To what extent does culture influence management and organizations in Serbia?

Author: Melissa van Houten
University of Twente
P.O. Box 217, 7500AE Enschede
The Netherlands

ABSTRACT,

This research aims at understanding to what extent culture has an influence on management and organizations in Serbia. First existing literature was analyzed. After, the influence of Serbian culture with regard to three cultural dimensions was studied by gathering data through interviews with five Serbian managers. Analysis of the data in combination with the studied literature about the dimensions: Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity shows that culture has an influence on management and organizations. The cultural dimensions have different amounts of influence on managerial behavior. Not only culture has an influence but also one´s own characteristics are important factors.

Graduation Committee members:
first supervisor: Dr. Martin Stienstra
second supervisor: Dr. Barbara Kump

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The background

In today´s world globalization is becoming more and more important. Globalization has an extraordinary amount of power not only to business firms but also to governments and other institutions (Guedes, 2007). International trading and operations in other countries are increasing, leading to companies facing cultural differences (Ajami, 2014). As a result of globalization, international management is becoming more important, managers have to be able to deal with different cultures. International management represents managing across borders (Guedes, 2007). It is important that managers understand cultural differences. To manage in an effective way in other cultures, they have to understand the national culture in which they operate (Mohammed & White, 2008). The style of management is influenced by cultural values, when operating in a different culture this might have to change to avoid conflicts and achieve better results (Gunkel, 2016).

1.1.1 National culture

So culture influences the type of management, but what exactly is the concept of culture? Culture is a concept that is hard to define. Hofstede defined it as "a set of shared values, beliefs, and expected behaviors" (Hofstede, 1980). Culture has an important role in shaping individual and collective identity. Different cultures have different cultural expressions, these are shaped by the history and experiences of the county. Culture is important because it influences individuals' values, motives, and beliefs (Hayton, 2002).

When a culture of a group or organization is analysed, it is desirable to distinguish three levels: observable artifacts, values, and basic underlying assumptions (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). The reason for this is that culture is not simply one aspect but consists of different layers. The first layer is an observable artifact, this category is everything that you see when observing a culture. This can be the dress code, the way in which people address each other but also patterns. The second layer is values, these ensure that people behave in the ways they do. This is hard to observe directly, interviewing members or analyzing charters is necessary to understand them. The third layer is underlying assumptions, these are typically unconscious but actually determine how group members perceive, think, and feel (Spencer-Oatey, 2012).

Fons Trompenaars and Peter Prud'homme are other researchers who have done studies about culture and explored issues in corporate culture, with a focus on changing management across disparate cultures (Prud'homme, 2004). The GLOBE studies of Robert House have provided valuable insights for leaders around the world. They have studied sixty-two societies but Serbia was not one of them (House, Hanges, Javidan, & Dorfman, 2004). Serbia is a country where the author has a personal connection and therefore this country was chosen for this research. The insight of Hofstede his studies will be used for further study, because he studies Serbia.

Geert Hofstede has done research about differences in culture in fifty-six countries. In his study, he has developed the value perspective with five dimensions of culture. The dimensions are power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation (Traquandi, 2016).

1.1.2 Management

People used to believe that one size fits all, a good manager in America was expected to also be a good manager in another country. Newman and Nollen have done research on the fit between management and practices and national culture and concluded that a manager is better when the management practices are adapted to the national culture (Nollen, 1996).

A good manager must have a set of capabilities. They have to be a leader, give the team tasks, but also let them have freedom within these tasks. A good manager cares about their team and helps to improve their team's skills within the field. Furthermore, they have substantial knowledge so that good advice can be provided when necessary. A clear vision and strategy are known for the team and good communication is also important (Oud, sd). The way in which these tasks will be performed are different for every team. It is important that there are differences in management styles because every team has a different culture. When performing in different countries the national culture will also influence the managerial way, some values might be more important than they are in other cultures (Byrne & Bradley, 2007).

1.2 Research gap

Globalization and internationalization have increased in the last few years and can be seen as fundamental for today's society. National culture influences the organizational culture, when the national and organizational cultures fit well, the business performance will be better (Nedeljkovic, Vukonjanski, & Niko, 2018). For managers who perform in different countries, it can be hard to adjust. Because every country has its own informal

rules and organizational environment when business is done, these can be very different due to culture (Stoop, 2022). Therefore, it is important that businesses and managers are well aware of cultural differences when operating internationally.

Serbia is a country where little research has been done and especially not about how culture and management affect each other. When searching for articles related to management and culture, 2196 results were found, but when filtered further to include Serbia, only 11 results were left. To fill this research gap, this study will be done.

1.3 Research question

The aspiration of this research is to answer the following question:

To *what extent does culture influences management and organizations in Serbia?*

The answer to this question could help managers from another culture who will start performing in Serbia. It can help them to be better prepared in several aspects such as how to act within the business and how to communicate with other employees. If managers are better prepared for cultural differences, less misunderstandings will take place and better results could be achieved.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the key concepts of this study and relevant literature will be discussed. This involves a reviews of Geert Hofstede his studies about cultural dimensions and the tasks of managers.

2.1 Management

It is crucial that managers at all levels are aware of their roles and responsibilities in maintaining positive environments at work, this can increase employee work satisfaction (Kane-Urrabazo, 2006). The work satisfaction of employees is important because if they are content with their workplace the motivation and positive results will increase. As a manager one has to feature a set of skills, these skills can be learned and practiced. Those skills are necessary to manage and help people and to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of their work tasks. Robert Katz has identified three main categories which are essential to be an effective manager: technical, conceptual and interpersonal skills (Maurya, Sharma, & Kumar, 2017). Technical skills are the specialized knowledge, ability to analyze and the opportunities of the use of tools and techniques of a specific field, it is the skill to work with objects. Human skills are the opposite, it is the skill to work with people, one with high human skills really understands what others mean with their behaviors and try to motivate others. The conceptual skill means being able to see the different relationships in the environment and how these affect each other. This skill translates the knowledge of the technical and human skills into actions (Katz, 1974).

Gillen stated that Fayol in the year 1949 had developed the classical managerial functions which are: planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. These classical functions are still used to categorize the place of the broader modern functions (Gillen, 1987). The functions which managers fulfill in today's society are broader than before.

2.2 Hofstede

Geert Hofstede was an organizational psychologist who has done research on intercultural studies. He developed the five dimensions which are mentioned in the introduction. This research has been done through a large-scale study in fifty-six countries where IBM employees were interviewed. Research showed that different countries often faced the same problems, but had different ways of solving their problems. Based on this, Hofstede originally developed four explanatory cultural-related factors. Later a fifth factor was added (EURIB, 2023).

2.1.5 Research relevant dimensions

As interesting as all these dimensions are, it is not feasible to go further into depth with all of them. For this thesis, only three dimensions will be used due to the timeframe in which it takes place. The first dimension used is power distance. It is a very important topic for managers, every country has a different power distance in its culture so the hierarchy within the company might also be affected by this. In table one, one can see that the power distance is 82 in Serbia, which is considered high. The second dimension that is important for this study is uncertainty avoidance. This dimension has an influence on risk-taking and innovation which a manager has to do. Serbia has an uncertainty avoidance of 92. Which means that they do not like to take risks, this research will see if managers also do not like to take risks. This high uncertainty avoidance also stated that people from the Serbian culture do not like to get into abnormal and surprising situations. The third dimension is masculinity, which has a score of 43, this would suggest that the Serbian culture is more feminine than masculine. Also, earlier research has been done regarding cultural dimensions and management. Therefore these three dimensions were chosen (Oudenhoven, Mechelse, & de Dreu, 1998).

2.2.1 Power distance

The degree to which a society's citizens accept that power is unequally divided through institutions and organizations is known as the "power distance". Both the less powerful and the more powerful members of the group are impacted by this. In large power distance civilizations, people accept a hierarchical structure where everyone has a place that does not require any extra justification (Hofstede, 1984). They accept what people with more power have to say and do not contradict them. This can influence communication and decision-making processes because people with lower power distance do not want to express their opinions. Small power distance societies are characterized by a desire for power equality and a requirement for explanations of existing power disparities. This dimension's fundamental concern is how a society responds to human inequities when they arise. This has an impact on how institutions and organizations are created in cultures (Hofstede, 1984). This dimension is importance to be able to answer the research question because it influences the manner in which people act toward one another. Power and inequality are very basic facts in any society, people

with international experience might have noticed that "all societies are unequal, but some societies are more unequal than others." (Danielle, 2007).

2.2.2 Masculinity

The masculinity/femininity dimension can be defined as follows: "The dominant values in a masculine society are achievement and success; the dominant values in a feminine society are caring for others and quality of life." (Hofstede, 2010). In masculine societies performance and achievement are important, and achievement must be demonstrated. For example, status brands or products such as jewellery are important to show one's success. The roles of genders differ less in feminine societies and more in masculine societies. An example of this is that in feminine cultures the housework and work are more equally divided between genders, while in masculine cultures the woman does more housework and the man will work more (Hofstede M. d., 2010).

2.2.3 Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is the degree to which a society deals with uncertainty and vagueness. It indicates to what extent a culture feels comfortable or uncomfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are new, unknown, and different situations than normal. In uncertainty avoiding cultures, they try to minimize the possibility of the occurrence of an unstructured situation. They try to do this by setting strict rules and laws but also by setting safety and security measures. People living in these cultures are more emotional and motivated by inner nervous energies, they are anxious in unpredictable situations. People from uncertainty accepting cultures are more open-minded, they do not only believe that their opinions are true but also tolerate other opinions. They also prefer not to have too many rules and are not expected to express their emotions. They are more tolerant towards unpredictable situations (Hofstede, 2016).

The uncertainty avoidance or embracement in societies have an influence on management. In cultures with a high uncertainty avoidance, employees obey their manager, but expect them to show habitual behavior and not bring changes. When a leader does this anyway the trust in them will decrease, nevertheless the positive results of the change. The trust will be decreased because the leader placed the employees in an uncertain situation which they do not like (Hunt, 2005).

Doğar did research about the cultural perspective and how this influences leadership in the Balkan. Serbia is described separately and in the context of the Balkan as a whole. Serbia has a high uncertainty avoidance dimension, this prevents change in the country. A general characteristic of these societies is that they do not accept gradual changes and reject minor changes. They reject economic and political changes until they become mandatory (Doğar, 2021).

Due to the scores shown in table 1, the following hypotheses can be stated:

- The power distance score of Serbia is 82, therefore the expectation is that in the Serbian culture the hierarchy culture is high and that employees accept what their boss say without question.

- The masculinity in Serbia is expected to be average, a mix of masculine and feminine cultural values is expected.

- The uncertainty avoidance in Serbia is a score of 92, it is expected that within the Serbian culture people are risk averse and that they do not like situations which are unexpected.
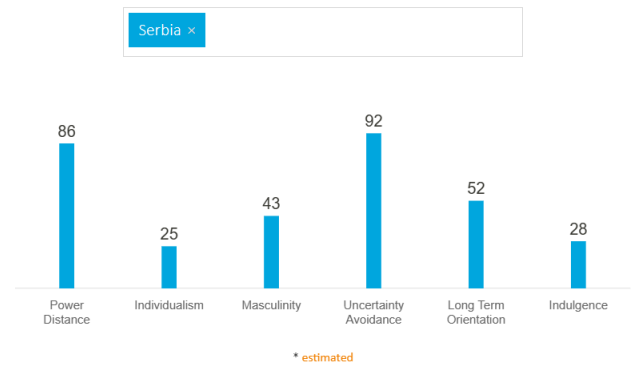

Figure 1. Serbia: based on Hofstede's Dimension.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

For this study, qualitative research will be done. The nature, strengths, and interactions of the variables can be understood better with this type of research (Black, 1994). Since the research question is about human behaviors is it important to understand the answers given by the people. Qualitative research allows people to give more in-depth answers to the questions which are asked.

3.2 Data collection

The data has been collected by interviewing five Serbian managers. In this research managers can be defined as people who know wat others have to do and influence them to act in that way (Mullins, 2010). Due to the short timeframe of this thesis, it was not feasible to interview more than five people. Managers born in Serbia from both genders were interviewed. It was important that they were born in Serbia and that their parents are both Serbian as well. This was important because they have to be raised in the Serbian culture with those values and norms in order to be able to investigate to what extent culture influences management in organizations. These managers could give a clear picture of how they lead people and what their company culture is.

In May Serbia was visited and several appointments for interviews were made. Private contacts were used to find managers who were willing to cooperate. Three of them were approached directly because they have a private connection to the author, the snowballing effect was used. Due to this effect the other two people were connected through one interviewee whom they know through work. This person exchanged contact information so that an interview could be arranged. Two

participants work in big firms and the other three work in smaller firms with less employees. Nevertheless, one of them has worked in a big firm before. A total of five interviewees participated to whom was explained what this research is about beforehand. The interviews took place online via Microsoft Teams.

3.3 Research instrument

The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. In this type of interview, not all questions are prepared. This was the best way to keep the interview spontaneous and allowed for opportunities to explore more about relevant topics (Pollock, 2023).

Out of five, three respondents gave their permission to record the interview, the audio of which were automatically transcribed. This made it easier to ask follow up questions during the interview.

3.3.2 Interview protocol

The interview consist of fourteen initial questions. First general questions were asked, such as age and education, later on in the interview more in-depth questions were asked. This structure was chosen to make the respondents feel comfortable. The interviews were taken in English but the Serbian translation of questions were also given to the interviewees to ensure that they understood the questions fully. In order to ensure the anonymity of the respondents, the names and companies of the interviewees will not be mentioned.

3.4 Data analysis

The data that came out of the interviews form the data set. This data set was analyzed using the thematic analysis. The analysis exists of six phases. The three main steps are: identifying, analyzing, and reporting. The first step was to get familiar with the data, this has been done by reading the data set. It is important to know the directions of the answers and to analyze the depth of the answers. The next step is analyzing the data. Sentences or parts of sentences which stood out and had potential importance for the research were noted and coded. After this, there was a search for overlapping themes in the codes. The themes were then categorized. The last step was to report the findings which will be done in this thesis (Braun, 2006).

3.5 Sample

In the beginning of the interview, the interviewees were asked for general information. These questions were like their age, education, and employee positions. The results are given in an overview in table 2.

	age	education	Employee position
interviewee 1	30	Economics unfinished	Chief of operations
interviewee 2	49	Economics	CEO
interviewee 3	37	VII -graduate economist	Purchasing manager
interviewee 4	47	VII -graduate economist	Commercial director
interviewee 5	55	High school	Development Manager

Table 2. Demographics interviewees.

4. RESULTS

In this section, the results of the five interviews will be presented. It will mention points of agreement and disagreements between the different participants. Outstanding answers that are of added value will also be discussed.

4.1 Interview results

4.1.1 Serbian culture in general

In the interview, several general cultural things were mentioned which are potentially important for this study. First of all, it is mentioned in several interviews that Serbian people have a strong work ethic. They are loyal to their boss and the boss to them. Interviewee two also partially agree with that but stated that there are two kinds of people in the Serbian culture, people who like to work and have finished high school, and people who do not like to work and did not finish high school. They also gave the example that a lot of young people are not willing to work for the normal salary in Serbia but expect to be paid the same amount as they would in Germany. They would rather leave and work in countries within the European Union where higher salaries are being paid. However, people from forty years and older are very motivated to work and have a strong work ethic. On the contradictory a younger participant stated that her generation is in general very motivated to work and willing to grow. But, they also mentioned that they have had experiences with young employees who were not motivated and did not care about their job. They had to motivate and talk with them in order to make them do their job.

The second subject that returned in multiple answers was that punctuality is very important in their fields of work. One participant said that punctuality and reliability are considered as important characteristics, another participant stated that everything is on time during their work.

The third reoccurring subject that came up during the interviews were personal connections and building networks with other colleagues which are crucial in the Serbian culture. These connections are formed by informal interactions and socializing outside office hours. Attending social events together or sharing meals can play a significant role in maintaining professional relationships.

The importance of friendliness of people returned multiple times. The Serbians were described as very friendly people. Interviewee five said, *"During the first meeting they will not be very friendly, the second meeting they will be, and on the third meeting they will invite you to their house to have dinner."* They can however be very temperamental during a conflict and shouting during an argument is nothing new.

The last subject that stood out was that a participant pointed out collectivism. Teamwork and collaboration are highly valued and decision-making may involve consultancy with colleges instead of relying on individual judgement only.

4.1.2 Power distance

On power distance, diverging answers were given. Interviewee three said, *"There is some degree of power distance between different employees, as can be expected in any organization. However, all employees have their respective tasks clearly defined so that it does not have any significant influence on the overall performance."* In contradiction, another interviewee said that a problem in private companies in Serbia is that, *"Everyone wants to do every job instead of focusing on a specific job."*

In all the interviews it became clear that the employees were allowed to speak freely and direct. Interviewee four said, *"I would define the distance as significant, they have the freedom to give their opinion but at the same time respect clear instructions."* The employees have respect for their managers but feel comfortable sharing problems if there are any or ask for help when needed. Interviewee five stated that the employees address them in a formal way but *"feel safe"* with them to speak their minds.

However a contractionary was also found as interviewee one stated that their employees do not always do what is expected from them. When they appeal to them about the fact that they do not do their job right, the employees think that they have the right to be angry at their manager. Another interviewee said that when giving feedback their employees listen to them, *"one sentence is enough."* The employee had listened to their feedback and the problem has never occurred from that day on. Interviewee five stated that they had never had problems with employees not listing to them.

Another important finding in the interviews is that managers might find challenges which arise due to the hierarchy and authority. They said *"Serbian culture tends to value hierarchical structures and respect for authority figures. A lot of managers may face challenges related to managing a hierarchical team where employees may be more deferential to authority. This can affect communication, decision-making processes, and the willingness of employees to express their opinions or challenge the status quo."* All five interviewees stated that power distance is important to a certain degree.

4.1.3 Uncertainty avoidance

Out of the five interviews, four stated that risk-taking is more of an influence than cultural influence. One stated that Serbia has gone through a lot of things like the Yugoslav war, economic crisis, and sanctions but that it survived everything. Therefore they said that the smart people in Serbia will take more risks due to this history.

Interviewee three mentioned that risk-taking had several factors influencing it. They agreed with the other interviewee's statement on the historical context with the experience of political and economic changes that could lead to more willingness for risk-taking. However, interviewee five stated the complete opposite and that due to these changes, Serbian citizens were less likely to take risks, she also stated that "*no one likes to take big risks.*" Interviewee two stated that it is more personal to take risks but personally thinks that it is important to take risks *"if you don't take risks, you won't achieve anything."* They also mentioned that they have experienced that people do not like to be responsible for tasks.

In addition, interviewee three mentioned that Serbia has a tradition of entrepreneurship and self-reliance. The culture values individual initiatives and resourcefulness, and due to this entrepreneurial spirit, risk-taking is more accepted and encouraged. The sense of identity and pride is another factor, Serbian citizens have a strong sense of national identity and cultural pride, which can encourage them to believe in their own capabilities and the willingness to take risks for successful achievements. The supportive environment created by social networks could also encourage people to take risks according to them.

The desire for a stable and secure life was mentioned during two interviews. One participant said that this desire may lead to individuals prioritizing work and maintaining a strong work ethic. Their emphasis on security and stability can result in a tendency to prioritize work over personal life. An example they mentioned was that longer working hours are not uncommon and that they take work-related responsibilities seriously to secure a stable income and future. This desire to avoid uncertainty can lead to an imbalance between work and personal life.

One interviewee appointed an interesting subject, they stated that private firms do not want to take on people from outside of the firm to help them manage problems in their company. She also mentioned that in corporate firms it is harder to achieve higher positions, the reason for this is that other senior managers have a big ego and are not willing to share their positions. They are afraid that the promotion of junior managers will affect them in a bad way therefore they rather not promote others.

4.1.4 Masculinity

Interviewee three stated that the Serbian culture exhibits a relatively high level of masculinity which could impact the work-life balance dynamics. This cultural dimension may place greater emphasis on work as a source of identity and accomplishment, potentially leading to a higher dedication to work and a lower emphasis on personal life. In three interviews it became clear that a lot of women work and that it is something of the past that women stayed home to be the caretakers and only run the households. Three woman said that they work and take care of the households. It also became clear that the men help in the house. It was said that *"men support women and women support men."* However, it was also said that men help although women do more in the household.

They all mentioned that women do work and have jobs. Two out of the five said that genders are equal in the field of work,

one of them said that this idea was formed during the time of President Tito. After the second world war Serbia became a socialistic state where women and men had equal rights. The other three participants answered that there is still gender inequality. One respondent said that men still have better positions and that she thinks that it is dominant and always will stay that way. On the other hand, they said that women can achieve top positions but they have to be very ambitious, good leaders and they must be very strong.

Another interviewee who disagreed on equality also said that gender plays a significant role in management positions in Serbia. Duo to Serbia's history, there has been a gender imbalance formed in leadership positions, with men occupying the majority of management roles. However, the situation is gradually evolving, and efforts are being made to promote gender equality and diversity in management.

Serbian society has traditional gender norms and expectations. These norms often assign women the role of caregivers and homemakers, while men are expected to be the primary breadwinners and decision-makers. These cultural expectations can create barriers and biases that hinder women's progress in managerial roles. Women often face challenges such as stereotypes, discrimination, and limited access to networks and opportunities. Additionally, traditional gender roles and societal expectations can lead to a lack of confidence and self-promotion among women, which may further hinder their advancement in management positions.

However, there have been positive developments in recent years. Efforts to promote gender equality and address gender imbalances in the workplace. Various organizations, both public and private, are implementing initiatives to support women's leadership and provide equal opportunities for career opportunities. All in all, all five participants said that men and women both work but three of them stated that the positions of men and women are still not equal. Men do however help with household tasks.

5. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of the study will be interpreted, explained, and compared to the existing literature. The main focus is on how the different cultural dimensions have an influence on management.

5.1 Data discussion

5.1.1 Serbian general culture

Although there was no literature available about this subject, several answers which came forward from the interviews are important. In the interviews, very different answers were given regarding the aspect of motivation in workers. Therefore it is not likely that this is culturally but instead personally influenced by the environment in which people grew up. The importance of punctuality and reliability was also discussed, this is important

due to the fact that not every culture values these aspects in the same way.

Building networks with personal connections was an outstanding subject during the interviews, it is seen as important in the Serbian culture. It is important because the managers need to maintain connections with partners outside of the normal office hours.

5.1.2 Power distance

As mentioned in the theoretical framework Serbia has a score of eighty-two on the power distance dimension. This suggests that people accept the hierarchical structure where every employee knows their place without further justification. This is not fully aligned with the results. In the interviews, a contradiction appeared, one person said that everyone wanted to do every job instead of focusing on one specific task, while the other said that their employees know their tasks since they are clearly defined. This is remarkable since Serbia is valued as a high power distance culture. The difference might appear due to the size of the companies. In the bigger firm, the tasks were more clearly and more specifically defined, therefore they knew their tasks and know where they stand. In bigger firms there might be more acceptation to power distance due to the structure. The fact that managers may have struggled with this hierarchical structure also appeared. The employees may be more polite to their authority which can have an effect on the communication, decision-making process, and willingness to express their opinions.

In the results, it became clear that when employees receive feedback they listen to the manager in most cases. They do not contradict their boss and they change their behavior according to the given feedback. This all points to a high power distance. In all the companies the employees had the freedom to speak and give their opinions. The managers all care for their employees and want them to be open and comfortable. Nevertheless, they still expect to be respected and that there is a certain distance between employee and manager.

5.1.3 Uncertainty avoidance

Serbian people are hard-working people, they desire to have a stable and secure life. This might have an influence on their working behavior and dedication to delivering good results towards their boss. It is not unusual that employees make extra office hours to achieve goals and deliver what is expected from them. This might occur due to fear of not performing well and ending up in an uncertain situation in which they might lose their job. This is aligned with the literature, Serbia has an uncertainty avoidance score of ninety-two which is seen as high. In the literature, a high uncertainty avoidance culture tends to have people who are more emotional. In the interview, it became clear that Serbians can have very emotional expressions.

Due to the high uncertainty score, it should be likely that Serbians do not like changes unless mandatory. However, due to the war, economic sanctions, and economic crisis they had to change. Several interviewees stated that due to these circumstances people are now willing to take risks. This is in contradiction with the literature. Nevertheless they also stated that risk-taking is more personal than cultural influenced.

5.1.4 Masculinity

Serbia has a dimension score of forty-three in Hofstede his masculinity dimension. This means that they are in-between a feminine and masculine culture. In the analyzed interviews it appeared that Serbians are hard workers and that this influences their work-life balance. This could be because they feel the need to accomplish certain things. If they work more, better things can be bought such as a more expensive car or more expensive jewelry. If this is their reasoning behind their behavior, this is aligned with the literature and Serbia is in this part a very masculine culture.

On the other hand, The literature stated that in a masculine culture, women are the caretakers and run the households and the men work more, and that in a feminine culture this is more equally divided. In the interviews, all respondents answered that women are also working and that men and women support each other. However it was also stated that men do help in the household but that women do more. Hence one could say that on this aspect Serbia is a more feminine culture.

Still, when looking at inequality between genders in multiple interviews, it became clear that men are the majority in higher positions. This might be due to the historical factors where men worked more and women stayed at home, which was the case in the past. Due to this, women could struggle to achieve higher management positions due to biases.

5.2 Practical implications

Managers who are working on an international level and want to gain more insight in how national culture has an influence on management and organizations can focus on a few aspects. First of all, the extent to which power distance is maintained is important. In high power distance cultures it is important that the manager is a strong leader who takes decisions. Secondly, the managers can expect their employees to be motivated and hard working in order to avoid the risk of uncertainty. They can expect them to perform their tasks as expected. However they can express themselves very emotionally so it is wise to stay calm and keep this fact in mind. Thirdly, the maintenance of networks outside work is important to achieve better connections and results within the work related cases. Additionally the punctuality is an important aspect for managers to maintain because Serbian culture values this a lot.

6. CONCLUSION

In summary, due to the preference of Serbian citizens who are partial to the hierarchical system, it has a lot of influence within the organizations. The structures within businesses are defined by this and in management the roles are clearly defined. Due to this the behavior of a manager should appeal to a hierarchical system and they should be strong and take the lead. The hypothesis: "The power distance score of Serbia is 82, therefore the expectation is that in the Serbian culture the hierarchy culture is high and that employees accept what their boss say without question." Can not be rejected.

Due to the high uncertainty avoidance, people work really hard and make extra working hours to achieve results. Therefore organizations will probably achieve the expected results as well.

Multiple interview participants stated that risk-taking is more personally influenced than culturally influenced. Therefore, it is assumable that the uncertainty avoidance dimension and culture are not a big influence on the risk-taking of managers. However, historical aspects will still have some influence on this. The hypothesis: "The uncertainty avoidance in Serbia is a score of 92, it is expected that within the Serbian culture people are risk averse and that they do not like situations which are unexpected." Can be rejected.

The masculinity of a culture has influence on organizations, the majority of top positions are still men. However, a process where more gender equality is supported has started in Serbia. Although in reality, women can still face struggles with management positions due to the biases which were formed by history. Therefore a woman in management should assert her dominance within a company more than men in order to prove themselves. The hypothesis: "The masculinity in Serbia is expected to be average, a mix of masculine and feminine cultural values is expected." Can not be rejected.

The general Serbian cultural aspects have a big influence on the behavior of managers, they should be punctual to be efficient. Collectivism is also an important topic, this cultural aspect is expected to have an effect on management decisions that are made in collaboration with others.

All in all, The power distance dimension can be seen as the most important influence when answering the research question. This influences the behavior of employees and managers in a significant way. The dimension which is of the least influence is the masculinity dimension, it became clear that woman and men both work and Serbia has an average score on this subject which is also seen in the interview results. In conclusion one could say that culture has a significant influence on management and organizations.

7. LIMITATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH

In this research, there were several limitations. Due to the limited time, the choice was made to only look further into three out of six dimensions of Hofstede. Hofstede's dimensions were formed in the seventies, therefore it might be questionable if the scores are still the same. Additionally, a lot of criticism has been expressed of Hofstede his research. Baskerville (2002) was one of them and she stated that Hofstede has never studied culture.

Due to the short timeframe, the sample size is very limited. Only five interviews were taken, four of them were women and only one male participated. Therefore unequal genders appeared. They were also all from central Serbia, which can lead to a bias.

This study can be used as a starting point for further research but it is advisable to repeat this study with a bigger more diverse sample size. To gain a better inside of the culture all the cultural dimensions should be included in the further study.

8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

9. REFERENCES

Ajami, R. A. (2014). *International Business: Theory and Practice.* New York.

Baskerville, R. F. (2002). *Hofstede never studied culture.*

Black, N. (1994). Why we need qualitative research. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 425-426.

Braun, V. a. (2006). *Using thematic analy-sis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology.* Retrieved from researchgate.net: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235356393_Using_thematic_analysis_in_psychology

Byrne, G., & Bradley, F. (2007). Culture's influence on leadership efficiency: How personal and national cultures affect leadership style. *Journal of Business Research*, 168–175.

Danielle. (2007). Mexican Geert Hofstede Cultural Dimensions Explained.

Doğar, N. (2021). A Cultural Perspective to Leadership Practices in Balkans. *international scientific journal*, 110-136.

EURIB. (2023, April). *De fijv cultuur demensies van Hofstede.* Retrieved from https://www.eurib.net/de-vijf-cultuurdimensies-van-hofstede/

Gillen, S. J. (1987). Are the Classical Management Functions Useful in Describing Managerial Work? *Academy of Management Review*, 38-51.

Guedes, A. L. (2007, August). Globalization and International Management: In Search of an Interdisciplinary Approach.

Gunkel, M. (2016). Cultural values, emotional intelligence, and conflict handling styles: A global study. *Journal of World Business*, 568-585.

Hayton, J. C. (2002). national Culture and Entrepreneurship: A Review of A Review of behavioral Research.

Hofstede. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work related values.* Newbury Park: Sage.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work related values.* Newbury park: Sage publication.

Hofstede, G. (1984). Cultural Dimensions In Management And Planning. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management.*

Hofstede, M. d. (2010). c 29(1), pp. 85–110 © 2010 Advertising Association Published by Warc, wwThe Hofstede model Applications to global branding and advertisingstrategy and research. *international journal of advertising.*

Hofstede, P. G. (2016, february). *The three classic schools for intercultural management.* Luciano Traquandi . Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/melis/Documents/IBA/buitenland/thesis/geert%20hofstede.pdf

House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., & Dorfman,, P. W. (2004). *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies.*

Hunt, J. Y. (2005). A Cross Cultural Perspective on Perceived Leadership Effectiveness. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management.*

Kane-Urrabazo, C. (2006). Management's role in shaping organizational culture. *journal of nursing management.*

Katz, R. (1974). *Skills of an Effective Administrator.* Harvard business review.

Maurya, D. D., Sharma, M., & Kumar, A. (2017). THE ROLE OF MANAGERIAL SKILLS IN SUCCESS OF AN ORGANIZATION. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT*, 12-14.

Mohammed, U. K., & White, G. R. (2008). Culture and Conflict Management Style of International Project Managers. *International Journal of Business and Management.*

Mullins, L. (2010). *Management and Organisational Behaviour.* Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited.

Nedeljkovic, M., Vukonjanski, J., & Niko, M. (2018). A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SERBIAN NATIONAL CULTURE AND NATIONAL CULTURES OF SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES BY GLOBE PROJECT APPROACH.

Nollen, K. L. (1996). Culture and Congruence: The Fit between Management Practices and National Culture. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 753-779.

Oud, N. (sd). *eigenschappen-goede-manager.* Opgehaald van nico.nl: https://nico.nl/eigenschappen-goede-manager

Oudenhoven, J. P., Mechelse, L., & de Dreu, C. K. (1998). *Managerial Conflict Management in Five European Countries: The Importance of Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Masculinity.* Groningen: University of Groningen.

Pollock, T. (2023, april). *The Difference Between Structured, Unstructured & Semi-Structured Interviews.* Retrieved from oliverparks: https://www.oliverparks.com/blog-news/the-difference-between-structured-unstructured-amp-semi-structured-interviews

Prud'homme, F. T. (2004). Managing Change Across Corporate Cultures. In F. T. Prud'homme, *Managing Change Across Corporate Cultures* (p. 314).

R. (n.d.). Skills of an Effective Administrator.

Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012). What is culture? A compilation of quotations.

Stoop, M. A. (2022, september 9). *dutch leadership culture*. Retrieved from https://humaninprogress.com/dutch-leadership-culture/

Traquandi, L. (2016, february). The three classic schools for intercultural management.

Appendix A- interview questions

1. How old are you?

2. What is your level and type of education?

3. What is your employee position?

4. How would you say the Serbian culture influences your behaviour at your workplace and your way of thinking?

5. How do employees approach and communicate with you when they need your help?

6. Do you feel a high or low power distance between different employees and can you explain why you feel this?

7. To what extend do you think that the Serbian culture has an influence towards risk-taking in management?

8. Do you think that there are cultural factors, such as uncertainty avoidance and the masculinity of a society, that influence the approach towards the work-life balance? If yes, which are they and can you give an example?

9. If a manager from another country would come to Serbia. What would you suggest they need to know about the Serbian culture? Please answer, if possible, only in one sentence.

10. If your employees receive feedback in what way is this given?

11. What role does gender play in management positions in Serbia? Are there any cultural influences affecting this?

12. How does the Serbian culture value and approach conflict resolution within organizational settings?

13. In your experience, what are some specific challenges that managers face in Serbia due to cultural influences?

14. Do you want to mention anything else?

1. Koliko imaš godina?

2. Koji je Vaš nivo i vrsta obrazovanja?

3. Koja je pozicija vašeg zaposlenog?

4. Kako biste rekli da srpska kultura utiče na vaše ponašanje na radnom mestu i način razmišljanja?

5. Kako zaposleni prilaze i komuniciraju sa vama kada im je potrebna vaša pomoć?

6. Da li osećate veliku ili nisku distancu moći između različitih zaposlenih i možete li da objasnite zašto to osećate?

7. U kojoj meri smatrate da srpska kultura ima uticaja na preuzimanje rizika u menadžmentu?

8. Da li mislite da postoje kulturni faktori, kao što su izbegavanje neizvesnosti i muškost društva, koji utiču na pristup ravnoteži između posla i privatnog života? Ako da, koji, i možete li navesti primer?

9. Kada bi u Srbiju došao menadžer iz druge zemlje. Šta biste mu/joj predložili da zna o srpskoj kulturi? Odgovorite, ako je moguće, samo u jednoj rečenici.

10. Ako vaši zaposleni dobijaju povratnu informaciju na koji način se to daje?

11. Kakvu ulogu rod igra na rukovodećim pozicijama u Srbiji? Da li postoje kulturni uticaji koji utiču na ovo?

12. Kako srpska kultura vrednuje i pristupa rešavanju konflikata u okviru organizacionog okruženja?

13. Po vašem iskustvu, koji su neki specifični izazovi sa kojima se menadžeri u Srbiji suočavaju zbog kulturnih uticaja?

14. Želite li još nešto da pomenete?

Appendix B - Quotes

Quote	interviewee	chapter
"The first meeting they will not be very friendly, the second meeting they will be, and on the third meeting they will invite you to their house to have dinner."	Interviewee 5	4.2
"There is some degree of power distance between different employees, as could be expected in any organization. However, all employees have their respective tasks clearly defined so that, in reality, it does not have any significant influence on the overall performance."	Interviewee 5	4.2.1
"I would define the distance as significant, they have the freedom to give their opinion but at the same time respect clear instructions."	Interviewee 4	4.2.1
"one sentence is enough."	Interviewee 2	4.2.1
"no one likes, to take big risks."	Interviewee 5	4.2.2
"if you don't take risks, you won't achieve anything."	Interviewee 2	4.2.2