Business Culture the Difference between Organisational Success and Failure: Selected Global Countries Expectations

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Abstract: *Developed economies have demonstrated their astuteness and prowess on the reinforcement of business cultures and etiquette that have contributed immensely to their businesses becoming internationally competitive and reputable. This study focused on how business culture is ofsignificance as a barometer of either promoting organisational success or being a barrier on the international arena by collating and comparing different countries' business cultures across the globe. This qualitative study based on the interpretivism philosophy used the triangulation approach of mainly desk research (library analysis) and interviews with some different business leaders in Zimbabwe.One of the major finding was that countries with widely known and strong business cultures had an edge in terms of getting business and even foreign investment opportunitiesover those whose business cultures are not known much and weak. Economies that struggle have large disparities among their different sectors on how they conduct their businesses. The study concludes that to do foreign business successfully, there is need to understand the business culture of that particular country first in order to enhance client relations and market segmentation.*

Key terms
Business culture*- common understanding and shared meaning on how to handle business dealings and the nature of conduct to be exhibited or portrayed.*
Expectation*- anticipation of certain business etiquette and behaviour.*
Failure*- business stagnation as evidenced by lack of growth, expansion and at times operational challenges such as loss making.*
Organisational success*- improvement of performance in terms of sales growth, increased market share, profit making and business growth.*

I.   Introduction and background

Business culture, which in the context of this paper, can be taken as the general business practices and approaches of a particular country that help potential business investors and dealers to appreciate what they should expect in that country and a key aspect of the international business environment assessment. Culture is arrangement of different attributes that express an organization and differentiate firms in one country from those in other countries (Hopkins, 2017). Business culture is the collective thinking of minds which create a difference between the businesses of one group from another (Kegan & Lahey, 2016). Business culture is made up of different values and behaviours that are considered to guide business to success (Elsmore, 2017). In international business it is gained knowledge, explanations, values, beliefs, communication and behaviours of large group of companies in a particular geographical location and influenced by policies, rules and regulations (Matthew, 2019). Business culture is integrated, with each element connected and influencing another and one cannot isolate certain aspects of it without producing a distorted viewpoint. These aspects are interlinked, directly impacting one another to create the prevailing situation (Henry, 2019; Hopkins, 2017). Business culture is learned; in fact, it must be learnedand alsoshared (Ross, 2016). For a belief or behaviour to be considered cultural, it must be shared (Harris, Mayo, Prince&Tooey, 2013) and must be considered appropriate by the society to be a custom (Henry, 2019).Language is one of the most obviously shared elements of any business culture (Evans, 2018; Tomalin & Nicks, 2007).

Perhaps anthropology's greatest contribution to organizational behaviour is its emphasis on the ability to facilitate the understanding of peoples in other countries or organizations (Buchanan, 2019; Lavenda& Schultz, 2010). Thislearning about business cultures is accomplished by noting differences in values, attitudes and behaviour (Lavenda& Schultz, 2010). Rather than focusing on the individual business, as in other disciplines, the focus here is on the macro level, as in group processes and multinational organizations (Hurt,

2016).This business cultural understanding is particularly important in today's workplace as different people (citizens and foreigners) learn to manage diversity and globalisation, whether one is assigned to deal with another organisation in another country or becomes a member of a virtual team (Ferraro &Briody, 2017).

The Significance of Culture

Recognizing the importance of culture in the business world is an important step towards success in the global marketplace. Understanding a country's business culture is a sign of respect that helps to foster effective communication, which attributes to business success. Developing an appreciation of another culture does not have to be difficult. Here are some vital considerations to keep in mind (Hurt, 2016; Martin & Chaney, 2012; Ross, 2016):

- **Cultural Stories**: Each culture has underlying themes. Values and attributes such as frugality, trust, honesty, accountability and endurance may be viewed differently in other countries. In most cases, these attributes translate into varying expectations for business partnerships and negotiations mostly abroad.
- **Communication**: In many cultures, communication, including non-verbal, may be subtle and nuanced, rather than the direct approach often associated with some countries. It is prudent therefore to learn how people in targeted foreign market use words and phrases, hand gestures, body language and other cues to communicate. It is also critical to identify non-verbal gestures used in that market (country)that are acceptable and those which are not, in order to avoid offending or embarrassing a new business partner (Chawla, 2017).
- **Decision Making**: It is important to know how businesses particularly in other countries make decisions e.g. individually or as part of a large group? In some countries, it may prolong by taking months to issue a group decision on a contract, yet elsewhere, unilateral decision-making could be the accepted norm.
- **Time Perception**: It is ideal to know how potential overseas partners perceive time and deadlines. While punctuality is observed and reinforced in one culture. In other countries for a meeting, time could be considered as more of a suggestion than a hard-and-fast schedule. Similarly, some cultures may place greater emphasis on long-term planning and overall company health, viewing success not through the lens of short term fiscal reports but rather from a perspective of long term programmes such as five-year blueprints.

Given the above, from a research perspective, the importance of studying the business culture enables one to look at the interactions in the global world and even the attitudes and working behaviour (Fusch& Gillespie, 2012; Mathew, 2019).

II. Problem statement

National economic growth hinges largely on fluid business practices that promote national identity and become universally known and appreciated. Such business practices are centred on business culture and etiquette, which areusually taken for granted, yet success largely depends on that. A number of developed countries have been able to market their business culture as epitomised by their approach and serious manneron how they treat business practices, yet some developingcountries such as Zimbabwe seem to undermine that and instead attempt to emulate other countries' business cultures. This lack of a shared business culture is detrimental to getting foreign business partners interested in dealing with businesses in such countries as it drowns their level of confidence.

III. Research questions

1. What is the importance of having good knowledge of a particular country'sbusiness culture?
2. What are the key considerations or dimensions that define a country's business culture?
3. How can comparisons between different nationalbusiness cultures influencebusiness opportunities abroad?
4. What are the major reasons affecting the understanding of business culture in some foreign countries?

IV. Literature review

The following Table 1 shows key dimensions that are considered key to defining a country's business culture and etiquette based on desk research (secondary data) for selected countries across the globe.

Table 1: *Synopsis of different countries business cultures*

Country	Continent	General business mantra	Dress Code	Greetings	Meetings	Negotiations	Gifts	Business cards	References
United States of America	North America	*Business culture is primarily money oriented. *Americans are often very individualistic and motivated by their careers. * Americans are future oriented and are opportunistic and risk takers since innovation will prevail over tradition.	*Initially dress conservatively. Afterwards, you may follow the example of your American counterparts.	*Refrain from greetings that involve hugging and close physical contact. *Most executives will be uncomfortable standing at a closer distance.	*Punctuality is very important for business occasions. *Unlike other cultures, it's perfectly acceptable to refuse food or drink. In most cases, the host won't urge you to eat.	* English will still be used almost 100% in business conversations. *Americans enjoy talking with people with a sense of humour. Jokes are usually welcome. *The concept "time is money" is taken seriously *Business executives value being straightforward and to-the-point information. * Avoid silence during meetings. * Executives are direct and will not hesitate to disagree with you. *Persistence is key to winning business deals.	*Business gifts are usually presented after the deal is closed.	One's business card will not be refused, but not usually exchanged unless you want to contact the person later.	Baginskaya (2017); Broadbent (2017); Crothers(2017); Helmold, Becker, Gonzalez& del Pillar Herrera (2020); Stewart-Allen & Denslow (2019). *www.todaytranslations.com*
United Kingdom	Europe	*The UK's Higher Education System is one of the most developed in the world with some of the leading universities educating business leaders in Business and Management Schools and therefore high degree of professionalism and integrity. The negotiating partner is expected to be highly qualified and dealings should adhere to best ethical practices.	*Usually formal wear is expected for business interface.	*Handshakes first and a 'little small talk' to kick start the meeting should be observed.	*Decisions usually are top down and may not be immediate but may be reached later after the meeting	*Beginning a conversation with someone new may be a daunting task *Opening a conversation with a neutral topic, such as the weather or something dictated by the immediate situation could be ideal * It is good practice for one to start a conversation with open questions as the reaction of the counterpart is not always predictable. *There is need to ask for permission if one would like to talk about potentially sensitive subjects and should not be overly negative or sarcastic.	*Not very particular about gifts but a token for courtesy or gesture can be welcome and accepted.	*Business cards are encouraged..	Fenwick, Edwards & Buckley (2003); Jean (2019); Lin, Guo, Wen & Zhang (2019); Woodward (2007); Marcel (2017); Xu, Chen & Xu (2018). *www.southampton*
Germany	Europe	*The nation is strongly individualistic. * Therefore the highest of standards are expected and any unethical behaviour might seriously harm all future business negotiations. *The government takes environmental issues in the country extremely seriously and that has greatly	*Appearance and presentation is very important to Germans, particularly when it comes to doing business. * Even when dressed informally, that should be neat and conservative.	Shaking hands with everyone before the meeting.	*Time should be managed carefully, and calendars, schedules, and agendas must be respected. *projects are carefully scheduled *One should not turn up late for an appointment or meeting. Even a few minutes' delay can offend the Germans. * If one is going to be even slightly late, should call ahead and explain the situation. One	*Very straightforward answers which are usually prompt *Usually not comfortable to use English and may feel offended	*Gift-giving among business associates is not common in Germany. *Most state governments and local authorities have contact points for whistle-blowing and provisions for rotating personnel in areas prone to corruption *government officials are forbidden from accepting gifts linked to their	*One can come with plentiful business cards.	Flamini (1997); Schroll-Machl (2016); Mole (2011); Srader (2018); Stahlhofer, Schmidkon& Kraft (2018). *businessculture.org*

		influenced its energy and environmental policy objectives.			should be five to ten minutes early for important appointments.		jobs.		
Russia	Europe	*It is difficult to do business in Russia without the help from a local "connection". * Patience is important with Russians, negotiations can often be slow. * One should avoid hard selling techniques and any sort of conflict or confrontation.	*Dressing should be formal, more conservative office clothes for both men and women.	*For greetings, one should shake hands firmly and maintain direct eye contact. *Always need to remove gloves when shaking hands, it is considered rude not to do so. *One should never use first names unless one is invited to do so, as it is important to respect authority and formality.	*Punctuality is appreciated, One should be on time if not early if for a meeting *However, one should not necessarily expect the Russian counterpart to be on time, this may be just a deliberate attempt to test one's patience. * Russians don't make an immediate decision in a meeting; usually some deliberation are done in private afterwards. * One should maintain eye contact and not stand around with hands in the pockets. * One should not sit with the legs apart or with one ankle resting upon the knee.	*Russians prefer foreigners to use their language, so an attempt to learn or at least partially speak with them in their language is a good idea. *Bringing up the subject of Russian culture and history will be an appreciated gesture. *One should avoid topics such as complaints about Russia, the Holocaust, Czarism and monarchy, conflicts with ethnic minorities and comparing Russia to other developing countries.	*It is often appropriate for one to bring a small gift when attending a function *Drinking and toasting at gatherings is an important and common act. * Going out for a drink when one has been invited is highly recommended as it shows interest in strengthening the relationship and promoting good will.	*The act of handing out business cards is quite a common and important action in Russia. *On the business cards, one should always print one side in own official language and the other side in Russian.	Ardichvili (2017); Roberts (2016); Zhuplev (2016) *www.todaytranslations.com*
Japan	Asia	* Japan is a more relationship-oriented culture than most countries. *Japanese want to know and trust someone before they do business with them. *Relationships are developed through informal social gatherings and generally involve a considerable amount of eating and drinking.	*Appearance is very important, and one should try to dress more formally. *Business attire is conservative, with an emphasis on conformity rather than individual expression.	*Bowing is an important part of everyday life in Japan, including in the business context. *Japanese bow to those senior to them both as a greeting and a show of respect.	*Japanese family names come first, and are followed by the given name. Therefore one should always address people by their family name until when invited to call them by their given name.	*Respect for age and status is very important in Japanese culture, with hierarchy affecting all aspects of social interactions. The Japanese are most comfortable interacting with someone they consider their equal. *Status is determined by a combination of someone's role in an organisation they work for, university they went to and their marital situation.	*Are accepted even from corporate companies.	*The exchange of business cards (meishi) is an essential part of initial meetings in Japan and a strict protocol It allows the Japanese to quickly determine their counterpart's position, title and rank. * If one is given cards should take a few seconds to review the names and titles, commenting on them if time permits.	Бондарик, (2019); Huysveld. (2018); Kumar &Sethi, (2016); Takei& Alston (2018); Yamamoto & Lloyd (2019). *asialinkbusiness.com*
China	Asia	*Business in China relies heavily on personal relationships and one should make sure to have some!	*Government officials and top management dress formally for meetings, while business people at working levels may adopt a more casual style. * If one is not	* Meetings often start with handshake followed by saying one's name clearly, organisation and position. * Chinese refer to their company first, then their title, and then their name during introductions	*One should not be late for meetings on the scheduled date and should know who is the boss. * The Chinese value punctuality, so one needs to arrive on time or	* One should know the language capabilities of the hosts before the meeting. *It is more convenient and reliable for one to have own interpreter if the hosts do not speak English or have little English capability.	*These are forbidden for business as they may be considered bribery unless for individual gesture.	* Cards encouraged but one should hand out business cards to the most senior official first and may reciprocate. * One should take a moment	Li (2003); Vollmer (2012) *todaytranslations.com*

Country	Region								References
		sure, should go formal, it will convey respect and seriousness.	* Seniority is valued in China and one should address the counterparts by their title (Chairman, Director, etc.) starting with the most senior person in the room.	even slightly early for meetings or other occasions.	* There is need to have Chinese-language materials (e.g. brochures, presentations) about one's company to share with the hosts.			to look at the given card and acknowledge it. *One should have own cards translated into Chinese on one side.	
India	Asia	*Indians are strongly guided by their respective religions and their shared values. * Respect for elders and hierarchy are core values that permeate all aspects of Indian society.	*Conservative, professional attire is expected in the business setting with variations though. *Women should avoid wearing short outfits or exposing their shoulders.	* A handshake is the standard way to greet men and women in a business setting. *The left hand is considered unclean and as such, should never be used alone to offer or accept a handshake, drink, food, money, gifts or business cards.	* In a first meeting, one should let the Indian host guide the initial stages of the conversation *One should be punctual for formal business meetings. * Indians like to develop a personal connection first and one should not begin business meetings by getting straight to the heart of the negotiation but instead ask personal questions about family and background.	* Depending on the type of Indian business one would be dealing with, it is not common for middle management to have decision-making autonomy. One should make sure that the person negotiating with is senior enough to commit to business and partnership decisions.	*These are encouraged but should be only issued or received using the right hand or both hands.	Business cards are essential and should include one's name, company, position and email address, all in English. *One should indicate a higher degree e.g. masters or a PhD, on the business card, as it earns greater respect in India. *After receiving a business card, one should spend a few moments examining it, providing positive feedback with a smile.	Henry (2019); Kumar &Sethi (2016); Shira, (2018); Srivastava (2019). *asialinkbusiness com*
Brazil	South America	*Brazilian business is hierarchical. *The final decisions are usually made by the highest ranking person; therefore, it takes some time to make a deal.	*It is important therefore to dress smartly and conservatively. Three-piece suits indicate an executive-level status.	*Greetings involving women will involve kissing of both cheeks. *Handshakes are usually reserved for men. *It is customary to shake hands with everyone present both upon arrival and when exiting the room. * Hugging and back slapping are also quite common.	*Punctuality is more relaxed but one should try to come on time. *Interruption whilst someone is talking is often considered acceptable. *Good conversation topics are football, family music and its beautiful beaches *Bad conversation topics are politics, poverty, religion and mentioning Argentina as it is considered a rival. * Also, it is not common to ask personal questions, such as age, salary, marital or job status.	*Brazilians negotiate with people not with companies, therefore, building a positive relationship (via small talk) is necessary while discussing business matters. *One should not try to show feelings of frustration or impatience as this will reflect poorly as an individual. *Brazilians pride themselves on their ability to be in control. *Usually negotiations are known to occur over meals, often lunch. *Good eye contact is expected. *The OK. sign in Brazil is considered rude.	*These are accepted but one should avoid giving purple or black gifts as this is for funerals or mourning.	*Exchange of business cards is done during introductions.	Herrington (2008); Kelm& Victor (2017); Mainardes, Nunes &Pinheiro(2013); Prates &Filgueiras(2011);Schneider (2018) *todaytranslations.com* *raveltips.usatoday.com*
Egypt	Africa	*Traditional culture greatly influences Egyptian business values. *Egyptian culture is influenced by Islam, family	*Most workplaces require men to wear suits and ties. *Women should dress conservatively- skirts should extend below the	One should wait for the host or counterpart to initiate greeting.	*During business meetings there is frequently offer of coffee and tea and one should always accept these offers, even if usually does not particularly want a drink.	*Whenever one enters business negotiations, the process will require patience and in many cases, business actions require the approval of government agencies, ministries or oversight committees. *Business in Egypt tends to move at a	These are welcome but give or receive using right hand or both hands and not left hand.	*One should have a number of business cards printed with personal name, title, business, address and full contact information. *	Davis, Easley, Lipshitz, Owens, Randinsky&Meraz(2012);Poelzl (2009);Trovão& Batoréu (2017); Wilson (2011); Zayan (2007). *todaytranslation*

Country	Region								
		and fatalism. * Emphasis is on building personal relationship.	knee and shoulders should always be covered. *Appearance is often tied to class and rank in Egypt, which are also extremely important.		*Hospitality is a very important element of Egyptian culture, and the refusal of food or drink can be quite insulting *One should make an appointments at least a week in advance and then confirm a day or two before the actual meeting. *In the meeting, the host may allow interruptions from others e.g. even taking phone calls even if personally one may find it infuriating.	slow (sometimes even ponderous pace) – especially if involving the government. * Egyptians will expect partner to negotiate on the terms of any agreement and one should never consider a first offer to be final.		The card should be double-sided, with information in English on one side and Arabic on the other.	s.com
South Africa	Africa	*An astute awareness of South African cultural differences can make the difference between a successful business meeting and a deal gone bad.	*Appropriate business attire includes suits and ties. It is preferable for women to wear dresses and skirts rather than pantsuits.	Humour is accepted when doing business.	*A first business meeting should be more about getting to know one another than a strict discussion of business matters. *South Africans are more likely to do business with expats if they like and trust you as a person.	*Most South Africans speak English as a second language and it is not expected that one translates documents or materials into any of the African languages. *One should never raise the voice and should always keep a mild tone when conversing. *It is considered rude to interrupt a speaker. *When speaking with female associates, one should not use the term "miss" if not sure of the woman's actual marital status; wrongly doing so may offend her. * One should show respect to elders as they are considered wise and those who disrespect them are considered undesirable business partners. *It is considered rude to have a conversation with anyone while keeping one's hands in the pockets. *One should make constant eye contact and nod often to indicate agreeing with the host. *It is important that one appears to be a good listener.	*Accepted.	Not a very common practice.	Bystrom (2016); Feldman (2019); Macleod (2002); Risik (2011);Scheeper & Reddy (2019) www.expatica.com
Australia	Oceania	*Like the British, Australians are modest, and do not like people who big themselves or their businesses up. *Of course, one should sell the benefits of working with his/her business, but should be modest and put the facts on the table.	* One should stick to suits or a smart dress.	*Australians are not very formal, so one should be relaxed and casual when greeting a potential client or business partner. *One should stick to a polite 'Hello' and follow with standard English terms.	*Punctuality is critical and one should arrive early for a business meeting.	*Australians are very blunt and to the point, and do not want to spend months chatting before they buy or sell to the partner. This is both a blessing and a curse, as it means they can enter quickly into fruitful partnerships, but one should also be prepared for rejection if trying too hard to sell as that might frustrate them by contacting them too often, they just would not be interested.	*Generally, gift-giving is not part of Australian business culture but stillacceptable especially one brings a small gift from home country and these should be opened once received.	*Business cards accepted.	Callaghan, Wood &Svensson (2008). Cavusgil, Knight, ,Riesenberger, Rammal& Rose (2014); Milton-Smith(1997). www.bizlatinhub.com
Zimbabwe	Africa	*Business etiquette in Zimbabwe is fairly similar to business etiquette in most of Europe particularly UK.	*Those doing business usually dress well, as a professional look speaks highly of one's professionalism. *Men usually wear the standard suit and tie, * For women, dresses should not cut above the knees as they are not appropriate for the workplace.	*Greetings usually by handshakes or use hugs *It's best to address people by their title (Dr., Reverend, Mr., Mrs., etc.), and you should only use their first name once they invite you to do so. *Greet the person closest to you first, and move out to the people spread around the room in order of proximity to you.	*It is important for one to be punctual for meetings *. If one must arrive late, needs to present a valid excuse as to why.	*One should allow the host to open the business discussions and must always close the discussions as well. *For negotiations, a calm, pensive demeanor is important. *Negotiations may become emotional, and that is acceptable but, for the most part, it is best to stay calm before a decision is made.	*When one intends to give a gift, should make sure it is wrapped and always opened in private, but the gift recipient must express gratitude upon receiving the gift. *One should bring gifts from out of the country, particularly if they cannot be found in Zimbabwe.	* Very much encouragedand when exchanging business cards, one must hand the card over with the right hand while taking the other person's card with the left.	Agburuga (2019); Mawere (2010); Muponde&Primorac (2005); Ndakaripa (2018). prezi.com

V. Methodology
The research was purely qualitative and adopted the interpretivism philosophy (Markey &Gass, 2016;Merriam &Grenier, 2019)anchored on the use of the triangulationtechnique that comprised the use of desk research (secondary data)and interviews.The key informants interviewed, as well as, the sampled countrieswere selected using the judgemental sampling technique (Flick, 2018;Hennink, Hutter& Bailey, 2020;Leedy&Omrod, 2016). The Content analysis was used to analyse the data and complimented by narrative statements in order to buttress some of the findings (Cresswell, 2014; Silverman, 2016; Hennink, Hutter& Bailey, 2020).

VI. Findings
Importance of knowing a particular national or country business culture
- influences how people from different nationalities can interact with each other.
- guides decision-making, behaviour, thinking patterns and values.
- determines business relationships which are pivotal to future or long-term deals.
- influences marketing strategies.
- guides how negotiations can be done in order to reach an amicable solution.

Key Informant 1said '*International business success hinges on the ability to understand and sustain culture developments in those countries that create opportunities to do business with''*.
Key informant 2said *'Understanding a foreign country's culture helps one to ascertain the probabilities of doing cordial and effective business as one would be already aware of the counterpart expectations''*

Key variables that define a country's business culture
The six major variables dimensions that should be considered are; dress code, greetings, preparation and conduct of meetings, negotiations, gifts and business cards.
Key informant 3 had this to say ''*Key areas that impact on international business hinge on the language you use with a foreigner, body language, andbusiness acumen that should convince the other party''*

Different cultures on business opportunities abroad
Culture profoundly influences how people think, communicate, and behave when conducting business abroad. It also affects the kinds of transactions they make and the way they negotiate them as epitomised by:
- Negotiating goal (contract or relationship?)
- Negotiating attitude (win-lose or win-win?)
- Personal style (informal or formal?)
- Communication (direct or indirect?)
- Sensitivity to time (high or low?)
- Emotionalism (high or low?)
- Form of agreement (general or specific?)
- Building an agreement (bottom up or top down?)
- Team organization(one leader or group consensus?)
- Risk taking (high or low?)

Key informant 4 had this to say ''*Apart from culture there are also considerations of perceptions about business prudence and professionalism ,as well as, country image (political risk) which should also be considered when exploiting business opportunities abroad''*

Major reasons affecting the understanding of business culture in foreign country
These include mainly:
- Language barrier.
- Strenuous government bureaucratic tendencies resulting in loss of patience.
- Too much formalisation of business procedures and processes.
- Discriminatory tendencies culminating in undermining one's country of business origin.
- Host country international business policies.

Key informant 5 said '' *There are a number of factors that affect comprehension of a foreign country's business culture which even goes back to trading patterns during pre-colonial era, impact of global technological developments, individual country perceptions and attitude, religious tolerance''*

VII. Conclusion

Despite people from different business cultures conducting business, in the international business context, mutual understanding of each other's business culture is fundamental for business success.There is need to understand the business culture and etiquette of a particular country that any firm intends to invest or market its products or services in such a country. Knowing and practicing common customs will also help one to relax, avoid embarrassment and focus on the matters at hand on critical occasions. Knowing business culture can also help to do market segmentation and improve customer/client relations in light of globalisation.

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