Human And Cultural Business Environment In International Business

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Abstract
Research shows that human and cultural business environment have significant influences in business activities, moreover in the fields of cross-cultural psychology and cross-cultural communication illustrated the main characteristics of most cultures in the world, also revealed cultures of certain societies. The current work is meant to add to the previous studies the impact of some philosophical doctrines on cultures adopted by certain societies. As a result, demonstrate how nature influence cultures of some societies and to what extent members of certain societies can exert influence on nature.

Key words: Scandinavia, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, sequential, synchronous, internally-directed, externally-directed.

1. Introduction.

Norway and Japan are among major players in the field of international business. Both societies have particular cultural characteristics. In this work, we will explore the two cultures to see their specificities so as to better understand their implications on international business activities.

2. Cultural dimensions of the Norwegian and Japanese societies

Human and cultural business environment influences business activities significantly. As earlier shown they may lead to business success and/or failure. Human environment includes elements as ethnicity and population. Cultural environment consists of factors such as attitudes, education, language, religion, traditions, values and social organization. In this thesis, we are going to use a theory that is developed by Geert Hofstede. A second theory developed by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner is also going to be used in this work in order to better understand influences of human and culture business environment in international business. Contributions   of the aforesaid scholars are considered among the significant works meant to better understand how intercultural differences influences human behaviors in workplace in different counties.

Geert Hofstede's work on cultural differences is widely used in several fields of scientific research for instance cross-cultural psychology and cross-cultural communication. His theory is based on six cultural dimensions. The first dimension of the model is power distance index. The second dimension is individualism versus collectivism. The third dimension reflects society's orientation towards masculinity and femininity. Uncertainty avoidance is the theme of the fourth dimension. Hofstede's fifth dimension deals with culture's long and short term orientation. The sixth dimension is indulgence versus restraint index. Hofstede's contribution provides significant support to businesses and firms. His model assists managers in considering cultural differences [1,

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p.4]. In the following pages, we will illustrate in some details Hofstede's cultural model and Trompenaars Hampden-Turner cultural model in order to explain these theories.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cultural model consists of seven core dimensions. The first dimension is universalism versus particularism. Individualism versus communitarianism is the second dimension. The third core dimension is neutral versus emotional. Specific versus diffuse is the fourth dimension. The fifth cultural dimension is achievement versus ascription. The sixth dimension reveals culture's attitudes towards time (Sequential versus synchronous). The seventh dimension reflects culture's attitudes toward environment (Internal versus outer direction). We are going to use these models in the following pages to identify characteristics of the Norwegian and Japanese cultures to better understand them and to clarify how to deal with these cultures in a perfect manner when conducting international business operations.

Hofstede Model of National Culture is a framework used to analyze a country's culture. The first dimension, power distance indicator (PDI) reveals the extent of power sharing between members of a certain society. It also illustrates basis upon which power should be divided between them. It similarly explains how difference in power sharing is perceived between members of society. In this index societies are divides into high or low power distance. In countries where PDI is high, the society consents an unequal hierarchical distribution of power, therefore people understand their own place in the system. Contrariwise, in countries where PDI is low, society members refuse situations where power is distributed unequally and assume that they must have an equal status. In societies where power distance is high, people at the bottom are subject to decisions and instructions given by superiors in opposition to low power distance societies.

Scandinavian societies sought to allow greater opportunities for sharing opinions and discussions between their members for several reasons. Historically, these societies were not part of the Roman Empire, therefore they enjoyed a relative independence status. They were composed of small Germanic tribes and their members were fairly equal. This situation developed an equal distribution of power between members regardless of their age and position. The trend implied that as long as all members are equal, they have the right to reveal their perspectives and to participate in decision making processes. Since power is distributed equally among members, then power distance between them is low. In the Norwegian society, people are equal and each person is valued not for the title or position but for her/his contribution to society. Leadership responsibilities are shared and subordinates are consulted when making decisions [2, p.318].

Asian societies are generally described as coherent societies. In these societies, family is the base of society and each member has her/his role. According to the authority s/he has, an individual gains power and respect. Just like the communities of that geographical region, Japanese society has the same traditions and customs. In Japanese society, a person gains his respect according to title and position. This is applicable not only on the family but also at public scale. Children have to respect and obey instructions of their parents and old persons. The same applies between subordinates and leaders with little chances for opinion sharing and discussion. Thus, in these societies we can conclude that since power is not shared between members of the society or the organization, power distance is relatively high. Power distance in Japan and other countries in the region are influenced by hierarchical fashion of Confucian philosophy [3, p.43].

The model's second dimension individualism (IDV) versus collectivism index reflects a societal characteristic. It refers to strength of the ties that people have to others within their community. It identifies to which extent, people in a certain society are integrated into groups. In individualist societies, individuals may care for themselves and their immediate families. While in collectivist societies, individuals are integrated into strong and interconnected groups that may include extended family. In individualistic cultures, tasks have priority over relationships in opposition to collectivist cultures. Individualistic cultures put emphasis on personal enjoyment, fun and pleasure. They are also characterized by tendencies to self-sufficiency and placement of self-interest firstly. Collectivist cultures lay emphasis on resources' sharing and readiness to give up personal interest keeping in mind group's interest.

As earlier shown in power distance criterion, in Scandinavian societies an individual is valued not for the title and position s/he holds but for the contribution s/he makes to society. Therefore individuals in these societies sought to concentrate in work to make a significant contribution to gain a respectable status in the society. This tendency might have transformed the way in which people thinks for personal and group interests. Shift in thoughts led to priorities' reorganization. Individuals in these societies started prioritizing their personal and immediate family interests. Obviously, Norwegian society shares relatively the same cultural features with others northwest European societies as they all belong to the same ethnic groups. Thus, we may safely expect it to be a relatively an individualistic society. Research proved that Norway is among the countries most characterized by high levels of individualism [4, p.41].

Asian societies are generally distinguished by some unique features as big size of families' in addition to a strong relation between family members within a society. Because relationships between society members are vigorous, individuals may rely on relatives whenever they need an assistance. Society members consider that group's interest has a priority. These characteristics reveals a spirit of solidarity and collectivism in eastern societies. Similar to other societies in the region, Japanese culture seems to be relatively collective. Scarcity of resources and the need to share them probably created and supported a sense of collectivism amongst Japanese. WWII perhaps reinforced a sense of collectivism among society members. Other human factors might stimulated the sense of interdependence between members in Japanese society. Studies revealed that psychologically Japanese society is characterized by collectivism [5, p.54].

The third dimension masculinity versus femininity index (MAS) is also addressed as a societal characteristic. It refers to the distribution of roles between the genders in a certain society. In masculine societies, generally men and women are assertive and competitive; though women are less assertive and competitive than men. In feminine societies, there is no strong difference between the genders' social roles meaning that men and women share responsibilities. In masculine cultures, men are expected to be tough and assertive with a concentration on material achievements. They are also expected to take care of appointment scheduling and payment issues. Thus masculine cultures are characterized by gender roles distinction. In feminine cultures, both male and female are expected to be tender, modest, with focus on the quality of life. This cultures are characterized by the similarity of roles between men and women.

Scandinavian societies sought to create an egalitarian system to protect individuals' rights and to ensure equality between society members irrespective of gender. This trend contributed in equal distribution of opportunities between male and female. These societies endorsed women with rights such as to participate in professional and political lives and to contribute in processes of making significant decisions. Women attained comparatively the same status like men in these societies. In Norwegian society prevailing values are warmth in personal relationships and caring for others. This trend reflects appreciation of the society for compromise and cooperation values. These values are linked to feminine societies and seem to be dominant in the Norwegian society. Therefore, we can state that the Norwegian society is feminine. Scandinavian societies generally place more emphasis on quality of life and gender equality [6, p.144].

Geographical location and difficulty of people's movement between continents in the past might contributed in the preservation of certain traditions and customs as well as other cultural features. Eastern societies maintained relatively a traditional shape of family. In these societies, traditional gender roles are relatively preserved. Men are responsible of providing living for the family and women's role is to look after children and household responsibilities. Scarcity of resources and difficulty of their exploitation might contribute in preservation of these roles. These societies place high emphasis on material achievement and progress which reflect appreciation of society for competition and success values. These values are adhered to masculine society and seem to be prevailing in Japanese society. Thus, we can presume that the Japanese society is relatively masculine. In Japan, masculinity is proved to be the dominant culture of the society [7, p.51].

Hofstede's fourth dimension is Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI). It reflects the extent to which members of a specific society are capable of coping with future uncertainty without going through stress. This dimension reveals how do different cultures deal with the uncertainty of life. Some societies try to control their future, because they feel uncomfortable with ambiguity. Those societies have high uncertainty avoidance tendencies. In contrast, other societies handle future uncertainty in a more relaxed and less stressed manner, thus show low uncertainty avoidance tendencies. High uncertainty avoidance cultures put emphasis on the need for laws and rules. They are generally characterized by reliance on absolute truth or the belief that only one truth dictates everything. Low uncertainty avoidance cultures put emphasis on flexibility. They are generally characterized by their openness and acceptance of dissent.

Scandinavians attained a significant status in almost all fields related to human development. The realization of such status maybe attributed to uninterrupted activities. These communities perhaps tended to organize their lives through setting procedures in a consistent and structured manner thus avoiding any unpredictable event. Norwegian society as being part of these communities seeks to decrease the probability of unpredictable events that may affect the operation of their society and its organization. Norwegian society members tend to be accurate and to pay attention to details. They are less tolerant towards ambiguity and prefer to minimize insecurity by setting plans and observing priorities. In general these values are linked to high uncertainty avoidance societies and appear to be prevailing in Norwegian society. Uncertainty avoidance is considered to be high in the Norwegian society [8, p.131].

Asian societies are generally characterized by the big size of families and existence of extended families. These features unquestionably influences society members' lives. As shown earlier, relations between eastern society members are strong. Intimacy among society members may be attributed to severe nature of life and scarcity of resources in that area. Strong relations between family members may imply that individuals can express their feeling naturally with no need to hide them. People's fear of uncertainty and ambiguity probably brought society members together, leading them to adopt an easy style of communication free of complications. These trends led to prioritization of society's interests thus different tendencies remain unacceptable. Japanese society seems to have these values which are generally associated with high uncertainty avoidance societies. High uncertainty avoidance is prevalent in Japanese society [9, p.196].

The fifth dimension of Hofstede's model is long term orientation (LTO) as opposed to short term. This dimension describes the time horizon of diverse cultures. It refers to whether a society reveals a rational perception oriented towards future or a historical conservative attitude. Long-term oriented cultures perceive time as a line and look to the future instead of the present or the past. Short-term oriented cultures view time as circular meaning that the past and the present are interconnected. Long-term oriented cultures lay emphasis on efforts made in modern education because they consider it as a way to prepare for the future. These societies tend to rationalize spending. In contrast, short-term oriented cultures are characterized by respect for traditions and customs as well as observing suspiciously societal change. They lay emphasis on reciprocation of gifts and favors hence have negative association with rationalization of expenditures.

Scandinavian societies always sought to develop their lives conditions. Sever natural conditions for instance cold weather and scarcity of natural resources in addition to difficulty of resources' exploitation motivated these societies to engage in future oriented activities such as seeking how to exploit available natural resources and to find out new resources. Scandinavians realized the need to adhere to their traditions and together sensing a need to develop their lives. Societies members recognized and understood the need for patience, persistence and thrift to be able to confront challenges and risks facing them. By adopting patience, persistence and thrift attributes, they managed to succeed in developing future oriented activities. Norwegian society is also involved in many scientific research projects and programs. Research reveals that Nordic society possess qualities and characteristics linked to long term orientation [10, p.124].

Sever natural conditions, scarcity of natural resources and difficulty of resources' exploitation as well as political conditions may contribut in emergence of Confucian doctrine in

Asia. Many Asian societies including Japanese adopted values of that doctrines. Adoption of these values perhaps influenced attributes of these societies. Though Japanese society members generally respect their traditions, they demonstrated willingness to accept new values that assisted them to work patiently and persistently to achieve long term successes. These values influenced the way in which these societies prepare for future. Japanese society through engaging in future oriented activities, turned into an international automotive and electronic industrial power. This society enjoy attributes that may reflect its orientation towards future. The culture of Japanese society includes values associated with long term orientation cultures [11, p.74].

The sixth dimension is indulgence versus restraint index. According to Hofstede, this dimension describes the extent to which a society relatively allows or controls free satisfaction of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun [12, p.8]. It also reveals societies' adherence to traditions and customs and to which extent societies can accept new trends and styles. Indulgent societies support freedom of speech, encourage debate, dialogue and feedback in meetings and in decision making processes. They emphasize flexible working and balance between work and private life. Restraint societies generally have a more rigid behavior and lean towards controlling human desires through strict social standards. Members of these societies are serious when engaged in formal sessions because more emphasis is being placed on work and leisure activities have lesser value contrary to members of indulgent societies.

Though Scandinavian societies seem to be serious when engaged in formal sessions, nonetheless they seek usually to place an equal emphasis on work life and leisure activities. These societies understood the need to get rid or minimize pressures of life. They realized that flexible working programs rise productivity. Balance between work and private life releases stress and ensures a healthy working environment. Scandinavian societies just like some other societies understood the need for freedom of speech. They also recognized the importance of encouraging debate, dialogue and feedback in meetings in order to make decisions that take into account interests of all. Though Scandinavian society members are showing respect to traditions and customs, they reveal some characteristics which can be noticed in indulgent societies. Research shows that the Norwegian society demonstrates a relative tendency towards indulgence [13, p.261].

Japanese society perhaps sought to create a balance between work life and leisure activities so as to release stress at workplaces and to increase efficiency and quality. Though this society seems to be flexible in accepting new trends and tendencies, yet it is considered to be a restraint society. Japanese society members sought to place emphasis on work to develop their life conditions and to overcome consequences of the past. Embracing Confucian doctrine similarly influenced the way in which Japanese consider values attached to work. Japanese generally demonstrate adherence to traditions and customs. They tend towards controlling human desires through strict social norms and standards. Japanese society members reveal some features which might be relatively connected to restraint societies. Studies illustrate that characteristics of restraint society is prevalent in Japanese society [14, p.76].

As previously shown, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cultural model consists of seven core dimensions. The first dimension Universalism versus Particularism reflects cultures' adherence to rules and values. Universal cultures places rules before relationships, thus within universal societies people are treated equally irrespective of their ethnic belongings and religious beliefs. In this culture people are generally encouraged to keep their promises and be consistent. Though this culture tends to provide clear instructions and procedures, nevertheless society members are given time to make their own decisions. Particular cultures lay emphasis on relationship and circumstances and place them before rules. Thus, this culture tends to be more flexible. Members of particular cultures societies tend to act according to circumstances since they believe that there is a need to better understand desires of other individuals.

As abovementioned, universalism emphasizes equality between people and society members must be treated equally regardless of the ethnic and religious groups to which they belong. We believe that universalistic societies have characteristics similar to traits and qualities which exist

in low power distance societies. In low power distance society, people are equal before the law. This implies that laws are applied on everybody irrespective of title and position s/he holds. As previously shown power distance index is low in the Scandinavian societies. In these societies relationships have no influence on application of laws and emphasis is always placed on equality between individuals as these societies consider that rules remain before relationships and rules of law must be applied without modification. Nawojczyk demonstrates that Norwegian society is among the most universalistic societies in the world [15, p.7].

As earlier revealed, Japanese society is characterized by existence of extended families, robust relations among individuals within a family and strong relationships between society members. Though strong relationships among society members may give an impression that relations have a priority, yet Japanese society have qualities which can be linked to universalism. Principles of universalism may be existed within Japanese society values since long time ago and they might also be gained through dealing with other cultures. In Japan power distance index is low meaning that laws are applied without consideration to titles and positions. This implies that law rules have to be applied without any amendment and relationships must not be considered. Japanese society members do not tolerate mediation. They believe that there is no place for mediation in their society. Trompenaars establishes that Japanese society culture is universalistic [16, p.250].

Individualism versus communitarianism is the second dimension. This dimension addresses the same characteristics that Hofstede examined in his model of national culture. Consequently, we believe that there is no need to investigate it again. The third core dimension is Neutral versus Emotional. It describes the extent to which different cultures allow expression of feelings and emotions. Neutral cultures place little importance to sentiments, hence reason influences actions more than feelings. In this culture, society members do not reveal their thoughts easily. In formal sessions, neutral cultures members take direct approaches to the point. Emotional cultures place high importance to sentiments. This culture allows disclosure of feelings freely, thus society members feel comfortable to express their emotions spontaneously in workplaces. They are also characterized by avoidance of confrontation and the use of indirect approaches.

Scandinavian societies generally seek perfection. They lay a high emphasis on tasks and focus to achieve duties in an excellent manner. Scandinavians largely tend to control their feelings. They place little importance to sentiments, meaning that they do not react to criticism aggressively and negatively, hence aim influences actions more than feelings. Similarly, they do not disclose their thoughts easily. Hence, we can consider that Scandinavian society to have a neutral orientation. Norwegian society shares relatively same characteristics with other Scandinavian societies. In private gatherings, some emotional features may appear without difficulty such as expressing feelings and revealing opinions. On the contrary, in formal meetings, Norwegians tend to reveal neutral behaviors and to act in an objective manner free of nervousness and tension. Norwegian society have relatively some characteristics of neutral cultures [17, p.72].

Japanese society is similarly well known for its excellence. Despite scarcity of natural resources and disasters that Japan witnessed in the past. Japanese managed to transform their country into one of the leading countries in the world in many fields such as education and industry. Japanese society members adopted qualities such as patience as a result of sever natural conditions or because of historical catastrophes. Strong relations between society members perhaps reinforced relationships between them. Until now, Japanese society holds qualities that can be linked to emotional cultures such as excessive motion when talking which can be clearly seen in Japanese usage of body language. Nevertheless, Japanese society has other characteristics which reveals its belonging to neutral culture. In official meeting, Japanese tend to hide any cues showing their feelings and thoughts. Japanese society culture is perceived as a neutral culture [18, p.159].

Specific versus Diffuse is the fourth dimension. This dimension describes the extent at which personal and professional lives of people are separated. In specific cultures there is a clear separation between employees' private and work lives, hence specific societies' members do not

reveals their personal life details in workplaces. Whereas in diffuse cultures, there is a significant connection between employees' private and work lives, as a result employees tend to socialize with their colleagues after working hours to a great extent. Diffuse societies' members may disclose some personal life details to colleagues and costumers at workplaces. Specific societies lay emphasis on work objectives while diffuse societies lay emphasis on relationships. Specific cultures members are likely to be direct, precise and transparent in contrast to diffuse cultures members who have a tendency to be indirect, evasive and ambiguous.

Scandinavians generally seek to release themselves from stress of workplaces and to enjoy every moment in life. Perhaps they do not want work life to have any influence on their private time. Thus, they tend to make a clear separation between professional and private lives. They also prefer to maintain their privacy and not to reveal details about their personal life in workplaces. Scandinavians generally tend to be transparent and they opt to be direct and precise. If they are invited for any discussion, they favor to have a precise agenda and detailed plan. They promote dialogue and accept criticism without regarding it a personal matter. Norwegians share relatively same cultural characteristics with other Scandinavian societies members. It is worth mentioning that Scandinavians constitute part of north European societies, therefore they all share similar cultural values. North European societies are defined as specific culture societies [19, p.104].

Even though Japanese society was influenced relatively by its strong connection with the west, the society managed to maintain its traditional values. As previously illustrated, Japanese society is distinguished by existence of extended family and the strong relationships between society members. These features may have implied that connections between society members remain strong and constant. This connection may force individuals to diminish their privacy thus influences private life. It can also oblige people to approve a less sensitive attitude towards socialization with business partners within their private time. More details about personal life may perhaps be revealed in work places and business meetings. In Japan, it looks like there is no clear separation between work and private life. So individuals tend to behave according to the situation and persons involved. Thus, relationships can be described as highly diffuse in Japan [20, p.136].

The fifth cultural dimension is Achievement versus Ascription. This dimension reveals the level of tolerance of society towards the pattern of distribution of power and status amongst members of society. It refers to the bases upon which cultures confer and grant status to society members either being knowledge and performance or title and position. Achievement cultures recognize and reward appropriate performance only. Achievement culture societies believe that a person is what s/he does, hence they base her/his worth in view of that. Ascription cultures recognize in general title and position. Ascription culture societies consider authority and power as the base upon which a person should be valued. While achievement societies members have a tendency to use titles when relevant, ascription societies members lean towards using them for expressing respect to people in authority and for revealing people's status in an organization.

This dimension addresses the same characteristics that Hofstede examined in the power distance dimension of his model of national culture. Nevertheless, in this part we are going to explore some features of this dimension to clarify some of its aspects and to inspect implications of these aspects in the society. Norway and Japan share many interesting characteristics. At the political level, both states have a constitutional monarchy systems, which means that king and emperor in both states have no authority in decisions-making processes. Decisions are ratified in parliaments by peoples' representatives according to publics' interests. At the public level, people are equal before the law, thus it is not possible to impose anything against peoples' interests. Accordingly, society members are not used to be given instructions. At the political and public levels, power distance is low in Norway and Japan. Thus, people are valued according to their achievement.

Equality between society member's has many important implications in business. Achievement cultures value knowledge and performance as aforesaid. Individuals who belong to achievement culture believe that where they have some prerogatives, they can make decisions.

Furthermore, they seek to participate in decision making processes. This tendency seems dominant in Norway. Norwegians at large expect and assume that managers will consult them when making decisions. Research indicate that Norwegians have achievement culture characteristics [21, p.113]. In Japan society values influence people's orientation. Much respect is showed to elderly people. Thus, age constitutes an attribute upon which status is based. Other aspects may also influence status for instance gender and profession. Thus, ascription-oriented culture attributes exist in Japanese society. Ascription culture elements are predominant in the Japanese society [22, p.158].

The sixth dimension is Attitudes towards time. This dimension is also known as sequential time versus synchronous time. It reveals orientation of cultures towards time. Whether society members of a culture have a tendency to perform one task at a time (Monochronic) or they are likely to complete several tasks at once (Polychronic). Sequential cultures' members place a high value on planning. They prefer to plan, to stick to plans set and to perform one task at a time. Synchronous cultures' members are flexible. They accept modifications of plans and schedules simply. They can perform several tasks at the same time. Sequential time societies members are characterized by their punctuality, systemization and preference to meet deadlines. Synchronous time societies members place emphasize on the importance of punctuality and meeting deadlines. However, they are flexible and can accept changes in times and plans without difficulty.

As earlier shown, individualism is a dominant attribute in the Norwegian society. This implies that individuals in this society place self-interest firstly. They take care for themselves and their immediate families only. We also illustrated that achievement-oriented culture is prevalent in that society. Thus, Norwegian society recognizes only achievements and members of this society seek always to make achievements to gain status in the society. Given these facts, we believe that Norwegians place high emphasize on time, thus they tend to be punctual. They also place a high importance on planning and they prefer to stick to their plans. This definitely implies that they opt to accomplish one task as a time, to concentrate on the task at hand and to prepare for future. Hence, we can conclude that culture of the Norwegian society is sequential. Norwegian society holds sequential culture characteristics [23, p.52].

Japanese society is considered among the societies with high levels of uncertainty avoidance. In general Japanese strive to prepare schedules and to formulate plans for future. Yet, they seem to be flexible at changing personal plans without difficulty. Japanese society is also distinguished by its collectivist culture as shown previously. Collectivist culture is characterized by members' readiness to concede personal interest taking into consideration the group's interest. This implies that any individual in this society is less sensitive towards changing personal plans for group's benefit. Similarly we illustrated that diffuse culture is dominant in this society. Thus, individuals attempt to be flexible and to behave according to relations and persons involved. Therefore, we can suggest that many attributes of synchronous cultures are dominant in the Japanese society. Trompenaars advocates that Japanese take a synchronous approach to time [24, p.170].

The seventh dimension is attitudes towards the nature (Internal versus outer direction). This dimension is similarly known as Internal versus external. This cultural dimension denotes the degree to which members of a society believe that they have control over the nature. Members of some cultures consider that they have an impact on nature. Therefore, they need to adapt nature to achieve their objectives. Other cultures' members believe that they cannot control nature. Consequently, they need to work with the nature to accomplish their aims. Internally-directed cultures' members assume that since they want to achieve specific goals they have to exert an influence over the nature. In contrast, externally-directed cultures' members are doubtful about the level of their impact over the nature. Hence, they consider that there is a need to work with the nature to achieve their aims since it can affect their lives.

Scandinavian society members generally believe that they can control their destiny. They sought to exploit natural resources and make use of them to make a living. Norwegian society as the rest of societies in the area faced severe environmental and geographical conditions. Cold weather and snow limit the movement of people. Mountains and lakes cover vast areas of land. However, Norwegian managed to adapt nature and to develop their country as they consider that

they can exert an influence over the nature to achieve their objectives. Norwegian society achieved a considerable success in the adaptation of nature to human's interests. Despite the mountainous terrain, Norwegians managed to develop Norway's economic conditions through exploitation of natural resources such as hydropower. Mostly, members of future-oriented culture consider that they can use their influences on nature to improve their conditions [25, p.67].

Although mountains and forests cover massive areas of Japan, nevertheless Japanese sought to overcome the issue of small available land areas by making maximum use of narrow spaces. As aforementioned, Japanese is a long-term oriented society. It attempted to practice its influence on nature to improve its conditions. Japanese exploited natural resources in a proper manner. They built nuclear reactors to produce energy and to use this energy for different purposes for instance construction. They sought to construct infrastructures resistant to volcanic activities, because earthquakes and volcanoes are dominant natural phenomena in Japan. In spite of all these efforts, it seems to be that Japanese recognized that they cannot exert control over nature but to work with it to achieve their aims. Morris-Suzuki clarifies that although Japanese were influenced by Western and Chinese cultures, they did not manage to have control over nature [26, p.36,37].

3. Conclusion

Human and cultural business environment have significant influences on business activities. Geert Hofstede developed a cultural model composed of six dimensions. This model is used in the present work to clarify to which dimension belongs the Norwegian and Japanese cultures. Power distance is the first dimension in Hofstede's model. It reflects how power is shared in a specific society. The results obtained reveal that power distance is low in Norwegian society but high in Japanese societies. Thus, Norwegian societies members assume that they have the right to show their viewpoints and to participate in decision making processes. While Japanese society members are subject to decisions and instructions given by superiors.

Individualism versus collectivism index illustrates strength of the ties between members of a community. We found that society is individualistic in Norway while it is collectivistic in Japan. Thus, Norwegian may prioritize their personal and immediate family interests whereas Japanese would consider group's interest to have a precedence. Results indicate that Norwegian society is feminine whereas it is masculine in Japan. This imply that in Norwegian society men and women must share responsibilities and no discrimination should be made based on gender. In Japanese society traditional gender roles are relatively preserved. Uncertainty Avoidance Index proved to be high in both Norwegian and Japanese societies. Thus, Norwegians are less tolerant towards ambiguity; they tend to be accurate and to pay attention to details. Japanese's fear of uncertainty perhaps stimulate them to express their feeling naturally with no need to hide them.

Norwegian society members have a long-term orientation. Sensing a need to develop their lives, they sought to discover natural resources and to exploit available resources through initiating scientific research programs. Japanese society also have long-term orientation. Sever natural conditions, scarcity of natural resources and difficulty of their exploitation may encouraged Japanese to work patiently and persistently to achieve long term successes. Results illustrates that society in Norway is indulgent, but it is restraint in Japan. Norwegians realized that balance between work and private life releases stress and ensures a healthy working environment. Hence, they seek usually to place an equal emphasis between work life and leisure activities. Japanese society demonstrates adherence to traditions and customs. They consider work as a top societal value. Hence, they place high emphasis on work and low emphasis on leisure.

In order to better understand cultural attributes and their influences in international business, we also made use of another cultural theory developed by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner. This theory consists of seven cultural dimensions. The first dimension Universalism versus Particularism reflects cultures' adherence to their values. Our research also focused in the cultural characteristics of the Norwegian and Japanese societies. The results demonstrate that societies in Norway and Japan are universalistic. Hence, there is no place for mediation. Rules remains before relationships and rules of law are applied without modification.

Results also reveal that both societies are neutral meaning that Norwegian and Japanese societies place little importance to sentiments, so reason influences actions more than feelings. Consequently, society members do not reveal their thoughts easily as personal feelings have no weight.

Our work also reflects some interesting cultural differences between both societies. The research reveals that Norwegian society is specific but Japanese society is diffuse. In Norwegian society, these is a clear separation between employees' private and professional lives. Norwegians are transparent, direct and precise. They favor to have a precise agenda and detailed plan. They may accept criticism without taking it as a personal insult. In Japanese society, there is no clear separation between work and private lives. A Japanese may disclose some personal life details at workplaces. So, individuals tend to behave according to the situation and persons involved. Norwegian society is considered as an achievement-oriented society, since it rewards appropriate performance only. Japanese society recognize title and position. It considers power as the base upon which a person should be valued. Thus, it is an ascription-oriented society.

The research also clarifies Norwegian and Japanese societies' attitudes towards time and nature. Norwegian society is sequential. Norwegians place a high value on planning. They prefer to stick to plans previously set. They opt to perform one task at a time. They are characterized by their punctuality, systemization and preference to meet deadlines. In contrast, Japanese society is synchronous. Japanese may accept changes of plans and schedules simply. They can perform several tasks at the same time. Attitudes of societies towards nature reveal that Norwegian is an internally-directed society. Norwegians assume that they have an influence on nature and can exert this influence over it to achieve their objectives. Japanese society can be considered as an externally-directed society. Japanese sought to adapt nature to achieve their goals, but perhaps they failed to have control over it because nature proved to be stronger than Human in Japan.

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