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Preface

This book presents the results of Polish-Ukrainian scientific cooperation. It contains the papers prepared for the 10th international conference “Quantitative Methods in Accounting and Finance”. Accounting and finance face nowadays many challenges. They require both an international and local approach, they need to be considered from the theoretical and practical point of view, and they also encourage general and specific analysis.

Support from quantitative methods is needed in order to discover, implement and verify new finance and accounting trends, methods and instruments. The research papers which are part of this book present different aspects of accounting and finance combined with a quantitative, in particular Econometric, approach.

Some of the papers focus on methodology of measurement, estimation and forecasting of financial phenomena, especially those related to investment processes. Others address specific problems of accounting such as accounting solutions for different branches, legal issues of accounting, responsibility and reporting. An alternative approach was also undertaken and the roles of a narrative and culture in accounting were presented.

The variety of papers selected for this issue ensures the complexity of the book. It provides theoretical as well as empirical material which can be used in further research and in business practice, particularly in accounting and finance. We hope that the content of the book provides a starting point for scientific discussion and practical changes.

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QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF CULTURE AND ITS USAGE IN ACCOUNTING

ILOŚCIOWA OCENA KULTURY I JEJ ZASTOSOWANIE W RACHUNKOWOŚCI

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Summary: Culture is one of most important factors that influences everyday life, economy, law and business practices. The purpose of the paper is to explain how culture can influence accounting. Different concepts of measurement of culture will be presented. Their usefulness for accounting will be explained. The considerations presented in the paper are based on literature on cultural differences.

Keywords: culture, national culture, business culture, accounting subculture, Gray.

Streszczenie: Kultura jest jednym z najistotniejszych czynników wpływających na życie rodzinne, ekonomię, prawo oraz praktyki biznesowe. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest wyjaśnienie, w jaki sposób kultura może wpłynąć na rachunkowość. Opisano w nim także różne koncepcje pomiaru kultury. Zaprezentowane rozważania bazują na literaturze dotyczącej zagadnienia różnic kulturowych.

Słowa kluczowe: kultura, kultura narodowa, kultura biznesowa, subkultura rachunkowości, Gray.

1. Introduction

According to R.F. Spinello, culture is what rational people add to nature by their chosen ways of living, thinking and acting [Spinello 2014]. According to G. Hofstede, culture is the collective programming of the mind. [Hofstede 2011]. Kluckhohn and R. Strodtbeck's definition of culture can be summarized as a shared set of commonly held general beliefs and values that influence people's assumptions, perceptions, and behavior ([Kluckhohn, Strodtbeck 1961] after: [Encyclopedia of... 2013]). GLOBE researchers define it as shared motives, values, beliefs, identities and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members

of collectives and are transmitted across age generations [House et al. 2002]. A. Kroeber and T. Parsons define culture as a transmitted and created content and pattern of values, ideas and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in shaping human behavior ([Kroeber, Parsons 1958] after: [Prescott, Vann 2015]). C. Geertz states that culture denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life ([Geertz 1993] after: [Prescott, Vann 2015]). According to D. North, culture defines how people process and utilize their information about their surroundings and determine how constraints are specified ([North 1990] after: [Moore 2009]). The specification of the concept of culture is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Specification of concept of culture

Elements	Group, community	Range	Transmission	Influence object
values; norms; traditions; thinking patterns; attitudes; knowledge; experiences; roles; - hierarchies; religions; space relations; time perception; concepts of world; material objects – goods; common rule; view on social world; view on members of community; ethical rules; symbolic and learned aspects of society	common for given society; differences between individuals	almost everything in the surroundings created by humans; in a narrow sense relating to art	from generation to generation; through educational institutions; through community members; acquired by generations through collective effort; transmitted socially, not biologically	governs the behavior of community members

Source: [Nowak 2013, p. 86].

The aim of the paper is to explain how the culture can be analyzed quantitatively and how it can be used in accounting. The structure of the paper is the following: firstly, the culture concept will be explained, secondly, different models referring to national culture will be explained. Their relevance and potential application and importance for accounting will be shown. Afterwards the quantitative assessment of chosen national cultures will be presented. Subsequently, the model and dimension of the accounting subculture will be explained and the position of different world's regions related to their accounting systems will be presented. The hypotheses are: 1) although the concept of culture is ambiguous, it can be operationalized and cultural dimensions can be measured quantitatively; 2) the quantitative assessment of culture can be used in accounting. The research is based on literature on culture, national culture, business culture and accounting and its subculture.

2. Models, dimensions and measurement of culture. Its consequences for accounting

Although culture is basically a social construct and its meaning is ambiguous, it can be operationalized. There are many culture models elaborated by the authors who belong to different academic fields. Their concepts are usually constructed by defining different cultural dimensions. The cultural dimensions introduced by different authors are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Different models of cultural dimensions

G. Hofstede	
Power Distance	Degree to which members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. It determines matters such as: the need of subordinate consultation versus the acceptability of paternalistic management; the meaning of status differences; respect for old age; ways of redress in case of grievances; the feasibility of various leadership packages such as Management By Objectives and the feasibility of appraisal systems in general.
Individualism (Individualism versus collectivism)	Preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families. The preference influences business aspects such as the nature of employer-employee relationship (whether it is considered to be calculative or morally-based); priority in business to the task or to the relationship; the role of family in the work situation; the validity of the economic theories based on self-interest and the validity of psychological theories based on self-actualization.
Masculinity (Masculinity versus femininity)	Preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. It refers to: competitiveness versus solidarity, equity versus equality, sympathy for the strong or for the weak; achievement motivation versus relationship motivation; concepts of the quality of the work life; career expectations; acceptability of "macho" manager behavior; gender roles in the work place.
Uncertainty avoidance	Degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. It has consequences for: the emotional need for formal and informal rules to guide behavior; formalization, standardization and ritualization of organizations; implicit models of organizations; types of planning used; appeal of precision and punctuality; the showing or hiding emotions; tolerance for deviant ideas and behavior.
Long term orientation (Long term orientation versus short-term orientation)	Degree to which society maintains some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and the future. In the business context this dimension is related to as (short term) normative versus (long term) pragmatic. In the academic environment the terminology Monumentalism versus Flexhumility is sometimes also used.
Indulgence (Indulgence versus restraint)	Allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

R. Gesteland	
Deal-Focus vs. Relationship-Focus	<p>Deal-focused (DF) people are fundamentally task oriented while relationship-focused folks are more people-oriented.</p> <p>In relationship-focused cultures people are usually reluctant to do business with strangers; make initial contact indirectly: at trade shows, on official trade missions or via intermediaries, introductions and referrals; at meetings, take plenty of time to build trust and rapport before getting down to business.; it is important to maintain harmony, avoid conflict and confrontation during discussions.; negotiators tend to be sensitive to issues of “face”, dignity, self-respect.; a preference for indirect, high-context communication to avoid offending others.; effective communication and problem-solving require frequent face-to face contacts.; lawyers are usually kept in the background during negotiations; A reliance on close relationships rather than contracts to resolve disagreements.</p> <p>In deal-focused business cultures an openness to talking business with strangers; though introductions and referrals are always helpful, it is generally possible to contact potential customers or business partners directly; at meetings, people get down to business after just a few minutes of general conversation; when communicating, the priority is clarity of understanding; little thought is given to maintaining harmony with counterparts during negotiations; little attention paid to issues of face; expect direct, frank, low-context communication most of the time; much communication and problem-solving handled via telephone, fax and e-mail rather than in face-to face; meetings; lawyers are often seated at the negotiating table; a reliance on written agreements rather than personal relationships to resolve disagreements.</p>
Informal vs. Formal Cultures	<p>In formal, hierarchical business cultures Formality in interpersonal communication is an important way of showing respect.; Status differences are valued and tend to be larger than in egalitarian societies.; expect to address counterparts by family name and title rather than by given name; protocol rituals are often numerous and elaborate;</p> <p>In informal, egalitarian business cultures Informal behavior is not regarded as disrespectful; people are uncomfortable with obvious status differences, which are smaller than in hierarchical societies; expect to address most counterparts by given name rather than surname and title shortly after meeting them; protocol rituals are relatively few and simple.</p>
Rigid-Time vs. Fluid-Time Cultures	<p>In polychronic business cultures people and relationships are more important than punctuality and precise scheduling; schedules and deadlines tend to be quite flexible; meetings are frequently interrupted.</p> <p>In monochronic business cultures punctuality and schedules are very important to business people; schedules and deadlines tend to be rigid; meetings are seldom interrupted.</p>
Expressive vs. Reserved Cultures	<p>In reserved business cultures people speak more softly, interrupt each less; are more comfortable with silence than is the case in expressive cultures; expect interpersonal distance of about an arm’s length and little physical contact aside from the handshake; avoid intense, continuous eye contact across the negotiating table; expect very few hand and arm gestures and restrained facial expression;</p> <p>In expressive business cultures people often speak quite loudly, engage in conversational overlap and are uncomfortable with silence; expect interpersonal distance of half an arm’s length or less and considerable physical touching; direct, even intense eye contact across the negotiating table signals interest and sincerity; expect lively facial expressions along with vigorous hand and arm gesturing</p>

Table 2, cont.

GLOBE	
Power Distance	Degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equally.
Uncertainty Avoidance	Extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events.
Humane Orientation	Degree to which a collective encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others.
Collectivism I (Institutional)	Degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.
Collectivism II (In-Group)	Degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.
Assertiveness	Degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others.
Gender Egalitarianism	Degree to which a collective minimizes gender inequality.
Future Orientation	Shows the extent to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviors such as delaying gratification, planning, and investing in the future.
Performance Orientation	Degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members.
F. Trompenaars	
Universal versus particular	In universal societies there is rigidity in respect of rule-based behavior. In particular ones - the importance of relationship may lead to flexibility of the interpretation of situations
Individual versus collective	The collective may take different forms like the corporation in Japan or the family in Italy; implication for such matters as individual responsibility or payment systems.
Neutral versus emotional	The extent to which societies differ is thought to show emotion in public. Neutral societies favor to "stiff upper lip", while overt displays of feeling are more likely in emotional societies
Diffuse or specific	In diffuse cultures the whole person will be involved in a business relationship and it would take time to build such relationship. In a specific culture basic relationship would be limited to the contractual
Achievement-based or ascription-based	Achievement-based societies value recent success or an overall record of accomplishment. In contrast, in societies relying more on ascription, status could be bestowed on you through such factors as age, gender or educational record.
Time approach	In some societies people start from a zero. In other societies people have enormous sense of the past.
Attitude towards environment	In some societies individuals are masters of their faith. In other societies the world is more powerful than individuals.
E. Hall	
High context societies versus low context societies	In high context societies a high proportion of information is "uncoded" and individualized by individual; communication styles are indirect and words are less important; shared group understandings; importance attached to past and tradition; "diffuse" culture stressing importance of trust and personal relationship in business. Low context societies exhibit contrasting features: a high proportion of communication is "coded" and expressed; direct communication styles, words are paramount; past context is less important; "specific" culture stressing importance of rules and contracts.

R. Inglehart	
Traditional versus secular-rational orientations toward authority	If the people in a given society place a strong emphasis on religion, it is related to such aspects as attitude toward abortion, level of national pride, the desirability of more respect for authority and the attitudes toward childrearing.
Survival versus self-expression values	The survival/self-expression dimension reflects cluster of variables involving materialistic values (such as maintaining order or fighting inflation) versus post materialist values (such as freedom and self-expression), subjective well-being, interpersonal trust, political activism, and tolerance of out-groups.; it taps a syndrome of trust, tolerance, subjective well-being, political activism, and self-expression that emerges from postindustrial societies with high levels of security. At the opposite extreme, people in societies shaped by insecurity and low levels of well-being, tend to emphasize economic and physical security above other goals, and feel threatened by foreigners, by ethnic diversity and by cultural change.
S. Schwartz	
Autonomy versus embeddedness	The issue is the nature of the relation or the boundaries between the person and the group: to what extent are people autonomous vs. embedded in their groups? In autonomy cultures, people are viewed as autonomous, bounded entities; they should cultivate and express their own preferences, feelings, ideas, and abilities, and find meaning in their own uniqueness; there are two types of autonomy: intellectual autonomy and affective autonomy Embedded cultures emphasize maintaining the status quo and restraining actions that might disrupt in-group solidarity or the traditional order; important values in such cultures are social order, respect for tradition, security, obedience, and wisdom.
Hierarchy versus egalitarianism	The societal problem is to guarantee that people behave in a responsible manner that preserves the social fabric. The polar solution labeled cultural egalitarianism seeks to induce people to recognize one another as moral equals who share basic interests as human beings; people are socialized to internalize a commitment to cooperate and to feel concern for everyone's welfare; they are expected to act for the benefit of others. The polar alternative labeled cultural hierarchy relies on hierarchical systems of ascribed roles to insure responsible, productive behavior; it defines the unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources as legitimate; people are socialized to take the hierarchical distribution of roles for granted and to comply with the obligations and rules attached to their roles; values like social power, authority, humility, and wealth are highly important in hierarchical cultures.
Mastery versus harmony	The societal problem is to regulate how people manage their relations to the natural and social world. The cultural response to this problem labeled harmony emphasizes fitting into the world as it is, trying to understand and appreciate rather than to change, direct, or to exploit; important values in harmony cultures include world at peace, unity with nature, and protecting the environment; mastery is the polar cultural response to this problem; it encourages active self-assertion in order to master, direct, and change the natural and social environment to attain group or personal goals; values such as ambition, success, daring, and competence are especially important in mastery cultures.

Source: own elaboration based on [Inglehart, Baker 2000, pp. 19-51; Mullins 2007; Hofstede, Bond 1988; Hofstede 1984; 1991; 1980; 1983; House et al. 2002; House, Aditya 1997; House et al. 1999; *Encyclopedia of Management Theory* 2013; Licht, Goldschmidt, Schwartz 2005; Schwartz 1994; 1992; Gesteland 1999; <https://www.geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>].

Table 3. Quantitative assessment of national cultures of chosen countries based on G. Hofstede model

Country	Cultural Dimension					
	Power distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty Avoidance	Long Term Orientation	Indulgence
United Kingdom	35	89	66	35	51	69
United States of America	40	91	62	46	26	68
China	80	20	66	30	87	24
Japan	54	49	95	92	88	42
Poland	68	60	64	93	38	29
Ukraine	92	25	27	95	55	18

Source: elaboration based on: [<http://geert-hofstede.com/>].

As presented in Table 2, the cultural dimensions constitute a continuums between two extreme approaches (like individualism and collectivism, femininity and masculinity, universality versus particularity etc.) This makes the quantitative assessment of cultural dimensions possible. Subsequently, this proves that the culture can be presented in the terms of numbers. The exemplary measurement is shown in Table 3. It contains the numerical assessment of chosen national cultures based on the dimensions which were proposed by G. Hofstede.

3. Accounting subculture

The cultural dimensions introduced by G. Hofstede, GLOBE. S. Schwartz, R. Gersteland, E. Hall and R. Inglehart can be used in various ways in accounting.

However, based on G. Hofstede's national culture dimensions, S. Gray introduced the cultural dimensions with special meaning and application for accounting. He defined special accounting subculture dimensions. They are presented and defined in Table 4.

It should be stressed that S. Gray introduced his idea in 1988, when G. Hofstede's model consisted only of four dimensions (power distance, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance). Therefore only those dimensions were reflected in S. Gray's proposal.

The location of different regions based on their accounting subculture (different accounting systems) are presented in Figures 1 and 2. The first of them presents the statutory control versus professionalism and flexibility versus uniformity dimensions. The second one depicts the secrecy-transparency and optimism-conservatism dimensions.

Table 4. Dimensions of accounting subculture according to S. Gray

Dimensions	Essence
Professionalism versus Statutory Control	Preference for the exercise of individual professional judgment and the maintenance of professional self-regulation as opposed to compliance with prescriptive legal requirements and statutory control.
Uniformity versus Flexibility	Preference for the enforcement of uniform accounting practices between companies and for the consistent use of such practices over time as opposed to flexibility in accordance with the perceived circumstances of individual companies.
Conservatism versus Optimism	Preference for a cautious approach to measurement so as to cope with the uncertainty of future events as opposed to a more optimistic, laissez-faire, risk-taking approach.
Secrecy versus Transparency	Preference for confidentiality and the restriction of disclosure of information about the business only to those who are closely involved with its management and financing as opposed to a more transparent, open and publicly accountable approach.

Source: own elaboration based on [Gray 1988, pp. 7-11].

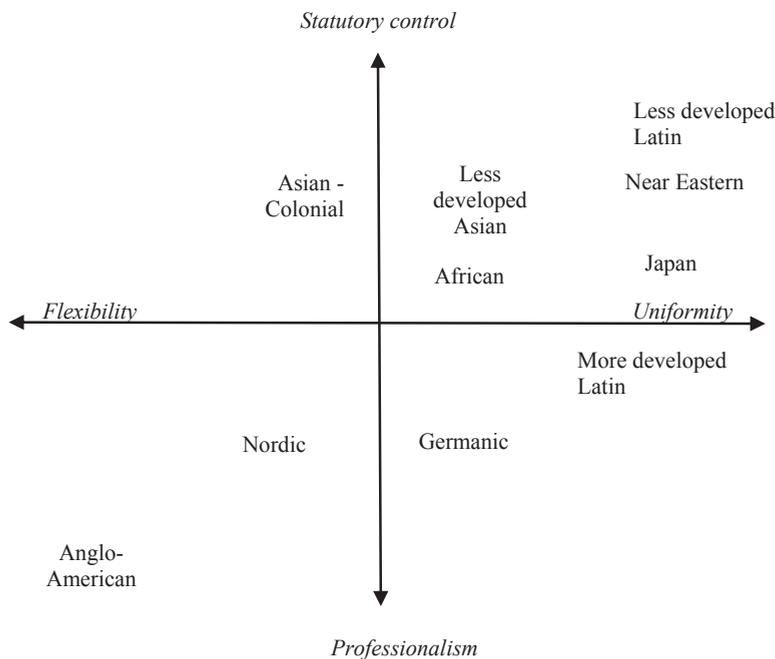


Fig. 1. Accounting systems: authority and enforcement

Source: [Gray 1988, p. 12]

As presented in Figure 1, the highest statutory control and uniformity characterizes developed Latin countries. On the opposite end, flexibility and professionalism are the features of Anglo-American accounting systems. Another professional and flexible accounting culture is in Nordic countries. Colonial Asia is characterized by flexibility and statutory control. Professional and uniformed accounting systems are in Germanic and more developed Latin cultures. Near Eastern countries, Japan, African and less developed Asian countries are characterized by statutory controlled and uniformed accounting subculture.

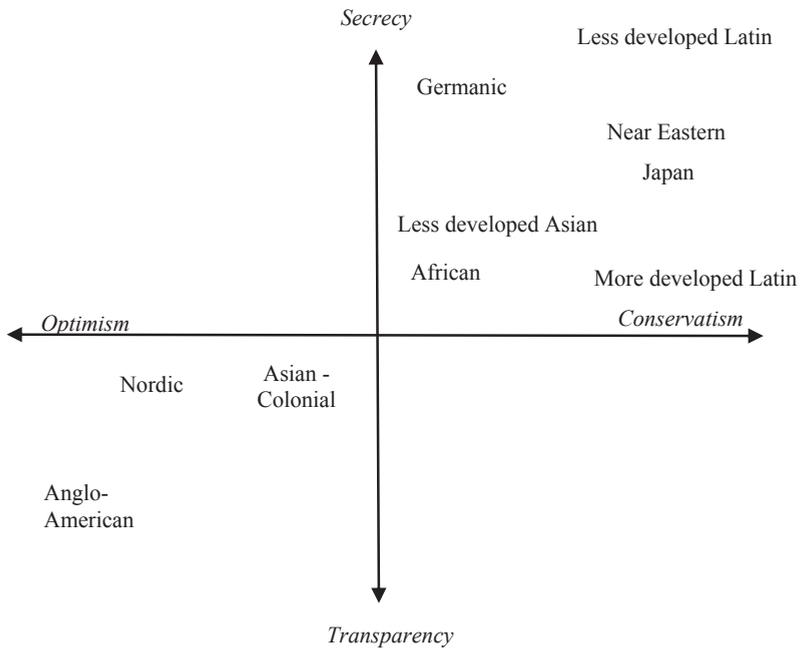


Fig. 2. Accounting systems: measurement and disclosure

Source: [Gray 1988, p. 13].

Less developed Latin countries also score highest on the secrecy and conservative scale. Again, Anglo-American accounting cultures are their opposite, scoring high on the optimism and transparency. Also, Nordic countries and postcolonial Asia are transparent and optimistic. On the opposite end, less developed Asian countries, Germanic, African, Japan, Near eastern and more developed Latin accounting subculture are characterized by secrecy and conservatism.

4. Conclusion

The research can be summarized by both theoretical and applicative conclusions. The analysis of literature and consequent theoretical study proves that 1) although the

concept of culture is ambiguous, it can be operationalized and cultural dimensions can be measured quantitatively; 2) the quantitative assessment of culture can be used in accounting. Therefore the two hypotheses of the paper are found to be true.

The information provided by study of S. Gray's concept can be used especially during international cooperation, analysis of financial statements which come from different regions, dealing with local authorities responsible for accounting and its control, it can also be useful for accountants who plan their career overseas.

The accounting itself needs wider and more detailed specification of social norms and values. Moreover, the accountants as human beings should be analyzed as well in terms of their own norms and values, attitudes etc. Also, the relation between corporate (organizational) culture of companies and the accounting culture should be analyzed.

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