

Selected Barriers in Intercultural Business Communication

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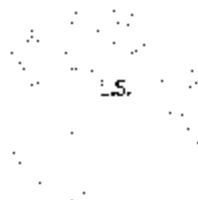
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ABSTRAKT

Bakalářská práce se zabývá interkulturní komunikací, charakteristikou tří vybraných zemí z pohledu kultury a komunikace a komunikačními překážkami při obchodním jednání mezi těmito zeměmi. Práce je rozdělena na dvě části. Teoretická část se člení na šest kapitol, které vymezují základní pojmy interkulturní psychologie, interkulturní komunikace a charakterizují vybrané státy.

Praktická část dále zkoumá hlavní problémy při vyjednávání a způsoby přípravy na tato jednání. Ke zjištění výsledků byl použit primární výzkum ve formě polostrukturovaných rozhovorů.

Na základě zjištěných závěrů byly v závěru práce vyhodnoceny hlavní problémy při komunikaci a jednání se zástupci vybraných zemí a doporučeny metody přípravy na tato jednání.

Klíčová slova: interkulturní, psychologie, komunikace, kultura, jednání, business, USA, UK, Česká republika

ABSTRACT

The bachelor thesis deals with intercultural communication, characteristics of three selected countries from the point of view of culture and communication and communication barriers in business negotiations between these countries. The thesis is divided into two parts. The theoretical part is divided into six chapters, which define the basic concepts of intercultural psychology, intercultural communication and characterize selected states.

The practical part examines the main problems during negotiations and how to prepare for these negotiations. Primary research in the form of semi-structured interviews is used to determine the results.

Based on the findings, the main problems in communication and negotiations with representatives of selected countries are evaluated at the end of the thesis and methods of preparation for these negotiations are recommended.

Keywords: intercultural, psychology, communication, culture, negotiation, business, the USA, the UK, the Czech Republic

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

Intercultural communication is an inevitable part of the modern society and it has power to influence our everyday life. People travel more, study abroad and make international businesses. Intercultural communication is the key to being successful. Part of it makes cross-cultural psychology which helps to understand the key terms as culture and the rest of the processes studies intercultural communication, e.g. communication style, ethnophaulisms, stereotypes, nonverbal communication, evaluations, level of stress, culture shock, etc.

The main reason for choosing this topic was my interest in the different cultural patterns and behaviour of the selected countries. I have been in the USA thanks to the exchange programme at the high school and in the UK because of the work experience. Those were the reasons why to understand better the culture and way of communication in those countries. The thesis is focused on the main cultural patterns in the selected countries and its aim is to find out the biggest differences among them and try to recommend several ways how to be prepared well for the meeting with the native representatives.

In the theoretical part, firstly the attention is paid to the basic terms of the cross-cultural psychology and intercultural communication. Secondly, it provides basic information about the USA, the UK and the Czech Republic and its communicational, behavioural and cultural patterns. All of the countries are compared according to the Hofstede Insights and its five dimensions. In this part are mentioned also tips for the business negotiations.

The practical part is devoted to the detailed analysis of the primary research and the recommendations. The chapter about the primary research evaluates twelve interviews with the participants about their experience with natives of the selected countries and it answers the research questions of the thesis. The second part, the recommendations, is based on the recipients' answers and should be helpful guideline for those preparing for the negotiation with representatives. It provides recommendations about the presentation, dealing with the angry opponents, false game, culture shock, etc.

I. THEORY

1 A CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Cross-cultural psychology is a scientific field which tries to understand relationships between social behaviour and culture. It is important to define this science because it is a part of this work and its topics.

It appears a bit problematic to establish a proper name for the science mentioned above because in Anglophone countries names differ and you can find terms as cross-culture psychology, culture psychology, and culture-comparative psychology. In the Czech Republic, the situation is the same and in literature terms such as *mezikulturní psychologie*, *transkulturní psychologie*, *psychologie kultury* or *psychologie interkulturních rozdílů* are used. According to the literary sources used for the purposes of this bachelor thesis, the term cross-cultural psychology is used. (Berry, Poortings, Segall, et al. 2002, 24) (Čeněk, Smolík, and Vykoukalová 2016, 16)

The field of cross-cultural psychology is the study of human behaviour according to cultural context and its influence. It studies the similarities and differences in various ethno cultural groups, and relationships between psychological variables and socio-cultural, ecological and biological variables and its changes. (Berry, Poortings, Segall et al. 2002, 26)

1.1 Three theoretical orientations of cross-cultural psychology

Cross-culture psychology identifies several types of theoretical orientations. Berry proposes three general orientations of relationship between culture and psychology. They are absolutism, relativism and universalism.

The first orientation, absolutism, assumes that psychological phenomena are qualitatively the same in all cultures. For example, human feature ‘happiness’ is the same everywhere and ‘grief’ either. This leads to a thought that culture plays no role in human characteristics. (Berry, Poortings, Segall, et al. 2002, 27)

On the other hand, relativism assumes that all human behaviour is culturally patterned. Meaning that relativists try to understand how people see the world ‘in their own terms’. Comparisons are sensed as problematic and ethnocentric and are never made.

The third one, universalism, lies somewhere in between absolutism and relativism. Universalism assumes that basic psychological processes are common to all human beings and that culture influences the development and display of them. Comparisons are made cautiously and interpretations of similarities and differences take into account alternative and cultural based meanings. (Berry, Poortings, Segall et al., 2002, 27-28) (Čeněk, Smolík, and Vykoukalová 2016, 21)

1.2 Key terms in the field of cross-cultural psychology

To understand cross-cultural psychology and know how does it work, is crucial to understand terms like culture, acculturation, enculturation, multiculturalism, culture relativism and ethnocentrism. Some of them may sound the same, but the meaning is completely different.

1.2.1 Culture

Since the term 'culture' is one of the key concepts within this thesis, it is important to define it. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, this definition is used '*the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time*'. (Cambridge Dictionary 2019) Anyway, this definition can be formed in many ways as culture is regularly changing and its subject of ethnology, ethnography, sociology, social psychology, and other sciences.

As Jandt states '*cultures do not respect political boundaries*'. (Jandt 2010, 15) In many western languages, the term 'culture' means 'civilization'. It is because this phenomenon is always collective, or at least share in a group of people living in the same background. It can be also seen as a resource for distinguishing more groups of people. This can be done according to specific segments. Key segments of culture are language, philosophy, religion, morality, law, art, needs, habits, family structure and others. (Čeněk, Smolík, Vykoukalová 2016, 31)

Culture can be seen from many perspectives and can have many various definitions from which no one is wrong. In every case, it gives people the possibility to see the world in some way and it gives us a set of rules. These habits are called the behavioural patterns. Behavioural patterns are observed by externalists and later on are copied. This is the way how to spread them. On the other hand, it also makes differences among the cultures. To sum it up, it is important to know the properties of the culture: it is learned, shared, symbolical, integrated, rational, dynamic and adaptive. (Čeněk, Smolík, and Vykoukalová 2016, 35)

1.2.2 Acculturation

The term acculturation defines cultural changes in society which are a result of culture contact between different cultural groups. It involves how people come into contact, how they deal with it and how it leads to changes in their behavioral patterns. (Berry, Poortings, Segall et al. 2002, 372)

Every single person or a group deal with culture changes and new surrounding differently. J. W. Berry defines four types of acculturation strategies. He distinguishes between the strategies of assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. (Berry, Poortings, Segall, et al. 2002, 376-77) The first strategy is assimilation. Assimilation is a need for new being to fuse with the new culture in a host country despite his own culture. Separation, the second strategy, shows isolation from host culture and willingness to keep the habits of own culture. The third is marginalization. The situation when it is not possible to find a value of one culture and where is no identification with it. The last, and possibly the most successful strategy, is integration. An individual considers the host culture important and gives it value but also wants to keep the culture of his own. (Čeněk, Smolík, and Vykoukalová 2016, 48)

1.2.3 Enculturation

Enculturation starts when an individual is born and is developed throughout his life. After birth, a human came into a specific culture and his parents, teachers and other adults try to develop him into an individual who is competent in their culture. This includes their language, rituals, values, and so on. It can be named as an adaptation of the human psyche and behaviour to the culture which is spread in society. We are born into some culture (e.g. USA) but much later we become culture being (e.g. American). (Čeněk, Smolík, and Vykoukalová 2016, 49)

1.2.4 Culture relativism & Ethnocentrism

As stated in paragraph 1.2.1 Culture, culture is a system of behaviour, values, and standard characteristic for one group of people which is usually copied. In connection with this statement, it is also important to define culture relativism and ethnocentrism. Průcha describe them in context.

Cultural relativism is a theoretical and methodological approach to studies of culture presuming that cultures separately show unique and unrepeatably socio-cultural systems which is understood and described only in the context of their own values, standards and ideas. (Průcha 2004, 46)

Ethnocentrism is considered as opposed to cultural relativism. The term 'ethnocentrism' was laid down by William G. Sumner, American sociologist and theologian. Nowadays, this term is used for describing a person who prefers his own lifestyle above any other ways. It also means an intolerant tension to measure everything different and foreign by values and standards of own society. In case of the ethnocentrism, the individuals acknowledge only

values, standards and ideas of their own social group. This identification comes from various criteria, e.g. religion, social group, race. (Čeněk, Smolík, and Vykoukalová 2016, 55)

1.2.5 Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism starts to evolve in the USA and Canada during the second half of the 20th century. It is hard to define it, but it contains the belief that people with different roots can live together and learn together about their habits. They also can communicate in spite of the fact they speak different languages, are a different race, have different age and so on. It also reminds interesting facts in history, which happened because of the context two different cultures. (Čeněk, Smolík, and Vykoukalová 2016, 59)

Multiculturalism can be seen from four perceptions:

1. A kind of social situation which is characteristic by (usually not equal) co-existence various (cultural, ethnical, religious etc.) groups in one social formation (e.g. country).
2. A way of theoretical understanding of social situation described in the point above.
3. A political vision, aim and a request to equally separate social sources among different groups.
4. Set of practical or educative strategies and proceeds through them is possible to achieve the aim described in the third point.

Multiculturalism perceives some categories as important ones which need to be protected, keep, preferred and saved because of assimilation and integration pressures. These categories are e.g. ethnicity, language and religion groups, etc.

Nevertheless, multiculturalism is not generally accepted concept. It faces a lot of criticism. (Čeněk, Smolík, and Vykoukalová 2016, 60-61)

2 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Intercultural communication studies communication among people of different cultures, speaking different languages and having dissimilar attitude and presumption (Průcha 2010, 14). It tries to help people who meet with intercultural problems because of their work or function. In the last decades, interpersonal communication has been increasing rapidly. It is caused because of expansion in international business and trade, exchange of students, and tourism. A growing number of people spend a limited period of time abroad, and those who stay at home anyway come in contact with visitors or migrants (Průcha 2010, 17). So as people communicate together they have to speak the same language - a language of one of their culture, or the third language which both are familiar with. Despite this, it is not accurate to think that if you can speak the language you will communicate properly. Always you have to be aware of the dissimilarities of another culture and respect it. In the case of disrespect misunderstandings or even conflicts can be observed.

Talking about intercultural communication can correspond with three different meanings:

1. Intercultural communication as a process of verbal and non-verbal communication.
2. Intercultural communication as scientific theory and research dealing with real processes of intercultural communication.
3. Intercultural communication as educative and supported activities focused on practice arising from relevant theory and research. (Průcha, 2010, 13)

2.1 Five barriers in cross-cultural communication according to Hofstede

Hofstede defines five barriers in the intercultural communication. The five barriers are language, nonverbal communication, stereotypes, evaluation, and level of stress. Each of them are described further.

2.1.1 Language

The first language barrier is not just about the grammar and vocabulary. To communicate effectively and appropriately means to have cultural competence as well. Cultural competence means to know what to say, how, when, where, and why to say it. It is required to speak fluently, accurately, and appropriately. It is advisable to have someone who speaks the language as an interpreter and helps us. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 18)

2.1.2 Nonverbal Communication

The second barrier, nonverbal communication, is the process of sending and receiving messages without using words. It includes gestures, postures, facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice, personal appearance, haptics or touch, and the physical distance between the communicators called proxemics. (Nordquist 2019) Because our own culture has taught us how to communicate without speaking, people rarely think about it. To cross the nonverbal communication barrier is important to not assume any nonverbal signals or behaviour unless we are familiar with the culture and develop an awareness of our nonverbal communication patterns that might be insulting in some cultures. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 18) In nonverbal communication belongs e.g. greetings, smiling. For greetings should be known that in Asian countries is physical contact taboo but in Europe handshaking is quite normal. Anyway, in Europe, differences can be seen as well. Inhabitants of the Mediterranean are used to kiss each other while meeting each other even two men. (Průcha 2004, 150)

2.1.3 Stereotypes

The Cambridge Dictionary defines this term as *'a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong'*. (Cambridge Dictionary 2019) The stereotypes which are the third barrier are a problem in communicating across cultures. It is about trying to fit people into patterns based on our previous experience. It is known that we see in people pretty much what we want and we reject the possible interpretations which do not fit into our patterns. To overcome this barrier is important to increase awareness of our own preconceptions and stereotypes of encountering cultures, learn about the other culture and reinterpret their behaviour from their cultural perspective. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 19)

2.1.4 Evaluation

The fourth evaluation barrier is about cultural bias. Cultural bias means the tendency to evaluate behaviour from the other culture as good or bad, to make a judgement based on our own culture. To decrease the tendency to evaluate is important, finding out that we cannot change a culture (of ourselves) overnight and not judge others by our own cultural values until firstly knowing them and their own values. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 19)

2.1.5 Level of stress

The fifth barrier is about the high level of stress. The stress usually occurs with unfamiliar experiences which can be intercultural interactions. There are several ways how to decrease stress, but in the case of intercultural communication it is good to accept the ambiguity of cross-cultural situations, working on reducing other intercultural barriers, and be forgiving of others and ourselves of the doubt. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 19)

2.1.6 Culture shock

A cultural misunderstanding means when two or more people from different countries meet and a misunderstanding arises. In the case of escalation such a misunderstanding is called culture clash. This type of problems typically occurs in international trade or diplomacy. If people are staying in a foreign culture for a longer period of time, it can lead to a state of frustration called culture shock. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 20)

Culture shock is the process of adapting to a different culture. It is a situation when an individual is not sure what is expected from him or her, and also do not know what to expect from the others. It can occur in any situation when is an individual in a foreign culture and not applied any previous learning about it. This can also occur in a new school, town, organization, or family.

There are some specific indicators that can help to identify the symptoms of the culture shock are missing familiar cues, a feeling of disorientation, depression, or anxiousness, not working social skills, and not respected values considering what is good, beautiful, etc. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 22)

Hofstede distinguishes five stages of culture shock because it usually occurs as a series of them.

1. Honeymoon stage

The first stage when an individual experiences the curiosity and excitement of a new culture as a tourist, but where the person's basic identity is rooted back home.

2. Disorientation stage

In the second stage, an individual found disintegration of almost everything familiar and is overwhelmed by the requirements of the new culture. One can feel disoriented and experiences self-blame and a sense of personal inadequacy.

3. Irritability or hostility stage

For the third stage is typical anger and aversion toward the new culture because it has caused difficulties.

4. Adjustment and integration stage

In the integration stage, is important to improve our ability to function in the new culture and integrate into it. An individual can see the bad and the good elements in both cultures.

5. Biculturalism stage

This is the final stage when an individual found oneself fluently comfortable in both the old and the new culture. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 23)

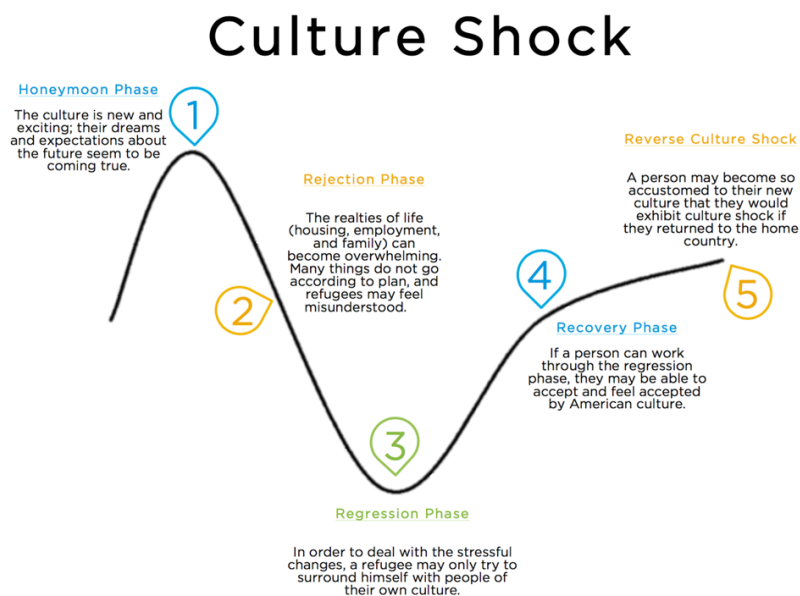


Figure 1: The Culture Shock

Source: World Relief Durham 2017

2.2 Five dimensions of the culture

Although every culture around the world is different, they all meet the same five basic problems of social life, and each culture has found out its own solutions to each problem (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 34). The five dimensions, laid by Hofstede, are based on a questionnaire made of 63 questions related to values. He received a huge amount of questionnaires, concretely 116 thousand questionnaires from IBM employees of 66 nationalities in 50 countries. (Průcha 2004, 81).

The dimensions and their extremes are:

- Identity (collectivism vs individualism)
- Hierarchy (large power distance vs small power distance)
- Gender (feminity vs masculinity)

- Truth (strong uncertainty avoidance vs weak uncertainty avoidance)
- Virtue (long-term orientation vs short-term orientation). (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 39)

2.2.1 Identity

The identity dimension is about the dependency of an individual to collective and the degree of freedom for oneself initiative. The difference between two extremes occurs - collectivism versus individualism. In individualistic collectives are connections between individuals and a collective quite free. On the other hand, in collectivism are people since birth integrated into cohesive groups which protected for their loyalty. Countries with the highest index of individualism are as follows: the USA, the United Kingdom, Canada, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Otherwise, collectivism is typical for countries as Ecuador, Guatemala, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Portugal. (Průcha 2004, 82) According to the given examples, individualism can be found mainly in wealthy countries and collectivism in poor countries. Individualism should represent wealth and sufficient resources. However, collectivism represents poverty and limited resources. The issue of identity has implications for aspects of communication. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 35)

2.2.2 Hierarchy

Hierarchy is about the division of the power in the state. Inhabitants, institutions, and organizations expect and accept that the power is divided unequally. This dimension captures the social distance between people of different social status, e.g. teachers and students. Countries with large power distance are as follows: Malaysia, the Philippines, Mexico, and Turkey. Contrarily, small power distance is typical for Austria, Denmark, Ireland, and New Zealand. (Průcha 2004, 81) Several studies proved that power distance in Northern and Western Europe cultures is smaller than in countries in Eastern and Southern Europe. A similar separation is between Anglo American and Latin American countries. Hierarchy is connected to wealth, but not so much as identity. It has been found that the wealthier countries have bigger power distance than poor countries. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 36)

2.2.3 Gender

Gender dimension is about role distribution between men and women. It is known an equal distribution is typical for 'feminine' and unequal for 'masculine' qualities. Qualities in 'masculine' countries are put in achievement. Otherwise, in 'feminine', on caring and

compromise. Masculine countries have more of the male element in social values, e.g. assertiveness and competitiveness. In masculine cultures is a strong hierarchy in family roles and in feminine culture these roles overlays. The main issue is to analyse what motivates people to be the best (masculine) or to like what they do (feminine). The highest index of masculinity is in countries like Japan, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Mexico. And feminine countries are Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, and Finland. (Průcha 2004, 82) (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 37)

2.2.4 Truth

The truth dimension is about the threats from unsure or unknown situations. Some cultures are not very friendly to strangers, they usually are rigid and dogmatic, and have a big tolerance for differences. All of this depends on anxiety as a human feeling and coping with the unpredictable. It is because many people believe that what is different is dangerous. It is called uncertainty avoidance. It shows how people of concrete culture found difficult taking risks of variable changes, e.g. in work. And if they are trying to avoid situations like that. Countries where can be found strong uncertainty avoidance are Russia, France, Mexico, Greece, Portugal, Japan, and Belgium. Also, Germanic countries do not like uncertainty as well. The United Kingdom, Ireland, Scotland, and China are more uncertainty tolerant. And very uncertainty tolerant are Singapore, Jamaica, and Denmark. (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 38) (Průcha 2004, 82)

2.2.5 Virtue

The last dimension is about short-term or long-term orientation. Long-term orientation is about people attributed to orient for future rewards, persistence, and willingness to subordinate for long-term objectives. In long-term oriented countries is important hard work, persistence, and sacrificing the pleasures of today for the benefit in the future. Vice versa the short-term orientation is about achieving objectives in a short time and immediate results. Speaking about this dimension can be connected also 'western' and 'eastern' thinking. Europeans and Americans are more concerned with truth, on the other hand, Asians with virtue. According to this, long-term orientated countries are Japan, China, Hong Kong, and South Korea. Most European and American countries are distinctly short-term oriented, and African countries and Pakistan are very short-term oriented. (Průcha 2004, 82) (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 38-9)

In the following parts, the following countries are characterized: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and the Czech Republic. They are described in terms of social customs, language, business tips, management, and each of the dimensions.

3 THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States of America, also known as the US or America, is a very big country. It is composed of 50 states as it is the federal presidential constitutional republic. The US is the world's third largest country by total area and the third most populous country. The capital city is Washington, D.C. and the president is Donald Trump. The USA currency is the US Dollar (\$) and any language can be spoken because there is no official language at the federal level.

For Americans, their flag is very important. The fifty stars represent the fifty states, the thirteen stripes represent the thirteen original colonies. The blue colour symbolizes loyalty, devotion, truth, justice, and friendship - important characteristics of Americans. The red colour stands for the courage, zeal, and fervency, while white symbolizes purity and rectitude of conduct. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

Americans are described as inventive, optimistic, religious, generous and with a 'can do' attitude which is described as 'thinking big' which means no challenge is too great to overcome. They enjoy being entertained by interesting, amusing, or quirky facts. The other characteristics are defined further. (Matz 2008, 19)

3.1 Religion & Population

In the US is most of the people Christians (around 70-78%), Judaism is the largest non-Christians faith (around 1.6%), followed by Islam (0.5%). Around 15% are atheists. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019) In the US, several categories of the population are identified by the U.S. Census. The majority is represented by whites, which are about 72% of the population. The largest minority is Hispanic (Latino) population which is about 16% of the total population and includes people of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban roots. Black or African American represent about 13% of the overall population and make the third minority. The Asian population includes Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Indian, Korean and Vietnamese is about 5% of the population. The Native American population is made by the Inuit and Aleuts - natives of Alaska, constitute slightly 1% of the population. The United States is the nation with the highest immigrant population in the world because of the huge waves of immigrants caused by the World Wars and non-European immigration since the 1960s. (Matz 2008, 21)

3.2 Family life & Education

This part describes the family life in the USA in detail. In this country, it is believed that the most important thing is to have a large, loving, close-knit family. This is observed in many movies, television shows and even in political speeches. The typical family is the nuclear family, which is the basic family unit of parents and their children. The nuclear family was highly popular in the 1960s when the situational comedies appeared and showed the typical family situation in which was father usually wearing a suit, the mother was staying at home perfectly caring of children and well dressed, and their two or three children. By the mid-1960s, this ideal started to disappear.

After many social changes during the 1960s, some people rejected the typical prototype of the nuclear family with all its characteristics and they started experiment with others which led to delaying the age of the marriage. So by the year 2005 the nuclear family model was followed only by 2.57 people. (Matz 2008, 23)

In the USA a school system is based on general attitude and statements as ‘Education is the key to our future,’ or ‘You learn something new every day’. The children go to school until age 18 and after that go to work or continue their studies at a college or university. Public schools are paid by local and state taxes. (Matz 2008, 29) On the other hand, private schools are sponsored by religions or religious organizations or are open only for the top grades students or for students from very rich families. To the private schools go about 12% of the US students. (Matz 2008, 36)

All of Americans can live ‘the American Dream’ which means that anyone can achieve anything and it does not matter what background they have. Theoretically, the US is not a ‘class’ based society, but social stratification exists and it is usually based on economics and ethnicity. The gender roles should be equal, but still it is only in theory. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

3.3 Economy

The US economy is the largest in the world – the market value of all the goods and services produced in one year, or gross domestic product is the highest in the world. It greatly affects the ‘global’ economy – it means that everything that happens in the US economy, affects every other country in the world in a positive or negative way. (Matz 2008, 93)

The US business is very active, dynamic and energetic. It provides an equal opportunity for all people, and both women as well as men can easily find jobs as secretaries, assistants,

etc. Americans work hard because they want to be independent, contribute something to society, or they want a better life for their children. (Matz 2008, 100)

3.4 Social customs

Describing the main social customs in the USA as naming, meeting & greeting, communication style, personal space, dining & food, taboos, etc. should be easier to behave properly in this country or with people with American nationality.

3.4.1 Naming

In the USA, it is usual to use first names when speaking to family, friends, and colleagues and in the formal situations, it is typically the both – name and surname of the person who is introduced. In work situations, a professional title and the last name should be used, but it is important not to use titles in introducing yourself. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019) In the US, the using of nicknames is very often. They are used if the name is long and difficult to pronounce. (Maskil, n.d.)

3.4.2 Meeting & Greeting

Greetings in the US are quite informal and casual, usually the simple smile or nod in common social situations is used. Handshaking is common when people are introduced. Speaking about business meetings, handshakes are expected when meeting and leaving. If introducing someone, their full name and brief information about them should be used. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

3.4.3 Communication style

Communication style in the US is influenced by a need to be direct, clear, transparent and open about the matter. Because of this, the stereotype of Americans considers them to be self-interested, rude and aggressive to foreign people. Plain and simple talk is very common and used because indirect communication and body language seem to be confusing and unnecessary. Business negotiation relies on the facts and not the relationships, the term ‘it’s just business’ is commonly used. Personal space is quite big in the USA as Americans try to give one another space. Usual space during conversation is 2-3 feet and there is a little or no touching ever. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019) The discussion usually begins with a focus on accomplishments and concrete facts, and later move to the abstract. This means you should begin with the most important information and small talk leave for later.

Eye contact in the US is also important because it is seen as an indication of openness, honesty and enthusiasm. (Maskil, n.d.)

3.4.4 Dining & Food

The USA is also about food. Americans came with the idea of fast foods, eating on the run, takeaway boxes, etc. In every region, inhabitants eat different kind of food and food from around the world can be found there thanks to the many immigrant communities.

Americans socialize and do business over all day. If doing business is a goal, the socializing is kept to a minimum as is written above. If you invite somebody to a restaurant, you should pay and be aware of social meals which are more about chatting than eating. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

Tips for dining can be as follows. The fork is held in left hand and the knife in the right and napkins should be placed on the lap. Many Americans pray before eating, some even in restaurants. They do not have any greeting or wish to tell at the beginning of the meal. It is considered as impolite to speak with food in the mouth or making any sounds, putting the napkin anywhere else but in the lap, leaning on the table with elbows or forearms. (Matz 2008, 63) Generally, do not start eating before the hostess starts or says to begin and do not sit down before being invited. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

3.4.5 Gift giving & Visiting

Gifts are usually given for special occasions and Americans do not have any customs or taboos concerning them. In business gifts are discouraged because of anti-bribery policies and generally cash should never be given as a gift. Invitations for visits at home are quite usual. The invited person should dress casually, but also smart and not to arrive later than 10-15 minutes. It is a good idea to bring flowers, chocolate, wine, a book or a small household ornament to the host. After the occasion, a note of thanks should be sent. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

3.4.6 Taboos

In the USA are a few taboos which are recommended not to be discussed. These taboo topics are e.g. race, religion, politics, sex and the wrong/rights of abortion. Also, in the public, is forbidden to spit, swear, and assuming that smoking is allowed everywhere. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

3.5 Language in the United States of America

As stated in the first paragraph, there is no official language in the USA, but English is the primary used for legislation, regulations, executive orders, treaties, and all other official pronouncements. Due to a large number of immigrants, the USA is a very multilingual nation. The American Community Survey 2011 shows the top five languages in the US - English (230 million), Spanish (37.58 million), Chinese (2.88 million), French (2.05 million), and Tagalog (1.59 million). (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

3.6 Business tips

Doing business in the US effectively means to understand their culture, manners, habits and so on. Dress code is an inevitable part of business. What to wear for doing business depends on the weather and local culture. It is known that people in the East dress more formally and people in the West more casual. To be successful, men should wear a long sleeved shirt, leather belt, suit, dark socks, and leather shoes. A tie should be in traditional colours, e.g. black, blue, grey and suit in a solid colour such as navy, black, or dark grey. Women should wear modest clothes, not too much make-up or jewellery or tight clothing. Suit skirt should be just below or above the knee and matched with a blouse. Shoes should cover toes. (Doyle 2019)

Giving and receiving business cards have no etiquette in the USA. They are simply exchanged and put into the wallet or trouser pocket. In the USA, this is not seen as bad. Americans are punctual so arriving on time is important to them and to be late is seemed as disrespect. When the meetings appear relaxed, the agenda follows and at the end of the meeting there is a time for the summary of what was decided. Americans are impressed by hard data, so having a presentation or claims, statistics and visual aids should be prepared. Small talk before any negotiation is common and an emphasis is put on the signed contract than building relationships as written above. Anyway, the relationship can be developed after the first contract has been signed. Negotiations may seem rushed and quick but it is because of American way called 'time is money'. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

3.7 Management

Being a successful manager in the USA means to treat all people with an equal amount of respect and deference, focus on schedules, meet deadlines and maximizing time. In America there is a sense that all people play an important role for a company and they are valued for their input. They are also involved in the decision-making process. America has weak

uncertainty avoidance so people face constant changes in organizations thanks to often restructuring. Americans believe that change, even more difficult one, usually brings improvements and enhancements so the manager should be tolerant to risk and ready to accept new improvements. A big impact is put on deadlines, as Americans, are punctual, not meeting a deadline is a sign of poor management and inefficiency. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

3.8 The United States of America by Hofstede Insights

In this chapter, the five dimensions according to Hofstede Insights are described. Every dimension is shown in the figure below.

The first dimension - power distance is about individuals and their ability to influence others. This dimension is not simply about an equal position of individuals in society. It is about how people accept this fact. In the graph above, it can be seen a quite low score on the Power Distance, which is 40. This is the American assumption of liberty and equal rights for all. The hierarchy in American organizations is about managers who rely on their individual employees and shared pieces of information frequently. Communication is informal and direct.

The second dimension - individualism is about the independence of society members. It is about how people see themselves - in terms of 'I' looking after themselves and their direct family or in terms of 'We' which is typical for collectivism and belonging 'in a group'. In the graph can be seen a really high score of 91 which makes the US the most individualist culture in the world. They look after themselves and their family and do not rely too much on authorities for support. In the business world, you should be initiated and self-reliance because the promotion depends on what one has done or can do.

The factor of Masculinity shows a score of 62. It can be explained by the combination of a high Masculinity drive and high Individualism. The Americans simply show their Masculine drive individually. It can be seen in their behaviour, they speak freely about their successes and achievements in life. In the US exists a 'can-do' mentality which is about the possibility to do things in a better way. The Americans 'live to work' so they can obtain monetary rewards and attain higher status based on their hard work. The goal is to be 'the winner'. Anyway, this also means rising inequality among people, which can slowly push Power Distance up and Individualism down.

The score of Uncertainty Avoidance is for the US below average, with a score of 46. As written before, Uncertainty Avoidance shows how people react and feel about ambiguous or

unknown situations. The Americans have a high acceptance of new ideas, innovative products and willingness to try something new or different. They are more tolerant of ideas or opinions from anyone than any others. They also allow freedom of expression. At the same time, they do not require a lot of rules and are less emotionally expressive, but because of 9/11, which created a lot of fear in the American society, the government started to monitor everybody through the NSA and other security organizations.

The fifth dimension - Long Term Orientation describes how is society links with own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and the future. The low score shows normative societies which prefer time-honoured traditions and norms and societies with the high score which take a more pragmatic approach and put efforts in modern education as a way of preparation for the future. The Americans are very practical, they have very strong ideas about what is 'good' and 'evil'. It is reflected in issues such as abortion, the use of drugs, weapons, euthanasia, etc. The business in the US is measured by profit and loss statements being issued on a quarterly basis. This drives individuals for quick results which means the American business is on a short-term basis.

The sixth and last dimension is Indulgence. It is the degree of how are small children are socialized. The US has a quite high score of 68 as an Indulgent. It is about working hard and playing hard. (Hofstede Insights 2019)

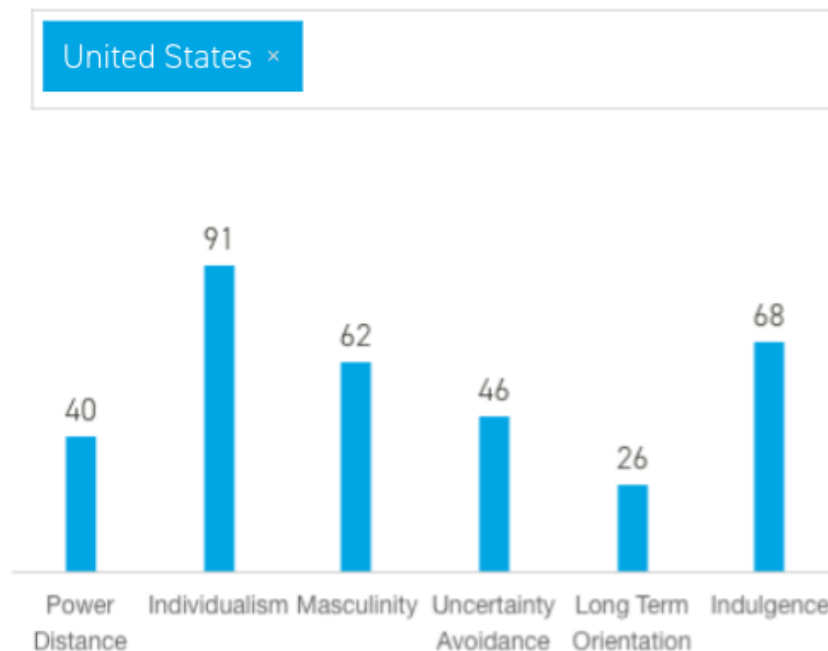


Figure 2: Dimensions in the USA

Source: Hofstede Insights 2019

4 THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The full name of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is frequently shortened to 'Britain' or more often the UK. It is composed of the four countries England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. (Childs 2017, 39) Great Britain includes the countries of England, Wales and Scotland. Politically, the British Isles consists of the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The capital and the largest city is London. The official and national language is English and their currency is the Pound Sterling, known as the Pound or Great British Pound (GBP; £). It is unitary parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as its head and Prime Minister Theresa May. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019) By population, it is 21st largest country in the world with its 66 million inhabitants in April 2019. (Worldometers 2019)

More about the identity, people in the UK usually refer to the country in which they were born. People born in the UK call themselves English, in Scotland Scottish, and in Wales Welsh. People from Northern Ireland refer to themselves as English or Irish. (Childs 2017, 50)

Britain is a constitutional monarchy and the political power resides at the Houses of Parliament in Westminster in London. It is made up of two 'houses'. The less important is the House of Lords and it gives advice on government Acts. The dominance is on side of the House of Commons. It is elected at General Elections, which can be any time, but a maximum period for a parliament is five years. The Cabinet is composed of twenty leading ministers and the Prime Minister. The Queen Elizabeth II has no real political power and she is a ceremonial figure. In the UK are three main political parties: the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. (McDonough 2017, 196-98)

The national flag is known as The Union Jack and represents the three older nations of Great Britain. Its current form was devised in 1800. It is made as a combination of the red cross of St. George (England), the white saltire cross of St. Andrew (Scotland), and the red saltire of St. Patrick (Ireland). (Tempest 2016)

4.1 Religion & Population

In the UK, there is a variety of ethnic groups. As written above, it is a very populous country and also the immigration in the last decade helps to heighten the population growth. In 2011, the first and highest ethnic group was the White British population. They formed 87% of the whole UK's population. The second highest ethnic group is the Black or Black British which

formed 3% of the total population. The third largest ethnic group are Indian. They represent 2.3% of the national population. (Smyth 2017, 209-10)

The survey made by the Census in 2011 shows a number of religious people in the UK. Christianity was the largest religion with 59% of the population despite falling numbers in 2011. The second largest group was Muslims with 4.8% of the population. The amount of Muslims increased, but also the number of people who have no religion moved from 14.8% to 25.1%, which means that it increased to a quarter of the population in the UK. 7% of the population did not answer the question and 4% of the rest of the population have different religion like Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism. (White 2012)

4.2 Family life

The family life in the UK is under a big impact of the many factors. Since the post-war population boom, the fertility rate is declining. Many young couples postpone having children and the average age of the first-time mother is now 30 and 32 for first-time fathers. At the same time, the traditional twentieth-century British family with 2.4 children has now decreased to 1.8. There has been arisen in co-habiting between couples than marriages. UK rates of divorces are the highest in Europe with its figure of 10.8 per thousand marriages in 2012. (Garett 2017, 124)

Until the mid-twentieth century, the dominant form of the family was extended than nuclear. Extended family shows parents, grandparents and even uncles and aunties living in close proximity. Due to the increase of geographical and social mobility of the population, this form almost disappeared. (Garett 2017, 137) The break-up of the nuclear family is regarded as the root cause of many contemporary social ills, e.g. drug addiction. Anyway, Garret states that there is evidence to suggest that new, more flexible family structures and systems of community support are beginning to take its place. For women, in particular, the evolution of the family unit led to higher social freedom and status as well as to financial autonomy. (Garett 2017, 148-49)

Storry claims that people's work is very often determined by the education they receive. The state offers 'primary' and 'secondary schooling. In the UK 'middle', 'special' and faith schools can be found as well. The school year runs from September to July. The official school-leaving age is sixteen, but 73% (2005/06) of pupils continued in education in schools or 6% in colleges. In Britain, the length of study for a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree (BA/BSc) is three years, and seven years for 'vocational' degrees – linked to the specific job, e.g. dentistry, medicine, etc. To get a Master's degree (MA/MSc), students study for at

least one year and those doing Doctorates (PhDs) for upwards of three years. The oldest and the most known universities in Britain are Oxford and Cambridge. (Storry 2017, 79-84)

4.3 Social stratification

The class system in the UK distinguished into the three main groups – ‘upper’, ‘middle’ and ‘working’ class. The highest class called the ‘upper’ class considers the royal family, the aristocracy and the other titled people. This status is based on family background, inherited wealth and land ownership. (McDonough 2017, 187)

The second is the ‘middle’ class. This class considers people who spend more of their income on leisure than on the basic necessities of life. In Britain, 70% of the population characterized themselves to this class. People in this class usually have a university degree or a post-graduate qualification, e.g. doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc. And their children usually tend to follow the same path, not even 10% of them ended up in a manual job. In sociological terms, there can be observed also ‘lower-middle class’ which considers clerical and administrative staff who are often heavily supervised in their job. The final group belonging to the ‘middle’ class are self-employed. They have more control over their working life. (McDonough 2017, 190-91)

The third and the lowest, is the ‘working’ class. In the 1950s, the stereotypical picture of the man belonging to this class was shown. They usually left the school without any formal qualification to find some job. They used to live in industrial towns and cities in close-knit communities, drank beer in the local pubs and enjoyed betting on horses or watching a football match. This stereotype was breaking down after the improvement in wages, the living conditions and the expansion of secondary education. Nowadays, the traditional working-class male is almost extinct – from over the 50% manual workers in 1981, the number declined to 14% in 2011. The ‘new’ working class have developed a consumer-based lifestyle and see themselves as the ‘middle’ class. They are individualistic, aspiring and value education and careers. There is the last class, called ‘underclass’ which describes homeless and drug and alcohol addicted people. Nowadays, the number of long-term unemployed people is at record rates. (McDonough 2017, 192-94)

4.4 Economy

From the historical point of view, the UK led in the developing world in the international trading economy during the Industrial Revolution. However, the influence and power had

weakened in the first half of the 20th century due to the World Wars. After that, the UK started its slow recovery and became a member of the European Union.

The trading ties of the UK have shifted to the other members of the EU. The major investment and trading partner is the USA. Moreover, Japan is a significant investor in local production. The UK is one of Europe's leading fishing countries and it has large energy resources like oil, natural gas, and coal. London has more foreign banks than any other city and it is one of the world financial centres. Half of the country's GDP represents the trade – the total value of imports and exports. The export represents machinery, automobiles, electrical and electronic equipment, etc. The biggest employment can be seen in service industries and the tourism industry is a leading sector in the British economy caused by UK's cultural treasures as castles, museums, theatres etc. London is one of the most-visited countries in the world. (Smith and Spencer 2019)

4.5 Social customs

The following chapter focuses on the description of the main social customs in the UK such as naming, meeting & greeting, communication style, dining & food, taboos, etc. This serves as a guideline that should help people to behave properly in this country or with people with British nationality.

4.5.1 Naming, Meeting & Greeting

Naming in the UK is the same as in the USA. The first name is followed by the middle name and then the family name also known as the surname. Traditionally, when couples marry, a woman takes her husband's surname as her new one.

The British usually appear as reserved but they are actually friendly. The British etiquette is to shake hands when greeting with everybody, even children. At the business meeting, it is polite to shake hands before leaving and last names should be used with the appropriate title. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

4.5.2 Communication style

In the UK, a foreigner can meet with understatement and direct communication at the same time. Communication differs according to the social classes. Business people from the 'upper class' rely upon formally established protocol. The qualifiers such as 'perhaps', 'possibly' or 'it could be' are used a lot. When communicating with people of the same class or someone you know well, the communication can be more informal but the British are still direct and reserved anyway. Written communication strictly follows the rules. It is always

addressed using the person's title and their surname. First names can be used even if the people know each other. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

4.5.3 Dining & Food

As in the Czech Republic, in the UK people tend to have breakfast, lunch and dinner at home. Nowadays dining is less formal as it is used to be, but in families, people try to have at least one meal a day together. Very popular is snacking, especially in front of the television.

The typical English national meals are fish and chips and roast dinners. Fish and chips are usually served sprinkled with lots of salt and vinegar, and red or brown sauce. On the other hand, roast meat is usually served with boiled or roast potatoes, peas, carrots, Brussel sprouts, and gravy. It can be considered as a typical meal for Sunday dinner. Moreover, British are famous for their full English breakfast which is a hot dish of fried bacon, sausage, egg, tomatoes and mushrooms.

Even though fish and chips and roast dinners are traditional food of British people, their most favourite food is tikka masala. Chicken tikka masala is one of the most popular Indian food in the world. Also, burgers and other fast food are favourite, especially among young people. (Haward 2007, 26)

To some dining tips, during the dining, the fork should be held in the left and the knife in the right hand while eating. You should stay standing until invited to sit down and never rest elbows on the table. To show that you did not finish eating, leave your knife and fork crossed on the plate while the fork is over the knife. If you finish eating, leave your knife and fork laying together at the clock position of 6.30. Giving a toast is usual at formal meals when the host will raise a glass and the guest then raise their glass and repeat the toast. In a pub is common to pay for a round of drinks for your friends or a whole group. As in the US, the person who invites to a restaurant usually pays and it is important to be there on time. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

4.5.4 Gift giving & Visiting

As in the USA, it is usual to take a small gift to the host if invited to their home. For this purpose, it is good to bring a bottle of wine, a box of chocolate or flowers. The British like if they can entertain visitors in their house and even they value punctuality, visitor can arrive 10-15 later on the invitation. If entering a house, it is better to ask whether shoes can be worn or not. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

4.5.5 Taboos

In the UK, there are several taboos which should be abandoned. Writing about dining, not resting elbows on the table has been mentioned. The other taboos are staring, personal questions about salaries or politics, speaking loudly or cutting into a conversation, being too familiar with not very known people. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

4.6 Language in the UK

As already written, their official and national language is English, which is spoken by approximately 98% of the population with numerous dialects. The second most spoken and non-native language is Polish followed by languages from India, Pakistan. And then also Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese and French. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

The first important thing is that people can say nothing without pronouncing it and this lead on to different articulation of the vowels, consonants and syllables and at the same way different use of stress, intonation, rhythm and tone of voice. All these changes are called an 'accent'. The primary purpose of it is to identify where someone is from. It is shown geographically and socially. Nowadays, people claim that 'accents are dying out' but it is rather the disappearance of old rural ways of speech because people speaking them already passed away. Accents today mix reflecting the growing character of the city. For example, in London, this trend is the most noticeable. (Crystal 2010, 26-30)

4.7 Business tips

When doing business, everyone should be dressed smartly. For men, it means to wear a suit and tie and women should wear formal dress or trouser together with a smart blouse and jacket. In situations when introducing someone, professional titles should be used together with 'Mr' for men and 'Mrs' or 'Miss' for women. The business cards are usually given at the end of the meeting and there is no ceremony, the same as the USA. Doing business in the UK and in the USA is very similar. Before getting down to the business there is a small talk, a meeting is clear following an agenda, punctuality is important etc. If making a presentation, have prepared facts and figures, make eye contact with the team members and maintain personal space. The most important decisions are made from the top and any hard-selling techniques are forbidden. It is better to avoid any facial expressions. Decision-making is a slow and deliberate process, so patience is necessary. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

4.8 Management

In general, time should not be wasted when doing business. All the people concerned in meetings should be treated with respect. Everyone should be prepared for the discussion. The British are not very emotive while making a negotiation. As written above, the UK is a hierarchical society, however, employees are part of the decision-making process and their input is important for organizations they work for. Unlike the USA, the UK has a medium tolerance for change and risk which means the fear of potential failure and embarrassment. All innovations should have a track record or history of benefits before they acceptance. Time is strongly controlled and scheduled. All deadlines have to be met otherwise it is a sign of poor management. Because of this strong control of time for the British, it is not unusual to work late. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

4.9 The United Kingdom by Hofstede Insights

The five main dimensions were put in the graph and this chapter describes the results thoroughly.

The low score of Power Distance showing 35 means that the British people would like to minimize inequalities amongst people. The Power Distance in the UK shows a lower index among the higher class than among the working class. It can be seen as incorrect because of the strong class hierarchy in the UK but in fact, it shows a difference between two states - the importance of birth rank and a belief that it should not limit a person during his life. This sense of fair play leads people to equality.

One of the highest scores for Individualism can be seen in the picture. The UK with its 89 score is one of the most individualistic countries, just behind the US and Australia. In the UK, children are taught from an early age to be independent and find their unique purpose in life. Personal fulfilment means happiness in the UK.

Score 66 for Masculinity means the British are a highly success oriented and driven. To understanding British, is crucial to be able to 'read between the lines'. They live in order to work and have a clear performance ambition.

The Uncertainty Avoidance score is quite low at 35. The nation in the UK is all right to wake up not knowing what the day brings. They can change their plans immediately and are comfortable in ambiguous situations. Speaking about work means the end goal will be clear, but the route to it will not. However, according to actual situations and planning horizons, the goals will be mostly short-term oriented.

According to Hofstede Insights page, the score for long-term orientation is 51 which means that a dominant preference in the British culture cannot be determined.

Due to a high score of 69, British culture is classified as Indulgent. People with a high score of this term are usually optimists, enjoying life, having fun and they put a big importance on leisure time. (Hofstede Insights 2019)

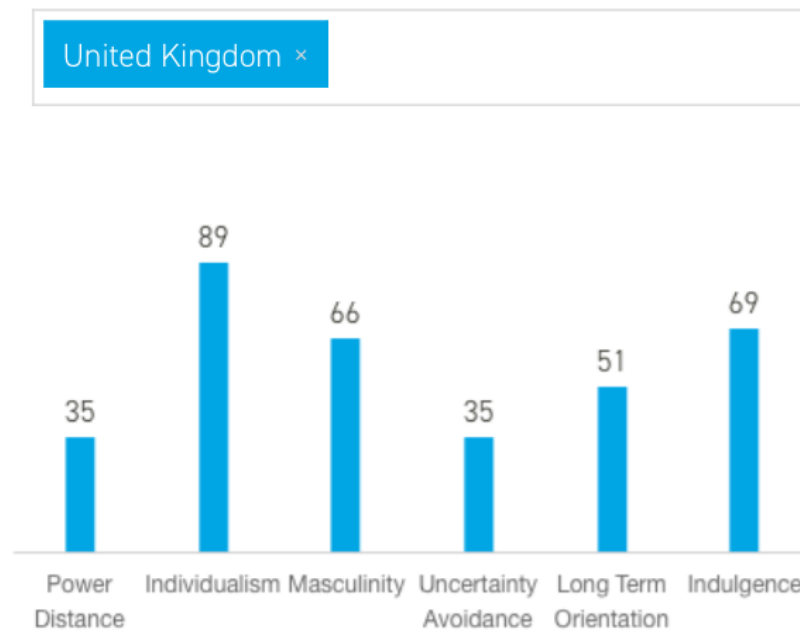


Figure 3: Dimensions in the UK

Source: Hofstede Insights 2019

5 THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic is a small country which is found in the heart of Europe, bordering Austria, Germany, Poland, and Slovakia countries. The capital city is Prague. The currency is the Czech Koruna (CZK) and the country is a member of the EU. (Humphreys 2009, 5-7) It is a parliamentary republic with President Miloš Zeman and Prime Minister Andrej Babiš. (Pražský hrad 2019) (Government of the Czech Republic 2019) The Czech language is spoken by 95% of the population, then another 3% of the population speak Slovak and the rest of 2% of the population speak Czech but has a different mother tongue. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

The history of this country is really rich. In 1355, the king Charles IV was crowned in Rome as Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV and he decided to rebuild Prague into the likeness of a second Rome. The Bohemian kingdom, thanks to his decision, became the largest and best-organized state in central Europe. (Bažant, Bažantová, and Starn 2010, 31) Later, the Czech people lost their national independence, became a part of the Hapsburg Empire in 1620 and for the next 300 years, they were ruled by Austrian Monarchy. (American Friends of the Czech Republic 2012) After the economic crisis in 1873, the Austrians decided to move factories to districts in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia because of the skilled but cheap labour. Due to the strong economic power, the Czech people with their lands finally decided to separate from Austria but the monarchy collapsed at the end of WW I. (Bažant, Bažantová, and Starn 2010, 189) The Czech and Slovak people won the independence in 1918, so Czechoslovakia was formed and proclaimed by the Washington Declaration. (Bažant, Bažantová, and Starn 2010, 241)

Czechoslovakia was the only parliamentary democracy country in East Europe during 1918-1938. All had changed after Hitler's invasion in 1935 which established a German 'protectorate'. At that time, Slovakia declared independence and become a puppet state of the Germans. (American Friends of the Czech Republic 2012)

Czechoslovakia reformed again after the end of World War II, in 1945. The elections that time won the Communist Party, which held most of the key positions in the government. In 1968, Czechoslovakia was invaded and occupied by the Soviet, Hungarian, Bulgarian, East German and Polish troops. The country belonged to the Soviet Union. During the 1950s and 1960s, a lot of protests against the repressive socialist regime took place. The peaceful protest led by students and intellectuals on 17th November 1989, turned violent after aggressive policing and led to a step down of the communist regime. Except for this violent

act, the rest changes were made peacefully and that time it is called The Velvet Revolution. (American Friends of the Czech Republic 2012)

The first free parliamentary elections took place in June 1990 and Václav Havel became president. Two years later, at the end of 1992, Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004. (American Friends of the Czech Republic 2012)

5.1 Population & Religion

Speaking about religions, there can be found the highest numbers of atheists in the Czech Republic. In fact, research indicates that by 2050, religion in the Czech Republic might be extinct. Around 34.5% of the Czechs have no religion and another 44.7% are undeclared. Catholic Church is identified by 10.5% of the population, believers who do not identify with any religion is 6.8%, other Christian Churches 1.1%, Protestants are 1% of the population and the other is 0.7%. (Sawe 2018)

5.2 Family life

The centre of the social structure is the nuclear family. An obligation to the family is in the first place all the time. For the Czech people, the forward-thinking, logic, efficiency and practicality is typical. They plan carefully their personal, but also professional life, according to the rules and regulations, to know what is expected. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

5.3 Economy

The economy of the Czech Republic starts its transformation after the splitting of Czechoslovakia in 1992. The economic transformation continued in the form of the privatisation. The privatisation was divided into three categories: direct selling to foreign investors, returning of property to the original owners, and coupon privatisation. The membership in the EU in 2004 led to the improvement of the position of the Czech Republic on the international market. It also brought an inflow of foreign investments, access to EU structural funds or possibility for inhabitants to move and work in other EU member states.

Jerenálová claims, that the Czech Republic economy is one of the most developed industrial economies in Central and Eastern Europe today. Industry in this country is focused on metallurgy, engineering, car industry, electronic industry, chemistry, food, production of glass, etc. The gross domestic product is made up to 41% by industry, 55% by the service

sector and the rest 5% by the agricultural sector. The most important trade partners are Germany, Slovakia, Poland, France, Austria, Italy, Great Britain, China and the USA. (Jerenálová 2011)

5.4 Social customs

Describing the main social customs in the Czech Republic as meeting & greeting, dining & food, taboos, etc. should be easier to behave properly in this country or with people with Czech nationality.

5.4.1 Meeting & Greeting

Most greetings include appropriate greeting for the time of day, a handshake, direct eye contact and if it is initial greeting it stays formal and reserved. Before using someone's first name, you have to be invited to it. Not to wait for an invitation can be seen as rude. This step to informality is usually offered by the older person, woman, or the person of higher status. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

5.4.2 Dining & Food

Humphreys states that in the Czech Republic you can eat and drink very cheaply. In bigger cities, cuisines ranging from Japanese and Lebanese to Balkan and French can be found. The Czech dining etiquette is simple and similar in many western countries. It is common to share a table with others, waiter-service is the norm, even in pubs and when the food arrives it is common to wish your neighbours Bon appetite. Tipping in the Czechia depends on the quality of service and it is not charged in the bill. In the Czech Republic, it is usual not to go for starters, but for a soup. Then it is the main course, which is usually based on the meat or fish served with a side dish of vegetables, potatoes or dumplings. (Humphreys 2009, 39-40)

5.4.3 Gift giving & Visiting

Being invited to dinner, it is good to bring a small gift like a box of chocolate, flowers to the hostess or a bottle of wine or good brandy to the host. If giving flowers, be aware of number 13, which is considered to be unlucky and give an odd number. The host should arrive on time, dressed well and he or she always should remove shoes before coming in. The person should wait before sitting down and eating. Usually, the honour guest is served as the first. It is polite to compliment the meal and when finished, rest knife and fork at the right side of the plate next to each other. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

5.4.4 Taboos

To prevent misunderstandings or embarrassing moments during the conversation in the Czech Republic, it is better not to talk about politics in general, the old communist regime, extremely serious topics which are not related to work and money. People do not like to talk about global problems, war, the nuclear issue or pollution. The safe topics are as follows: weather, nature and historical beauty, hobbies and sports such as golf, tennis and soccer and anything about art, music and culture. (Cotton 2012)

5.5 Business tips

Czechs are very punctual when speaking about meetings and they are mandatory. A business letter should be addressed to the company and be aware of July and August because its time of summer holiday and many businesses are closed. Meetings should not be planned on Friday afternoon, during them you should keep direct eye contact and expect some small talk. If making a presentation, it should be accurate, detailed and prepare charts and figures. During the negotiation, high-pressure tactics should not be used. Be patient, as it can take several meetings before the deal is done. In the Czech Republic, the decision-making process is hierarchical, so the power is at the top of the company. Lowering eyes, silence or statements as 'It is difficult' or 'We will see' are often negative. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

5.6 Management

Czechs work hard, they are practical and do not generally socialize with colleagues. Manager in this country should develop a cordial working relationship with colleagues, business partners, and clients. Making some changes needs patience because the Czechs have a medium tolerance for changes and risks. The changes and risks are obviously made, but slowly, considering the amount of thought, planning and evaluation. This is because of the fear of failure. Deadlines should be met as the Czechs put importance on agreed-upon dates. As has been written above, decision making is hierarchical. Speaking about teamwork, many young people would like to work in teams and share ideas, but they need to be coached to get the results. In negotiations should be confrontational behaviour and high-pressure tactics avoided. Czechs usually offer what they expect to get and do not give any counteroffers. If they are unhappy about what has been said, they will use an intermediary to communicate with you because of avoiding conflict. (Commisceo Global Consulting Ltd. 2019)

5.7 The Czech Republic by Hofstede Insights

As in the previous chapter, this one describes the five dimensions for the Czech Republic. The figure is below the evaluation.

The relatively high score for PD, 57, means that it is a hierarchical society. People accept this order, everybody has a place and subordinates expect to be told what to do. An ideal boss of such a society is a benevolent autocrat.

Score 58 for Individualism shows, that Czechs are an Individualist society. High preference for the social time used to take care of family or themselves. The employer/employee relationship is based on the contract. The hiring and promotion depend on the merits.

The Czech Republic has scored 57 on Masculinity, which means it is a Masculine society where people 'live in order to work'. Managers should be decisive and assertive the emphasis is put on equity, competition and performance.

The highest score 74 for Uncertainty Avoidance shows that the Czech people have a higher preference for avoiding uncertainty. They have an emotional need for rules, time is money, and they also have an inner urge to be busy and work hard. As the norm is precision and punctuality, security is important for individual motivation.

The Czech culture is pragmatic, showing a high score of 70. In pragmatic societies, people believe that truth depends on the situation, context and time. They can adapt easily to changed conditions, they have a strong tendency to save and invest, and perseverance means achieving results.

The dimension of Indulgence with a score of 29 shows that the Czech society tends to be cynical and pessimistic. Also, they do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control their desires as it should be something wrong. (Hofstede Insights 2019)

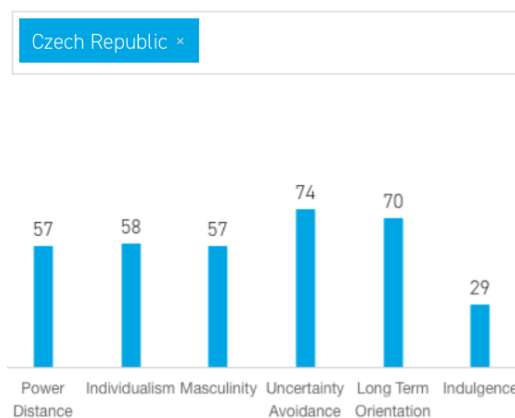


Figure 4: Dimensions in the Czech Republic

Source: Hofstede Insights 2019

6 METHODOLOGY

In this part, the main goal of the thesis, the research questions and research method are described thoroughly.

6.1 Main goal

Based on the research results, the main goal of the thesis is to present differences in business negotiations between the USA, the UK and the Czech Republic and to make recommendations on how to communicate in business effectively.

6.2 Research questions

To meet the main goal of the thesis, the following research questions were stated:

1. How far people in the business experience culture shock?
2. Does culture shock have an impact on business negotiations?

6.3 Research method

As the research method, the semi-structured interview, is used. It is based on primary data which are actual and concrete. On the other hand, to get the data is more difficult and slower than using of secondary sources.

Primary sources are the original bearer of the information. To make an interview with participants takes a depth preparation. The source is everyone who can give us accurate answers. (Kozel, Mlynářová, and Svobodová 2011, 56) The semi-structured interview is part of qualitative research. The aim of qualitative research is to formulate a new hypothesis and new views of reality and to explain how respondents think and behave. The analysis comes from the small number of participants, but it holds a big amount of information. This research has high validity. (Kozel, Mlynářová, and Svobodová 2011, 166)

As the method of qualitative research, the personal interview has been used. This method is based on direct communication with participants. The main advantage of the interview is the existence of direct feedback. The interviewer can motivate the participant to answer or to explain him deeper the questions which make this research more reliable. The disadvantage of this research is time duration, searching of participants and an ability of them to cooperate accurately. (Kozel, Mlynářová, and Svobodová 2011, 175)

II. ANALYSIS

7 COMPARISON OF THE SPECIFIC CULTURES

Through the work, the individual national differences of the USA, the UK and the Czech Republic, is described. There is no universal advice that works because of the culture, and different business administration. However, every country and every organisation faces universal dilemmas. The dilemmas are in the relationships to people, in the relationship to time, and in the relationship between people and the natural environment. (Trompenaars and Hampden–Turner 1997, 182)

Focusing on the criteria of Power Distance, the Czech Republic has the highest score. It is a strong and hierarchical society, especially in an organisation. Managers from the USA or the UK should be prepared for this and behave more autocratically. (Hofstede Insights 2019)

Contrarily, the criteria of Individualism show the lowest score for the Czech Republic. From the historical point of view, this is caused by the Communist Era in this country which was not in the UK or the USA. With a score of 58, it is an individualistic society but people still tend to belong ‘in groups’. And in the UK and the USA management is the management of individuals chiefly. (Hofstede Insights 2019)

The criteria of Masculinity show minimum differences thus Uncertainty Avoidance is described. The biggest difference is between the Czech Republic and the UK. The UK or US managers should be aware of an emotional need for rules and intolerance of new ideas. This means the negotiations can last more time than expected.

The Czech Republic shows a very high score for Long Term Orientation. People tend to save and invest and they are insistent in achieving results. However, the US is very short term oriented. They strive for quick results and issue profit and loss statements quarterly. During negotiation, deadlines should be set clearly to prevent any misunderstandings.

People in the UK and the US are Indulgent. They want to enjoy life and have fun. Commonly, their attitude is positive and optimistic. Simply, they can enjoy their money. Well, Czechs Indulgent are not. They tend to be pessimistic and do not put emphasis on leisure time. This probably affects more personal life than the business one. (Hofstede Insights 2019)

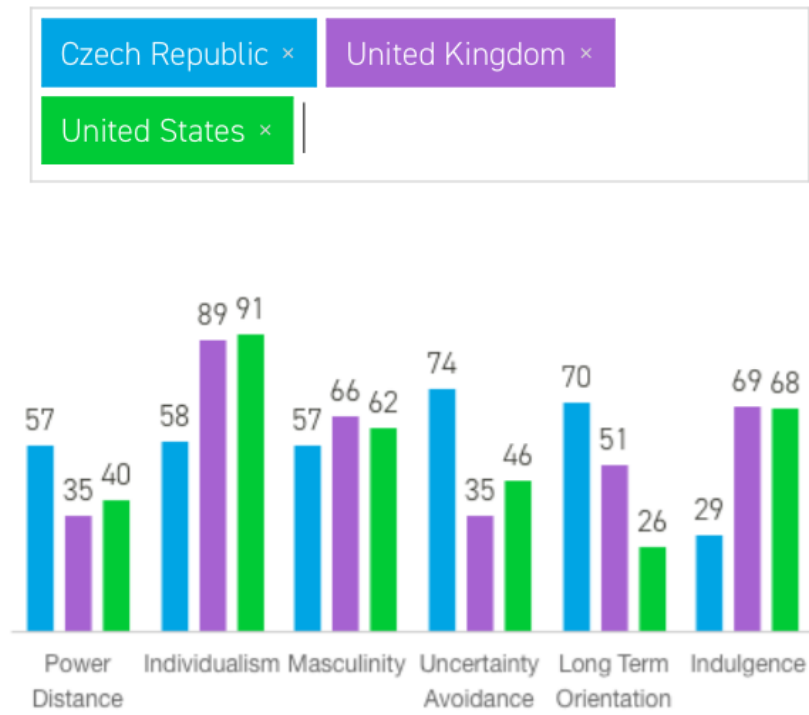


Figure 5: The comparison of the selected countries

Source: Hofstede Insights 2019

8 PRIMARY RESEARCH

In this chapter, the performed interview is analysed, the participants' answers are evaluated and answers to the research questions are given.

8.1 Characteristic of research and its preparation

The interview of this thesis was completed by twelve respondents. The main issue was to find out recipients who are negotiating or who have ever attended any negotiation or business meeting with Americans, British, Czechs and between themselves. This took a lot of time and patience.

After having enough recipients, the dates for meetings have been set. Many interviews were made online via Skype because recipients were from the USA, the UK or live at the other end of the Czech Republic.

The questions for the interviews were well prepared in advance. Altogether, seven questions were prepared to find out, how should people prepare for business negotiations and meetings, whether they experience culture shock and what the impact on negotiation or meeting is.

8.2 Structure of the interviews

This chapter describes the structure of the interviews. During the interviews with participants were asked eight questions. Their order was different because of various situations. Usually, the first question was what kind of job people were given to deal with a foreign client. This was used as a kind of introduction.

The second question asked about the specific representatives of the countries of which the participants were negotiating with. To this question participants could name all of them, but the rest of the questions were mainly focused on the UK and the USA.

The other two questions were crucial for the research because they were asking about the concrete preparation for the negotiation. This included a specific type of preparation and participation in any training or course on intercultural studies and recommendations of it.

The next questions were related to the culture shock. Even though the participants were prepared well they could experience some state of uncertainty or unexpected behaviour of the representatives. It was needed to find out specific problems and situations and evaluate them. Cultural differences could be noticed before or during the meeting and to find out how to deal with them was crucial.

Because some of the participants have experienced negotiation among the participants from the UK and the US as well, the question was asked for the comparison between these two cultures and their main differences.

8.3 Evaluation of the interviews

During the discussion with participants, the questions were asked in a different order than they are written in the appendices. It was because of the current situation and ongoing discussion. The questions are analysed in a different order as well.

All of the recipients had experience in negotiation with the UK and the USA. The second common country was Spain, and the third was Italy and Germany. Some of the recipients had also experience with Sweden, Australia, France, Poland, Hungary and the Netherlands.

8.3.1 Factors of the negotiation

The preparation for negotiation depends on many factors. These factors are: how the meeting/negotiation is important, how many people will attend it, if the presenter is presenting with somebody else or alone. These factors were mentioned to recipients to get better answers about their preparation. The answer differentiated. All recipients said, they prepared a presentation or excel analysis as material presented. Some of them mentioned they asked colleagues for their opinion about the presentation and changed it if needed. The whole preparation for the meeting/negotiation usually took them several weeks in advance.

8.3.2 Training on intercultural studies

Nowadays, many of intercultural courses or presentation skills trainings exists. It is not difficult to participate in them, but there is a question about their usefulness. The nine of twelve participants answered they never had one. They all agreed that training is a good idea but usually cannot prepare for what is waiting in the real world. The one participant had not one at the time of the job, but later received some training on presentation and management. Two participants have taken part in several negotiation training usually organized by a company they worked for. It was part of a regular employees training programme. However, they admitted the most effective learning they get was from already conducted negotiations for their clients on their finished projects. One of the recipients even has organized and presented "*West-East Intercultural Difference*" presentation of a company training organized in Shanghai.

8.3.3 Culture shock

The other question was about culture shock. Even though the recipients were prepared, they observed some difficulties and uncertain situations. They all agreed that negotiations with the Americans include lengthy discussions, sometimes also annoying questions and in fact, the meetings can be boring. Negotiations with the British are often more difficult to understand because of their humour which is not easy for foreigners. The British people also tend to ask a bit rude or sarcastic questions and they are considered to be reserved. One of the participants also suggested to be in contact with the opponent in advance and tried to know him as much as possible because recognizing his strategy can be very helpful in the final negotiation.

What can be found very interesting, the southern countries behave very differently during negotiations. Three of the participants had experience with French, Italians and Spanish businessmen. They found these negotiations very hard and unpleasant. During their presentation, they experienced angry customers, sometimes complaining, yelling, or demanding impossible exceptions. The very common was, that people talk to their colleagues during their presentation which made them unsure and they were thinking if they said something wrong etc. Two of the participants also admitted that southern countries are not very time punctual.

8.3.4 The main recommendations

The fifth question about preparation and recommendation was crucial for this research. The main suggestions for the participants were as follows:

- believe in what you are presenting,
- if you do not know the answer, do not pretend you do,
- do not take yelling or complaints personally,
- do not try to convince angry customers that their anger is not right,
- set your goals before negotiation, do not change your mind,
- get to know your opponent, study his history and current situation,
- observe non-verbal communication of your opponents.

They all agreed with that more important than smarts are being a good communicator – get your point across, explain well and persuade. You should play fair and not to be disappointed if you do not succeed because you do not necessarily need to leave with the final agreement after the first day of negotiation.

The cultural differences differentiated according to the participants. They experienced yelling during their presentation and then a very pleasant and fun atmosphere during dinner later on. The point is, people are not yelling at you, but at your company and its policies or rules. Some of the opponents even walk out of the room and then came back or they play tricks e.g. summarizing wrong data. This is observed mainly in the western world. On the other hand, negotiations with Czechs have the more uptight atmosphere, the person should be aware of the hierarchy in the company and be familiar with the fact, that Czechs cannot separate work and private life. If you disagree with them during negotiations, they would not be friendly outside of work as well.

All of the participants have experienced negotiation with American and British businessmen. Negotiate with Brits, they found very difficult to understand their dry humour, but it is the key to success. They also tend to be very calm, frank and open and professional during presentations. Before and after the presentation, they tend to be friendly. Brits are necessarily like Americans, they are usually more sophisticated and gentlemanlike. They dislike the American ego-centrism, confidence, know-it-all attitude. To negotiate with Americans successfully, you should be confident yourself, a bit dramatic, showing excitement, ask them questions, show admiration and curiosity. They are not as frank and rather politically correct. Most of the negotiations are done outside the presentation, later at lunch, coffee, smaller meeting, etc.

8.3.5 Job position

To imagine what kind of job the recipients have been given to dealing with foreign clients was the last question of this research. The recipients were of a different age, mainly about 30 years old, the oldest one was forty-five. Their job positions were as follows: procurement consultant, business unit manager, sales manager, account manager, expansion manager and some of them were repeating. Czech participants of the research have been working for US/UK company in Prague and US company in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm. The group of the participants was made up of four Czechs, four Brits and four Americans. The aim was to cover business negotiations from all points of view analysed nationalities in this thesis.

9 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to the results of the research, it is possible to find out if the goal of this thesis has been achieved. For this thesis the following research questions were stated:

1. How far people in the business experience culture shock?

The answer to the first question is clear. According to the participants' answers they all have experienced the culture shock. They experienced it in many forms. The most usual were different approaches during presentations, British tend to be very professional and reserve, Americans, on the other hand, very self-centered and not so frank and the Czechs are uptight and strictly follows the agenda. As one of the difficulties was mentioned British dry humour, which is not easy to understand and yelling in southern countries such as Spain which made a really unpleasant atmosphere.

2. Does culture shock have an impact on business negotiations?

To answer this question seems more difficult. The participants of the research actually did not mention specific situations when the culture shock had an impact on business negotiation. However, they admitted impact on themselves. Specifically, they mentioned the state of uncertainty when people were yelling at them, speaking with their colleagues or played tricks with wrong data. Anyway, all of this is part of the negotiation 'game' and the culture shock itself does not have an impact on negotiations.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results of the interviews, several recommendations were made about successful communication in business negotiations. They will be described further in this part. Always it is important to know at least these three factors:

1. How important the meeting/negotiation is?
2. How many people would be present?
3. Would anyone else present with me?

In accordance with the answers to these questions the preparation should look like.

10.1 Presentation

As the first step of the preparation should be making a presentation. Presentation is the main tool of the presenter and should be prepared weeks in advance and very thoroughly. In presentation, only true data and the most important information should be used.

Moreover, it is good to run the presentation by your colleagues and ask their opinion. The key is to rehearse as many times as possible to be dead certain. The presenter should believe in what is he presenting. If it is possible, get to know each other with the person you will present to. This can help to make a good atmosphere and achieve your goal more easily.

10.2 Enquiries

After the presentation, the enquiries should follow. The presenter can prepare some questions by himself but more likely your opponents should ask about the things presented or about your company.

The uncertain situation can occur. The presenter might not know the answer but it is important not to become hysterical but honestly admit it and say you will find out.

10.3 Angry opponents

During negotiation, many people can get angry. The main recommendation for this situation is to keep calm and not to try to persuade them that their anger is not right. This yelling and complaints should not be taken personally because opponents usually disagree with your company's policies and the rules not with you.

10.4 False game

It is important to set the goals before the negotiation and not to change mind during it. It is also very good to be in contact with the opponent as stated in the paragraph about the

presentation. This can help the presenter to study the opponent's history, current situation and his strategy.

Some people can come up with several tricks, considering as a false game. This situation occurs when opponents summarized wrong statements, fooled input data, etc. If they want to create even more uncomfortable atmosphere, they leave the room and then came back. The presenter should not behave like that and play fair.

10.5 Cultural patterns

As the whole thesis is about cultural differences it cannot be missed in the recommendation. To study primary information about a culture who the presenter is going to negotiate with is the basis. The presenter should know:

- how the management in the concrete country works,
- how the negotiations and meetings are held,
- how to greet,
- what are safe topics and taboos,
- what to bring as a gift and what not.

If you study this information properly, it should minimize culture shock and help you to achieve your goal during the negotiation. It is always important to keep in mind that achieving the final agreement after the first meeting is not the most important thing, but to prepare a good base for another negotiation is considered as a success.

All in all, the recommendations are rather general but all of them are based on primary research.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the bachelor thesis was to find out the main problems during the negotiations with the representatives of the USA and the UK and set the recommendations. Theoretical part of the thesis sets the basis of the cross-cultural psychology, intercultural communication and the selected countries. The practical part was about the research itself, it was based on the twelve interviews with the participants who had experienced negotiations with the natives of the selected countries and according to their experiences were the recommendations set.

The recommendations were separated into the several groups: presentation, enquiries, false game, angry opponents and cultural patterns. They should be used as a helpful guideline for those preparing for the negotiation with the natives of the selected countries. According to the results of the interviews was possible to answer stated research questions. First of all, it was found that all the participants have experienced the culture shock despite thorough preparation. They have experienced it in many forms which had been analysed in the practical part of the thesis. Secondly, an impact of the culture shock on business negotiations was discussed. The participants of the research did not mention any specific situations when the culture shock would have directly affected the business negotiation. On the other hand, they admitted an impact of it on themselves. Even though they were prepared, they have experienced a state of uncertainty when negotiating with the natives, e.g. yelling, speaking in the native language with co-workers, false game, etc. According to their experiences the advices were stated as well.

To summarize, I hope that my bachelor thesis will be a helpful guide through the intercultural communication and negotiations with the USA and the UK representatives and will be beneficial for those who are interested in intercultural communication and business negotiations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

e.g.	–	Exempli gratia
etc.	–	Et cetera
EU	–	European Union
UK	–	United Kingdom
US	–	United States of America
USA	–	United States of America
WWI	–	the First World War
WWII	–	the Second World War

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APPENDICES

Structure of the interviews

1. With representatives of what countries did you negotiate? (name all, the rest of questions are only about UK and US)
2. How did you prepare for this negotiation, how much time did you spend on preparation?
3. Have you ever participated in any training or course on intercultural studies? If so, would you recommend taking part in this?
4. In spite of your preparation, was there something that put you in a state of uncertainty or shocked you? (the negotiation process, representatives behaviour)
5. What would you recommend, how to prepare, what to pay attention to, or what to be ready for?
6. What was the biggest cultural difference you have noticed during or before the meeting?
7. If you have to negotiate with the US and the UK representatives, what differences did you notice between these cultures?
8. What job you have been given to dealing with foreign clients?