Learnings, how this relates to literature and the research question</p> <p>What did I really learn?</p>	<p>Hall (1959) suggests that no two people see the same thing. This research follows Halls observations but in country groupings. The vignette made me realize that when I was overseas when I looked at an object/scene the person next to me may be looking at different perspectives. It also clarified why I saw many people from the East taking pictures with themselves in the pictures (selfies).</p>	<p>Shortly after I reported the problem to the receptionist the manager was in contact with me. Hofstede's power distance dimension indicates that the Vietnamese accept hierarchical orders, and it was fascinating watching the manager issue his requests. My diplomatic approach had been well received and our reception by the staff in later days indicated the correct approach had been taken.</p>	<p>This incident highlighted a cultural difference and how people address each other in overseas countries. Without this knowledge it is easy to upset the very person you are trying to build up a relationship with.</p>

Table 11 Analysis of vignettes

Together all the vignettes confirm that cultural differences do exist UK to the Far East. Vignette 8 shows how overseas culture can impact upon the unexpected here in the UK; understanding the different global cultures can help prevent an uncomfortable situation arising. Vignette 3 highlights a challenging phenomenon: How can you change places with a Far East inhabitant and fully appreciate how they will respond to life's challenges? When looking at a picture/landscape what they see compared to someone from the UK could be different. The importance of numbers seems to be rising in the Far East. A recent BBC article by Mithila Phadke has shown the connection with words and

numbers citing Mc Donald's and the way customers order food by typing 4008-517-517. They use 517 because in Mandarin it sounds like I want to eat. (Phadke M 2019). She goes on to talk about flats numbered 4 or 44. These tended to be rented out to foreigners and car number plates which include the number 88 would probably demand a higher price.

Throughout the vignettes the common theme is that there are fundamental differences and if these are not respected confusion may creep into any communication.

5.0.3 Summary.

The vignettes explored above highlight the differences that exist between nations, but it also must be accepted that differences can exist within nations. Numerous authors refer to the Native Americans and their cultures within the USA, but for the purpose of this research I have adopted a macro approach using countries as boundaries. In the vignettes in which I have been involved, I have experienced a wonderful, enlightening learning curve, and I now find when I travel abroad that, as soon as I leave the UK, I am looking for indicators as to how the locals, in whichever country I am visiting, will act. Heywood (2002) talks about cross cultural awareness, which is when someone leaves their place of residence for another location around the world. He suggests that that they will go through the following five stages:

Stage 1: Unawareness

Stage 2: Beginning awareness

Stage 3: Conscious awareness

Stage 4: Consolidated awareness

Stage 5: Transcendent awareness

(Heywood, 2002:13)

From the five stages, Heywood develops his ideas on intercultural literacy as indicated in Table 12.

Table 1 A multidimensional model for the development of intercultural literacy

	<i>Monocultural level 1 Limited awareness Unconsciously incompetent</i>	<i>Monocultural Level 2 Naïve awareness Unconsciously incompetent</i>	<i>Monocultural Level 3 Engagement- distancing Consciously incompetent</i>	<i>Crosscultural level Emerging intercultural literacy Consciously competent</i>	<i>Intercultural level Bicultural or transcultural Unconsciously competent</i>
<i>Understandings</i>	No significant intercultural understandings. Unaware of own culture or of the significance of culture in human affairs.	Aware of touristic, exotic and stereotypical aspects of other culture(s). Little understanding of metaculture.	Aware of significant cultural differences. Other culture(s) perceived as irrational and unbelievable.	Increasingly sophisticated understandings of socio-political and intergroup aspects of culture and metaculture.	Aware of how culture(s) feel and operate from the standpoint of the insider. Understandings of primary and metaculture and global interdependence.
<i>Competencies</i>	No significant intercultural competencies.	No significant intercultural competencies.	No significant intercultural competencies.	Developing competencies include mindfulness, empathy, perspective-taking, tolerance and communication.	Advanced competencies include mindfulness, empathy, perspective-taking, tolerance and communication.
<i>Attitudes</i>	No significant intercultural attitudes. Assumes that all groups share similar values and traits. Value neutral.	Naïve and stereotypical attitudes which may be positive, negative or ambivalent.	Typically negative attitudes. Stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.	Differentiated, dynamic and realistic attitudes. An overall respect for integrity of culture(s).	Differentiated, dynamic and realistic attitudes. An overall respect for integrity of culture(s) accompanied by legitimate and informed

Table 12: Multidimensional Model for the Development of Intercultural Literacy

(Heywood, 2002:16)

Reflecting on the vignettes, I can see how my journey into the abstract world of culture has followed Heywood's five stages, from the unawareness stage. When I first started my business, a few years ago, I completely underestimated the impact that my lack of understanding of overseas culture would have on the growth of the company. Many of the people I communicated with spoke English, so why would they act differently? Heywood expands upon the five stages in his multidimensional model for the development of intercultural literacy. My experiences ran parallel to the model, but I do not think that I will ever reach the Intercultural level, although I am now aware of it.

Vignette 5, although based on a BBC article, had an impact on me. To understand why people in Asia put umbrellas up when the sun came out was interesting. In the UK when the sun appears people flock to the seaside, parks etc. to get a suntan. However, in certain parts of the Far East, if someone has a sun tan it means they work in the fields, and are therefore a peasant, so those who have risen economically try to keep out of the sun to remain as white skinned as possible.

In Vignette 6, a South Korean university completed empirical research to establish whether people in different parts of the world looked at pictures/events in different ways (through a different lens). The results provided interesting information. Although the research methodology did not provide many details of how it was conducted, the outcome did provide some interesting results which, to summarise, concluded that people around the world look/approach life differently. Although Hofstede et al.'s research was far more comprehensive, its results, in effect, said the same thing.

The Conscience Competence Learning Model

While completing this longitudinal research project I was able to use knowledge uncovered early in the development stage at a later event which was instrumental in preventing a cultural misunderstanding and a possible loss of face for the Vietnamese. Reflecting on the Bangkok event, (vignette 1) I had gone from the unconscious incompetent to the conscious competent stage and I was therefore better qualified to handle the situation which occurred later as recorded in vignette 7. I had a greater understanding of the local culture. From the results in the vignette and using this model it is clear that culture plays a major role when conducting business with organizations in the Far East. As the events recorded in earlier chapters have shown if you ignore Culture it can be very costly.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Cultural intelligence does not mean being a chameleon to every situation encountered but the results presented in the vignettes show that to be aware of your current environment can help to achieve the goals you would like especially in the business world. As the conceptual framework has indicated there are three definite areas:

1. cultural differences,
2. intercultural communication/acclturation
3. Learning theory

My findings contained in the vignettes and analysis matrix show there is a different culture between the UK and the countries discussed in each example. Hall, Hofstede etc talk about these differences and the findings contained in this document build upon this knowledge.

From the outcomes as reported in the vignettes it is clear that a knowledge of Intercultural communication/acclturation is important. Vignette 1 highlighted my lack of knowledge in this area whereas at a later event recorded in vignette 7 it demonstrated that I had now gained an understanding of the culture and perhaps started to move to the culture of that country.

Rosewell and Honey and Mumford etc discussed learning theory. My results demonstrated that the way people learnt, and the learning styles and their preferences was important.

Reflection in action.

My aim, as a reflective practitioner, was to contribute to the common good and find out more about culture and the effect it has. For me its implications, if ignored, could have a major negative impact upon my business.

The vignettes are more than just a picture of events and reflections that attempt to answer the research question; they were selected to try to convey the new knowledge uncovered, and the learning that has taken place via this document. The observations, comments and eureka moments have been encapsulated in the vignettes in an effort to try to present this new knowledge and how it will impact upon me, and how I will have to change my way of approaching different challenges. The act of writing the vignettes has made me revisit events, examine each activity, and from this uncover new knowledge before building upon it as I moved forward.

The events recorded in the vignettes have built upon research completed by Hall, Trompenaars and Hofstede, to mention three eminent gurus. The saying 'you don't know what you don't know' has moved slightly as I have uncovered the answers to some mysteries but there is still a lot more to uncover. Vignette 8 showed that an understanding of cultural differences can prevent uncomfortable disparities occurring. Back in the UK I could understand what was occurring, mainly because of completing this research and observing and reading about the cultural differences.

5.0.4 Contribution to Knowledge and the Iceberg.

Like an iceberg, part of culture is "above water" in that it is visible and easy to identify and know. This would include folk culture - the arts, folk dancing dress, cooking, rules of the road etc. But beneath the water surface the iceberg hides a much larger piece of ice hidden from sight which is like culture. You can see some cultural traits going on but there is a considerable amount you cannot see. These hidden elements would include eye behaviour, interpersonal relationships, notions of modesty, concepts of beauty, child raising, criteria for leadership, decision making processes, roles in relation to status by age and the concept of justice. Culture if ignored can result in misunderstandings which can then lead to challenging situations. As Vignette 7 demonstrated the change in my approach, uncovering the local hidden culture helped to resolve the problem.

At a practical level the research completed has certainly expanded my knowledge base, not only as shown in the vignettes, but it has also made me aware when abroad or talking to someone from overseas that the way they respond may not be how I would expect an English person to respond. While running my company and having discussions /meetings with my overseas colleagues, my increased awareness on the topic of culture has helped me to avoid many pitfalls and helped to ensure I arrive at a satisfactory outcome.

The outcomes of the research completed confirm that culture plays an important part in any transaction with an overseas country. Hall, Trompenaars, Hampden Turner and Hofstede and many other researchers provided excellent background knowledge on which this research project was built. My own involvement moved my methodological approach to a self-ethnographical one. The study focusing on the countries of Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the UK has highlighted different cultures exist in these countries. Using the CQ and the conscious competence learning models helped to make sense of the data collected.

Chapter 6

6.0.1 Conclusion.

I have shown that culture plays a particularly important aspect when communicating with people outside the UK. My new business venture took me into uncharted waters, and I felt like a small child having been thrown into a swimming pool and told to “learn how to swim”. Fortunately, I did learn and via this research things began to become clearer. As the investigation into culture developed, I could see differences in the cultures, and hence the working practices. All the vignettes revealed new knowledge which I was then able to use as the company moved forward. Since starting this document my son has married a young lady from Malaysia, and I have used much of the knowledge gained from this research when interacting with his wife’s family, who live close to Kuala Lumpur. For me, the central actor in the research, a considerable change has occurred in my working practice.

This final chapter presents a summary of the thesis, beginning with the rationale for undertaking such a large project. Working on the literature review opened Pandora’s Box and more questions than answers appeared. From the literature review the research question was developed, and the methodology selected to try to answer the research question ‘Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn’. In all research there are limitations, and I will briefly touch on this area. Finally, I will reflect on what I have learnt, and the knowledge contributions of this thesis will be considered.

The conceptual framework (figure 11) provided a synthesis of the literature and assisted in the explanation of the phenomenon’s encounter in this research journey. It helped to map out previous knowledge of other researchers' point of view and their observations.

The rationale for starting this research journey was to support me as I developed my company into what was, for me, uncharted territory – working with people from the Far East. At the start of this research I was keen to explore why events were not unfolding as expected when dealing with colleagues from overseas, and I really did not know what to expect. Before forming my company, I had been working for a government department advising small companies on how to develop their business. When I introduced exporting into the company’s strategy, I do not think I had really appreciated the implications and the challenges the different entrepreneurs were about to face. As this research developed and I read books and papers by the likes of Hall, Hofstede and Trompenaars, I slowly became aware of numerous differences that existed. During my overseas travels I became aware that people conducted themselves in different ways, such as how they beckoned you over to them (palm down moving fingers) or the Asian ‘saving face’ approach, all of which were new to me. As I delved deeper into this new area called ‘culture’ this new knowledge created further problems.

Realising there were differences, and not wishing to upset (insult) my business colleagues, I was becoming very aware that the UK method of operating did not necessarily fit in, in the Far East and I had to modify my way of working. Again, the saying “You don’t know what you don’t know” kept raising its head. Life’s journey contains many different experiences and therefore just because something went well once does not mean that it can be repeated, as one or more of the variables may have changed.

This longitudinal research, has demonstrated to me that, due to the vast repository of information and from my own observations while overseas, I do not expect to ever be able to fully appreciate all the differences between the UK and the Far East. My reflective analysis using vignettes has enabled me to show some of the differences and discuss the changes in my day to day working approach. It is via these vignettes that I have been able to highlight differences in the methodological approach taken by people in the UK and the Far East. The research has focused on me and my day to day working, auto ethnography, and I have used it to try to gain a greater understanding of what happens and why when working with people from the Far East. Reflecting on and recording a particular experience via the use of vignettes has enabled me to revisit a particular time and examine what happened and see how I had (as was most often the case) misread the situation, or put another way had not switched off my UK programming.

As I come to the conclusion of writing this thesis, I can see that a profound shift has taken place in my life. Recently, when travelling overseas, my wife and I had a minor issue to address and I found myself saying to my wife “maybe it would be better to approach the problem from this angle” in effect giving the member of staff in the hotel a way to resolve the issue and at the same time save face. I do not think this would normally be the approach she would have taken, and I could see she was a little surprised at the positive outcome.

Initially I wondered if Kolb’s learning cycle had an impact upon my thinking, or whether Argyris’ (1997) action research and double loop had helped me to understand some of the differences between UK and Far Eastern culture; however, when I have reflected on different activities, I have been involved in I can see I have, in effect, used these tools in the challenge to understand what is occurring. In a practical sense (day to day working) I have looked at what has happened and implemented changes in line with my research findings from this project. Fellows and Lin (2016) looked at sense-making and, together with Schon (2003) and storytelling, I arrived at the presentation of short stories via the use of vignettes. Rudmin (2003) discusses acculturation, the way the pendulum swings as you move from one culture to another. Although I am sure this research will result in a change in my methodology when operating in the Far East, as I will not be living there I would expect it to be only on the surface

– the tip of the iceberg. The vast majority will still be hidden, waiting for me to discover it as time goes by.

6.0.2 What were the research questions?

When I first started on my PhD journey, I felt a little how I would imagine a fish would feel out of water. I was constantly reading and asking questions, trying to understand the environment I was in. Phillips and Pugh (2000) indicate that “understanding what is required is, we find, particularly a problem for those researchers part-time and continuing in their jobs, and the ‘real world’ as they see it. It is basically the difficulty of understanding what is meant by ‘research’, since the word is used much more strictly in the academic than the non-academic sphere” (Phillips and Pugh, 2000:38). I am now semi-retired but, still work out in the real world and had done for years before, so to start a PhD was a real challenge. The fact I was able to base the research on something which had a real impact upon me, culture, was a big incentive to complete the investigation, especially when the sun was shining outside or some other attractive activity was on offer. At times my wife did not appreciate a negative response to her request for my company but over the years I seem to have mastered that art (no I am not divorced, nor did I shoot her!).

At the beginning I was not sure what I wanted to research, as I wished to focus on what was at the time my new company and what I was not understanding. What was going wrong? Why were we not developing relationships with our overseas partners? We had visited, well spent a few days, and obtained signed contracts as we would in the UK.

Referring to Phillips and Pugh (2000), their comment about the ‘real world’ had a positive impact as I realised that events overseas (away from the UK) happened differently. When listening to the reports on the radio and television, some of the global disputes between countries, sometimes leading to a war or invasion, it could sometimes be difficult to comprehend why an event occurred, until the small word with a big impact was considered, culture. So, for me, as I started to develop my company, I had some inclination that culture existed, but I did not know quite what an impact this would have.

Once I had decided to start the PhD, I began to look at areas relating to culture. Questions such as ‘what is culture’ and other open questions were recorded. However, as the study developed and desk research was completed, it became obvious the topic was vast, too great for me to consider, especially for this research project. To start with I had only found a few names that had completed research into the topic, but as I read them, then looked at some of the references they gave, the topic opened up like Pandora’s Box, and I was swamped with information; thus, it became obvious I would have to refine my research question. Even now I can find myself reading an article and wondering what, if

anything, it has to do with the research question. If nothing, I put the article away to read another day and return to focus on the research question.

In the early days of the development of this thesis I considered questions such as:

- Identify and explore the elements of culture and how they impact upon the English way of operating
- Explore global and regional cultural differences
- Try to paint a picture of how someone who grew up and was programmed in England should try to adapt to the overseas way of working.

As the thesis developed, so my ideas changed.

During the early stages of the research the following set of primary research questions was posed:

- 1 Why was I not developing strong working relations with people from the Far East? What intercultural issues existed?
- 2 Is there a pattern or thematic areas which will help me to understand how I should adapt my way of working?
- 3 How does the work of Hofstede, Hall, Trompenaars, and other respected researchers, offer any enlightenment into the culture of the Far East?
- 4 How does the cultural difference/understanding impact upon communications when using the English language?

The original concept was to focus on one country, but as my company grew and my travels took me to many of the countries in the Far East including Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Indonesia, I opened up my research to include examples in my vignettes of more than one country. The influence China has in this region of the world, now and in the past, is substantial and impacts on many of the Far Eastern Countries. One of the better-known philosophers, Confucius, was considered China's "most famous teacher, philosopher, and political theorist, whose ideas have influenced the civilization of East Asia" (Ames RT). The title chosen "Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn: An investigation into local customs/cultures" encapsulates my current thoughts.

6.0.3 What did I do in terms of research?

Around 15 years ago my son graduated from a UK University and then announced he had found a job in China, so my wife and I helped him pack and said goodbye. Over the next 15+ years he worked in numerous countries in the Far East. On a regular basis he would ring home and tell us what was occurring. To start with I could not understand why he was experiencing so many problems. Why were people late for meetings? Why didn't they ring back as promised? Why would the team not work together to highlight a few of the issues? I think this was really my first introduction into the cultural differences that existed between countries, although at that time I do not think I really appreciated this. Hall, Hofstede, Trompenaars, Morrison and Conway, among others had not yet entered my life. It was my son who, in effect, introduced me to the Far East. In one of the vignettes I tell the story of a visit to Thailand and a disputed bill at a hotel. I now know I totally mishandled the situation by using the UK approach, but at the time perhaps we could consider I was a little naive. As this research developed, my approach overseas appears to have changed. I find myself thinking before I take any action and even suggesting to my wife a different approach to the one, we would take should the problem arise in the UK.

So how did I start the research project? My first lucky break was to be introduced to my supervisor, Dr O'Shea, who has been with me throughout my PhD journey. Over the years we have developed a good working relationship and I know when I feel the world is coming to an end, as far as the PhD is concerned, he will always make a suggestion which will make me sit up and set me off again. Following a meeting with him, I set about looking at the world of culture again. Willcox (2014) states that "cultural distance increases the chance of miscommunication and that this distance influences the perceived similarity or dissimilarity of individuals involved in intercultural interactions" (Willcox, 2014:22). Hymer continuing the topic of international operations, suggests that many things must be considered. He says, "different nations have different governments, different laws, different languages and different economies; and communication between countries has, in the past at least, typically been far less than between regions within a country" (Hymer:28). This then offered a rationale for me and my company as to why things did not always turn out as expected.

6.0.4 What did I find?

The saying 'you don't know what you don't know' certainly rings true when looking at overseas culture. Reflecting on the time that I have been completing the research for this project, I can now see my approach to working with people who originate from the Far East has changed. As described in Chapter 1, my working relationship with a gentleman who has lived in the UK for many years, but is of Chinese extraction, is different from the relationship I have with people from the UK. In fact, I would suggest that when I am dealing with anyone not from the UK, I am now aware they may approach life

from a different standpoint. This rather macro approach can be refined down into what may also be called a micro approach. Over the years, the UK has become a cosmopolitan country, and as people from overseas bring their culture it takes time for them to settle in and adapt to the UK way of working. However, research into this area is outside the scope of this research.

So, what did I find out? One of the first lessons I learnt was that just because someone dresses like an English person and speaks like an English person, if they originated from overseas it does not mean their approach to life will be the same as someone who grew up in England. Hofstede, Trompenaars and Hall, three well known researchers into the topic of culture, highlighted some interesting areas. Hofstede's (2010) definition of culture is that "culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the member of one group or Category of people from others" (Hofstede et al., 2010:2). If I apply this statement to myself, I grew up in England and until my twenties did not gain an understanding of overseas cultures (and this was considerably basic). The ease of worldwide travel had not yet arrived, which meant the early part of my life had been programmed with an English way of approaching life. I had been programmed to the English ways (culture).

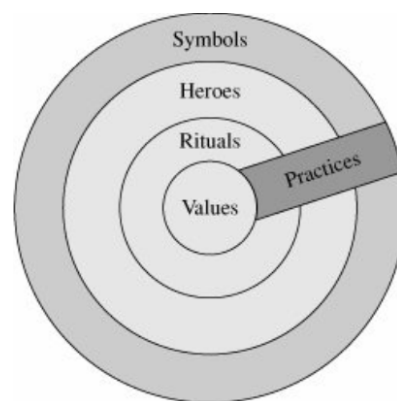


Figure 25 Hofstede (2010).

Hofstede et al. (2010) explored the ways cultural differences manifest themselves and figure 29 is a pictorial representation of this. The symbols refer to things which have a particular meaning to someone from one country, but perhaps not to someone from another. For example, in some countries, when a person wants someone to join them, they hold their hand palm down, moving their fingers; we have different heroes or characters who serve as role models; we have different rituals - who in the UK, for example, would want to live in a house with someone who died a year ago, as we have seen occurs in Indonesia and we have different values, where there is a tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others. Hofstede et al. also cover the five dimensions, power distance, individualism and collectivism, masculinity and femininity, uncertainty avoidance and finally long- and short-term orientation.

Cultural Intelligence is also known as Cultural Quotient (CQ). Cultural Intelligence is the ability to adapt to new cultural settings which as the title of this thesis states 'Being aware of cultural differences and preparing oneself to learn' was similar to my research. The vignettes all produced new evidence which supported the fact people's beliefs and values etc were different around the world. My CQ was growing. The use of the conscious competence learning model provided a framework to establish what was occurring in each vignette. I could see how I had moved from the unconscious incompetence stage to the unconscious competence stage which in effect built my cultural intelligence. As the research progressed my knowledge grew, and I gained the skills to go into new environments with confidence to make informed judgments based on observations and evidence. This is highlighted in vignette 7.

My interactions with overseas business colleagues, together with my overseas travel and observations in different Far Eastern countries over the years, have certainly allowed me to use the knowledge I have gained over the years to gain an appreciation of what is happening, and have also enabled me to try to respond to any issue in a way more aligned to the country I am in. In Hall's publications, *The Hidden Dimension*, *The Silent Language* and *Beyond Culture*, he explores a raft of cultural differences. One topic I found interesting which answered a long outstanding question, concerned why doors in Germany were so heavy (thick). Hall states that this is cultural; the Germans wish to screen out sound. In his first book he discusses why people like to keep certain distances between themselves and other people or things. This explained why, in some instances when I was talking to a colleague in the Far East, I felt they were far too close, and then at other times in another country I felt they were too far away. In his second book, *Silent Language*, Hall analyses the way people talk to each other without the use of words. My overseas travels have introduced me to many of these experiences (like the example above). The concept of high and low context communication is another part of a country's culture which will impact on a society and the way they communicate with the outside world (other countries). High context countries can be difficult to enter as you do not have contact with the locals and do not carry the tacit information needed to fully understand what is occurring. You have not been programmed locally and you are outside the networks that exist. This lack of local knowledge could also act as a barrier and probably prevent the instant creation of close relationships. Relationships are more important than the task in a high context society. Low context cultures are far easier for an outsider to enter. There are local, informal networks which may be useful short term. The reason for this is that much of the information is free to find out and relationships can be established easily. The important thing is establishing a task rather than feeling your way into a relationship. This was an important finding for me, as I deal mainly in the Far East. During the development of my company I tried to develop a relationship with an overseas company which was in a high context country (Bangladesh). We rang, spoke, and visited on numerous occasions, supporting

our overseas contact, including appearing on national television with them. Eventually, we appeared to have developed a close relationship and were beginning to understand how to operate in the market, but unfortunately, our colleague ran into a commercial difficulty and the relationship ceased. Reflecting on this, it was an interesting time, and I can see how we took on the challenge of operating in a high context country. Hofstede et al. ranked countries in order of individualism v collectivism, with the UK ranking at 89 and Bangladesh at 20, virtually at the other end of the pendulum swing.

6.0.5 What does it mean - for me, for the world, for practice, for theory?

In the UK if 18.30 hours is given for the start of a business meeting that normally means the meeting will begin at 18.30 hours. However, as this research has revealed some people from overseas put a different importance on the medium of time. To some it means exactly 18.30 and to others it is simply a guide to time. In the UK we tend to tackle one challenge at a time (monochronic) whereas in some Far Eastern countries they tend to operate in a different way, completing more than one challenge at a time (polychronic). As you look around the world today, the media reports on differences between one country and another, but which is right? I recently talked to my son's wife (who is Malaysian) about an article I had read in the media. The topic revolved around air travel and I said that although we liked travelling with Qatar Airways, following my understanding of events in the Middle East with Qatar supporting ISIS I did not think I would travel via Qatar. She immediately responded that my understanding was flawed and suggested that the issue concerned two Middle Eastern countries looking for commercial gain and publishing wrong information, thereby trying to get people like me to boycott Qatar in general. Although this lies outside the scope of this research, the more I investigated this area the more I found different cultural issues had entered the arena. Would I have looked further if I had not completed this research? I imagine not.

As far as the business world is concerned, if anyone is to increase their chance of success in overseas markets, they have to realise that they must look at their potential customers, find out as much as they can, which would include the country they are from, then look at some of the findings of the culture gurus and then develop a strategy for the future. Before I began this research, I would glibly say "let's go to the Far East". My visits and observations, together with my desk research, have indicated that it is impossible to make the generic statement 'The Far East'. While in Thailand I said to a Thai "you are lucky to have such good neighbours as the Cambodians". Unfortunately, I was close to an area where there is a disputed region, and the two countries at that time were not getting on too well. An early introduction to cultural differences for me was the exchanging of business cards. In the UK I have had scruffy pieces of card (business cards) almost thrown at me. In the Far East, most countries regard the exchanging of business cards as a small ceremony where the business card is an

extension of self. You receive the card with two hands, read it, then put it somewhere safe (not in a leather wallet if it is from a person from India).

The list of differences goes on and on, and if you bring into the equation the topic of language (which is outside the scope of this research project), and the ways in which communications can be misunderstood, the topic of culture can have a massive impact upon relationships around the world. My findings from my empirical and desk research have supported many of the past researchers' findings, including Hall whose research may be considered dated. However, this dated research has helped me to appreciate how we have arrived at today's situation.

Today, as soon as I am alerted to a problem around the world, especially the Far East, I start to look for any cultural differences. Recently I watched a program focusing on Vietnam and Cambodia on the television and I found myself saying to my wife, "well one of the reasons for that is that they are a collective society as against an individualistic society here in the UK". It is highly unlikely that I would have uttered that phrase before I started this research.

This research has uncovered numerous cultural differences that I was previously totally unaware of, and I am sure there will be a lot more to follow. I do hope so, as I find the whole issue fascinating. As I am typing this document, I am hoping in 2019/20 our next trip overseas will be to the Far East where I can immerse myself in the local culture, both by observation and communication.

This research, including the vignettes, has uncovered new cultural areas as well as supporting the existing research. The one thing I am sure about is that there is still a huge amount to discover. Like the iceberg, perhaps I have made inroads into the section you can see, but I have only just entered the part under the water, and it is highly unlikely that I will ever understand it completely.

6.0.6 What gaps in the knowledge did I uncover?

Using myself as the focus of this auto ethnographic qualitative research has been very enlightening. As I look at myself in the mirror, I sometimes wonder what has changed. However, over recent years I have found I am now becoming quite inquisitive and challenge many events and activities which in the past I may have just accepted. Reflecting on this, I can see my approach to any interaction with new business contacts in the Far East, or in effect any overseas country, has changed. If I am required to speak to someone from a new country, I will look at Trompenaars, Hall, Morrison and Conway's research, in an attempt to get an understanding of what I will probably experience as the relationship develops. However today, with the fast flow of communication around the globe linked to the ease of movement of people around the world, some of the old research may need to be refined to reflect the current trends. My son's wife, who is Malaysian and has spent a considerable amount of her life in the Far East, especially Malaysia where she was born, has recently moved to the UK to live. When

comparing Rudmin's (2003) four stages of acculturation with her experiences as she integrated in with the UK way of life, it did not appear to be creating many issues. It would appear we have arrived at the integration stage where individuals are able to adopt the cultural norms of the dominant host culture while maintaining their culture of origin. From what I have observed, she keeps in close contact with her family back in Malaysia via VOIP (such as Skype), but it would appear she finds it easy to integrate with English society.

This research has found that reviewing past research by academics and practitioners has helped to gain an understanding of what was occurring overseas. However, the use of the vignettes has helped to focus on a selection of instances, and explore what took place in greater detail, which enabled a better understanding of cultural traits.

Vignette 1 was the first experience of recognising I had acted as an Englishman abroad and forgotten I was overseas. When reflecting on the event, there would never have been a happy conclusion with the approach taken. Recently my cousin's 24-year-old son announced he was off to Australia for a year. Until then he had lived in the town where he was born and, other than the odd trip to London, he had not ventured far away. Reflecting on the last meeting I had with him I can recall saying "remember the Aussies speak English (well an Australian English) dress similar to the English and can be mistaken for an English person (until they speak) but they are not English and you are a foreigner in their land; there will be differences so be ready for them". I wonder if I would have given the same advice before I started this investigation into overseas culture.

Vignette 2 looked at the use of numbers, or in some cases not using certain numbers which are thought to be unlucky, such as the number 4. One of my first introductions to the number culture was when I agreed to meet my wife on the 4th floor of a massive shopping mall but discovered there was no 4th floor. The number 8 appears to be the reverse of the number 4 in that it brings good luck, thus when dealing with someone of Chinese extraction it may be beneficial to arrange to sign any documents on the 8th of the month. Block and Kramer (2009) investigate the impact lucky numbers have on marketing exercises. They discuss the lucky Chinese number 8, which is reinforced when looking at the Beijing Olympic Games which opened at 08.08.08pm on the 08/08/08. However, in today's society Agarwal et al. suggest that "8 could also be connected to wealth or status" (Agarwal, 2014:6).

Vignette 3 looked at attire and showed that different populations can look at items in a different way. The picture of the Dutch wedding couple did not look out of the ordinary to me; however, when I looked at the pictures of the Indonesian weddings, I realised that something I thought was perfectly normal to a local person in Indonesia may look unusual.

Vignette 4 highlighted the impact time can have on people around the globe. In this vignette a delay of 30 minutes by the Indonesians was considered quite acceptable. On the other hand, recently there

was a report in the media about the Japanese apologising for a train leaving a station 20 seconds early, so it would appear the Japanese place tremendous importance on punctuality (BBC Trains (2017)

Vignette 5 explained the different approaches between UK and Malaysian women to sun tans. In the UK many people would rush outside and lie in the sun in an attempt to get a sun tan, whereas in Malaysia, as soon as the sun appears women would produce parasols/umbrellas for shade to stay white, as sun tans indicate manual workers working out in the open.

The YouTube research in Vignette 6 uncovered some differences to questions posed in different countries. In the first example, participants were shown pictures of flowers and asked to group them into two categories. Differences in selection continued throughout the video. The decision processes and rationale appeared different in the countries selected for the research.

Vignette 7 was one of my recent experiences, and as a result of my research the experience of the over-enthusiastic hotel staff was an experience, I found relatively easy to understand and fit in with the local culture.

Finally, Vignette 8 was something I heard in the UK which highlighted to me cultural difference – the use of ‘Mr’ Singh.

Via the use of the vignettes I have been able to show differences in culture, mainly between the Far East and the UK. Although only small in number they have helped me to gain an understanding of the different ways people have of tackling a task. If I stand next to an Indonesian and look at a picture, the question must be asked: what do they see and what do I see?

The Far Eastern Confucian approach of ‘saving face’ is common to Asian countries, so it must be considered when communicating with anyone from that part of the world. Hofstede et al (2010) talk about the way people are brought up and the way they are programmed, in his book ‘Software of the Mind’. This creates a dilemma. How can one ever fully understand how Far Eastern culture operates if one only visits and does not reside there? While I appreciate that we have high and low context countries, this is another area of culture I will struggle to fully appreciate, especially the high context where a lot is programmed into someone and taken for granted.

Although this research has uncovered many new areas which will be very illuminating and help with my understanding of culture, I also know I will never stop learning. I also consider it will be impossible for me to fully understand everything, and my knowledge of Far Eastern culture will develop, but the cultural arena is vast.

6.0.7 Cultural Levels

Browaeys and Price (2011) state that culture operates on three levels.

The first being on a level where it is observable and tangible. Here, **artefacts** and **attitudes** can be observed in terms of architecture, rituals, dress codes, making contact, contracts, language, eating and so on. Operating at a second level, culture is to do with norms and values. **Beliefs** – or **norms** – are statements of fact about the way things are. These are the cultural rules, as it were, which explain what is happening at level one and determine what is right or wrong. **Values** are to do with general preferences as to what is good or bad, how things should be. The third – and deepest level – has to do with **basic assumptions**. This level is difficult to explore and what lies there can only be construed through interpretation of what is happening at the other levels. Interpretation involves trying to explain why we act according to particular rules or in line with particular values

(Browaeys and Price, 2011:4).

This thesis has looked at a selection of different scenarios, via the use of vignettes, to try to “unpeel the onion” (Hofstede 2010) in an attempt to understand what is occurring in my world as I communicate with different people.

6.0.8 What was outside the scope of this research?

At the beginning of this research journey I do not really think I fully appreciated what I was undertaking. I began by asking what the difference was between the UK and the Far Eastern way of working. Reflecting on the early days of this research, I soon realised that the term ‘Far East’ was an oversimplification. The Far East comprises several countries, each with its own culture, and once I started to communicate with people from those countries it soon became obvious there were differences in the way they operated.

An example discussed earlier in this thesis was that of the exchange of business cards in the Far East, which in effect was a little ceremony. If you compared that to some of the exchanges of business cards that occur here in the UK, where a screwed-up piece of paper/card found in the bottom of someone’s pocket or case is virtually thrown at you, it highlights the different approaches taken. In the Far East people regard the business card as an extension of themselves, whereas in the UK you may sometimes wonder if any importance is given to the act of exchanging business cards at all. It is important to treat any business card with respect, and once read it should be put somewhere safe in front of the giver of the card. Thought must be given as to where to place the card for safe keeping, bearing in mind, for example, that in India the cow is considered sacred and therefore if the exchange of cards is with an Indian person it may be prudent not to place the card in a leather wallet.

Until recently Thailand had a unique position, as the king was revered and acted as a stabilising factor. Unfortunately, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who ruled for around 70 years, died recently and his son has

now been crowned king. However, whether the new king will command the same respect as his father only time will tell. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government. The King, a highly revered figure in Thailand is the Head of State while the Prime Minister is Head of Government. I visited Thailand when King Bhumibol Adulyadej was alive, and while there I became curious about some flags flying in the streets and on buildings. At one of the hotels we stayed at I asked why there were so many yellow and blue flags flying on different pillars /lampposts around the different cities. I was told the King was born on a Monday and the colour for Monday is yellow, and the Queen was born on a Friday and the colour for Friday is blue. We were staying at the hotel for six days, so on the Monday I wore a yellow shirt. The hotel member of staff who told me about the flags came across to me and looked at my shirt and smiled. On the Friday I wore blue. The same member of staff was on duty and the reception I received indicated I had made a positive impact. Within the country the media have highlighted the two main cultural differences that of the Red and Yellow shirts.

The Red shirts are formally known as the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) and its members are mainly rural workers from outside Bangkok. However, the Red shirt ranks also include students, left-wing activists and some businesspeople who see attempts by the urban and military elite to control Thai politics as a threat to democracy. A loose grouping of royalists, ultra-nationalists and the urban middle class also known as the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) accused the opposition leader of inadequate loyalty to the monarchy - and wear yellow because it is the King's colour. (BBC Red. 2012).

Examining this BBC report on Thailand further you can compare it to the iceberg example, as we do not know what is lurking below the water. As the BBC article touches upon, there are a lot of other areas, including cultural matters, which would emerge if you were to look deeper (something which is outside the scope of this research).

Language has an impact upon the culture of a country: how something is said (tone of voice), and how someone looks (body language). What is not said can also impact upon how someone communicates. Although this area is recognised as having an influence upon the cultural scene, it is outside the scope of this research. This may mean I may miss some of the nuances that occur, but to include it would make the research footprint exceptionally large, and well beyond the researcher's brief.

During this research, countries have been classified as a whole e.g. Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia etc., but in many cases within each country micro cultures exist. In Indonesia there are different tribes, in Malaysia there is a variety of religions all impacting upon the development of the country. Baginda (2009) states that, "Malaysia starting at 100BC to 1400AD [it] comprised Hindu Kingdoms, then from 1400 to 1511 there was the Islam and Golden age of Malacca, 1511 to 1957 it was colonial Malaysia

and gained independence in 1957” (Baginda, 2009:103). Also, “The Portuguese, Dutch and British came to Malaya to spread their influence and power” (Baginda, 2009:107). Due to recent events in the development of Malaysia “another problem the country faced with independence was determining its national identity” (Baginda, 2009:108). Where Malaysia comprises the mainland plus Sarawak and Sabah (plus some small islands) Indonesia is an archipelago comprising around 17,508 islands (Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board, 2011:3). This number changes as small islands disappear, and others appear. There are over 300 ethnic groups (Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board, 2011:3), all bringing their different cultures. The main religion is Islam (88%), followed by Protestantism (6%) Catholicism (3%) Hinduism (1%) Buddhism (2%) and others (Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board, 2011 :4).

As this research developed, staying focused on the core topic became a challenge. The desk research and observations revealed many new areas which have had to be set to one side for the time being. It is hoped that once this research project is complete my travels in the future will allow further exploration into the world of culture and associated areas. One of the negative sides of completing this research is that I now tend to look deeper into activities and events, and before long a Pandora’s Box is opened, and new facts are uncovered which I am itching to explore.

With the world becoming a smaller place (metaphorically speaking) some of the research completed by the likes of Hall (1959), Trompenaars (1998) and Hofstede (2010) has become a little dated. Although other people/organisations such as Globe (1991) have added to the research pool, to date I have not found any large projects such as that of Hofstede. Recently I visited an office in London, and when I looked around at the faces of the people it was obvious many were of foreign extraction and I wondered if they had brought their home culture (or family culture) into the office. In around 13 hours you can be in Singapore, so the movement of labour and the way people communicate with each other has changed dramatically over recent years. I recently spoke to a friend who works for an international financial company in London whom I had not spoken to for three weeks. While we were talking, he stated he had to go as it was bedtime, which surprised me as it was only just after 14.00 hrs. What I had not appreciated was that he had been sent on secondment to their Singapore office for three months and he was not in London but halfway around the world. Skype (VoIP) has certainly changed the way people communicate with each other, both within the UK and around the world.

6.0.9 How I have developed as a researcher in the process of completing this research.

Undertaking this research study has been an invaluable and challenging learning experience. It has expanded my knowledge and understanding of the research process, including the highs and lows as the research process develops. Some of the research has revealed that events do not fit into tight

categories; for instance, when looking at a country I have adopted a macro approach whereas there are micro approaches which may differ from my findings.

The knowledge gained while completing this study has had a major impact upon my way of operating and has influenced my professional values. It has already affected my way of working and will continue to do so in the future. Although this study is nearing its end for me, the learning has only just started as I now find I am always wondering: What is that person thinking? What does this mean? Why did he do that? And so, it goes on. It has also affected aspects of my personal life. For example, when I am sitting at home watching the television, I am constantly asking questions such as “why did he say that or why did he do that?” I find myself becoming quite frustrated by programmes that in the past I would have enjoyed, to the point I will sometimes leave the room in frustration. I must remind myself that many programmes on the television are fictional, and therefore to make the programme last an hour, sometimes decisions which seem to me to be irrational must be made.

However, the study is not over; in fact, the journey has just begun. As I write this thesis, I am in the process of closing one of my companies, so my overseas contacts are reducing. The closure will have a positive impact as my wife, and I are already looking at traveling overseas, perhaps outside of the Far East so I am excited about what I will find there. Nowadays, whenever I travel, I approach new areas consciously asking myself: “How was this person programmed, how will he/she respond to me?” The whole process of completing this research has encouraged me to view events differently, and to realise that even though someone dresses in a similar fashion to me and speaks English like me, if he grew up in some distant land his approach to life’s events could be quite different.

As I arrive at the end of this research, I now find I am not quite so surprised/horrified at some of the items I read in the media or on the net. In the last couple of days, the Phnom Penh Post published the following article. While I appreciate some editorial licence will be included to make the article newsworthy, it highlights a difference between the UK and Cambodia.

Kampot Province

It was raining the night that the attacker – or attackers – broke into Ouy Sok's cottage, decapitated him and covered his headless body with a plank of wood. Pich Ra, 25, recalled that fact the next day when the village chief brought him the news about his neighbour.

"He did not deserve to die," said Ra, who described Sok as a quiet man who spent his days tending to his three cows. "This was revenge for his sorcery. But I don't think he was a sorcerer."

More than a week after the 69-year-old traditional healer was beheaded in Kampot province for being a "sorcerer", police are silent on whether they have any suspects, villagers remain divided over whether their neighbour was truly a practitioner of black magic and Sok's head still has yet to be found.

The grisly killing highlights the still-strong belief in black magic in many parts of Cambodia, where a predilection for mob justice – and perhaps, in the case of Sok, a lack of access to mental health care – often make for tragic outcomes.

Residents of Tamnak Trayueng and Chamkarmon villages, in Kampot's Chhouk district, say they had been suspicious of Sok for years after he began acting strangely – talking to himself, nailing stakes aimlessly along the roads and shouting that he had sickened their relatives with black magic.

Sok's family believes his increasingly erratic behaviour was the result of the onset of mental illness and excessive drinking. To other villagers, however, it was interpreted as an obvious sign of sorcery. Soon, villagers started reporting a number of unusual deaths that they attributed to Sok.

"When I saw his face, I would walk away," said 23-year-old Ngoath Cheavda, a resident of neighbouring Chamkarmon village. "It's better for him to be dead than alive. Whoever he touched, wherever he touched them, they would get sick."

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Like many countries around the world some of the old-world traditions/cultures still exist. However, the question must be asked as to whether this is due to a lack of education in the less developed countries. This is outside the scope of this research project, although the speed of development with the introduction of the internet and the impact on communications will certainly bring it to people's attention quicker than in the past.

6.0.10 Further Research

From the results shown above it has highlighted I have only just scratched the surface when looking at the cultural iceberg. Some of the areas identified during this research which need further investigation include, local education, gestures, body language, and the way you carry out culturally significant tasks. Culture is a strong part of people's lives. It influences their views, their values, their humour, their hopes, their loyalties, and their worries and fears. Many issues around the world today revolve around culture so therefore to have some perspective and understanding of their cultures

would help in any resolution. The more we uncover the easier it will become for different people from different countries to understand each other.

As I come to the end of this research document my eyes were drawn to a recent event in Japan. Mr Yoshitaka Sakurada (Japan's Sport Minister) has publically apologised for being three minutes late to a parliamentary meeting. Colleagues have stated his tardiness showed disrespect for his office. Obviously, time has a different level of importance in the Japanese culture to the English (BBC Yos, 2019).

This longitudinal investigation has been an exciting, challenging journey into the world of culture. At the start of the journey I did not appreciate the vastness of the topic and it was not long after starting that I realised I had to start to focus on a particular area which would support me the most. Although this research project is coming to an end my interest continues and I am looking forward to my next foray overseas – what will I uncover – time will tell.

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