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Culture and Personality

Speaking of culture, we cannot ignore a very important aspect: the role our personalities play in forming cultural identity.

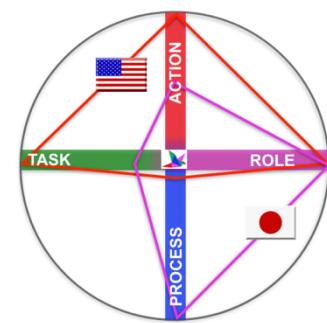
We are all different, and these differences begin with our individuality. Character, temperament, behavioral preferences, level of personal development - all these factors play a decisive role in the perception and interpretation of the cultural environment.

We will use a metaphor to understand this correlation. Let us present culture as a game with certain rules and all representatives of this culture imagine as players. As in any game, players can follow the rules or they also can modify, interpret or even violate them. This depends on their personal approach to the game and understanding of their role in it. Just as in reality: despite the integrity of a certain culture, individual members of one cultural community will have a great deal of behavioral diversity according to their personal preferences.



The following classical experiment from the field of psychology of human relations in 1970s shows how personal manifestations are regulated by cultural rules. Americans and Japanese watched exciting action movie first alone, then in the presence of a researcher. Volunteers from both countries while watching the film alone were expressing similar emotions on their faces. However, in the presence of others, the Japanese masked negative emotions with a smile. The Americans, on the contrary, continued to express them in the same way like they did before.

This phenomenon is easy to explain with Model-of-Freedom. In Role-oriented Japan it is traditional to hide negative feelings in public in order to maintain general harmony. The personal preferences in this case are less important than social norms. For comparison, in the more individualistic culture of the United States open expression of emotions is common.



It is easy to translate this knowledge into business reality. The essential part of cross-culturally intelligence is the ability to always take into account the individual characteristics of each personality. Every time we talk about cultural differences, we must not forget that any cultural background is interpreted by a concrete person. Cross-culturally intelligent leader keeps both in mind: culture influences personal behavior and personality manages cultural rules.

U-Coaching has developed a special training module that addresses the interaction between culture and personality.

The methodology involves the use of reliable Personal Evaluator, through which participants have the opportunity to get to know themselves and their behavioral preferences.