RESEARCH ARTICLE

"F-M-C-G MATRIX" A TOOL FOR CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL TRAITS

*,1Manabhanjan Sahu and 2Dr. Jitendra Kumar Sahu

1Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities PMEC, Sitalapali & Research Scholar (B.U)
2Professor & HOD, Department of Mechanical. SMIT, DEC, Chandipadar

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	At present time we live in the era of global village, where the cultural dynamics affects the dissension making strategies of the corporates and the government. These dynamics are the byproduct of the cultural traits which are inherited by the people of a particular country or a geographic region. Hence the researchers in this paper try to establish a real-time relationship between the personal traits and associated culture of that country. This research is a descriptive study of two factor analysis theory based on secondary data availed from Geert Hofstede dimensions of national culture[i]. Inspired by him the matrix designed is based on the secondary data available from the different sources. The FMCG matrix tried to include the important traits of individuals which may assign a specific feature to that country. The matrix is composed of two major Traits, each of these traits are further divided in to two parts, which generates four major groups. These are (a) Shared values, which is analyzed under two cultural traits i.e. Masculinity (M) as strong cultural value for Work and Feminine (F) as Weak cultural value for work. And (b) Shared group Goals, which is also analyzed under two cultural traits i.e. Group goal (G) as Hard culture and self Centered (C) goals as Soft culture. These major groups are further divided in to twelve sub groups, and it ends with 24 treatments. As per the treatments each country can be reviewed and hence a specific strategy can be applied to get the best result from the population. The total numbers of countries taken for research are fifty, and each of those is assigned one of the above groups as per the personal traits. This is a conceptual research; the statistical tools used to analyze and differentiate the countries as per the individual traits of average people. This paper try to give a basic knowledge on present cross country dynamic of different countries, which may facilitate the Government, corporate and others to evaluate their strategies in specific to traits.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's business environment is increasingly multicultural. Successful organizations of any size often work with people and firms from other parts of the world, often with very different cultures. Culture has been defined in many ways, but it is principally viewed as the fundamental system of meanings shared by members of a specific society. That system of meanings is specific to a society and learned by its members over time. Different cultures will emphasize different values; what is important to one culture at one time may not be important to another culture or even to the first culture at some time in the future. These values may affect both the role institutions assume within society and what society expects of those institutions. Personal traits are influencing and influenced by the culture and culture varies from time to time, person to person and situation to situation. Along with the above understanding the culture differs geographically and

demographically. Speaking about geographical identification of culture, it is broadly defined as per the average personal traits of individuals in that geographical unit. Hence we can understand that, as different countries are geographically divided so the culture along with its traits varies to a large extent. In our study we are going to elaborate how the personal traits of the average individual give the country a separate identity on cultural background. The necessity of making this research paper is that, no single country is identical on its cultural traits with others. Hence there cannot be a single or solo strategy by the Government or Corporate while they go for a multi-country operation of business. This in turn says that the cross cultural analysis is highly essential while making a national strategy in international forum.

Objective of the study

Primary objectives

- To understand the value system of individuals and group towards the organizational goals

Corresponding author: Manabhanjan Sahu,
Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities PMEC, Sitalapali & Research Scholar (B.U)

- To establish a relationship between individual values and group values with organizational goals.
- To create a matrix table as per above traits and assign a symbol to each country.

Secondary objectives

- To understand, what are the hard and soft goals for an individual and group?
- To understand, what are the strong and weak values for an individual and group?
- To understand and explain the components of matrix table in brief.

Theoretical frame work

In the theoretical literature review, various key terms, issues and concepts are dealt with and explained.

Definition of organizational culture

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values. Culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and as conditioning elements of future action. (Kroeber and Kluckholn -1952) Culture is, "The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another. It is the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influences a human group's response to its environment." (Hofstede -1980) Hence we can define the corporate culture as "consists of norms, values and unwritten rules of conduct of an organization as well as management styles, priorities, belief and interpersonal behaviours that prevail. Together they create climate that influences how well people communicate, plan and make decisions" Organizational culture as the shared attitude and perceptions in an organization that are based on a set of fundamental norms and values and help members understand the organization. (Wagner III and Hollenbeck)

Types of organizational culture

Strong vs. Weak cultures

Organisational culture can be labeled as strong or weak based on sharedness of the core values among organisational members and the degree of commitment the members have to these core values. The higher the sharedness and commitment to the core values, the stronger the culture, increases the possibility of behaviour consistency amongst its members for performance and productivity. While weaker the sharedness and commitment to the core values, the weaker the culture, which reduces the possibility of behaviour consistency amongst its members for performance and productivity. Strong Culture exists when an organization's core values are both intensely held and widely shared. The greater the number of members who accept the core values and the greater their commitment to these values, the stronger the culture is.[ii] A strong culture creates an internal climate of high behavioral control and builds cohesiveness, loyalty, and organizational commitment.

In this case of Weak Culture, the organization's core values are not widely held or intensely felt. These cultures have little impact on member behavior. A weak culture opens avenues for each one of the members showing concerns unique to them and Strong cultures have a greater impact on employee behavior and are more directly related to reduce turnover.[iii]

Soft vs. hard culture

Soft work culture can emerge in an organisation where the organisation pursues multiple and conflicting goals. In a soft culture the employees choose to pursue a few objectives which serve personal or sectional interests. A typical example of soft culture can be found in a number of public sector organisations in India where the management feels constrained to take action against employees to maintain high productivity. The culture is welfare oriented; people are held accountable for their mistakes but are not rewarded for good performance. Consequently, the employees consider work to be less important than personal and social obligations. Sinha (1990) has presented a case study of a public sector fertilizer company which was established in an industrially backward rural area to promote employment generation and industrial activity. Under pressure from local communities and the government, the company succumbed to overstaffing, converting mechanized operations into manual operations, payment of overtime, and poor discipline. This resulted in huge financial losses (up to 60 percent of the capital) to the company.[iv]

Geert Hofstede

- Cultures vary in their underlying patterns of values and attitudes.[v] The way people think about such matters as achievement, wealth and material gain, risk and change, may influence how they approach work and their relationships with organizations.
- Hofstede (1980,1991), in order to find the common dimensions of culture across the countries, gathered data from surveys with 116,000 respondents working from IBM from more than 70 countries around the world.[vi]
- The framework developed by Geert Hofstede offers one approach for understanding how value differences across national cultures can influence human behavior at work. The five dimensions of national culture in his framework can be described as follows.[vii]

Power distance is the willingness of a culture to accept status and power differences among its members.

Uncertainty avoidance is the cultural tendency to be uncomfortable with uncertainty and risk in everyday life.

Individualism vs. Collectivism is the tendency of a culture's members to emphasize individual self-interests or group relationships. It is the tendency of a culture to emphasize individual versus group interests. It reflects the degree to which people are likely to prefer working as individuals or working together in groups. The United States is a highly individualistic culture, whereas Mexico is a more highly collectivist one.

Masculinity vs. Femininity is the degree to which a society values assertiveness or relationships. It is the tendency of a culture to value stereotypical masculine or feminine traits. It

reflects the degree to which organizations emphasize competition and assertiveness versus interpersonal sensitivity and concerns for relationships. This somewhat unfortunately-named category considers the differences in decision-making style. Hofstede linked what he called a "masculine" approach to a hard-edged, fact-based and aggressive style decision-making. By contrast, "feminine" decision-making involved a much greater degree of consultation and intuitive analysis.[viii] Japan is considered a very masculine culture, whereas Thailand is considered a more feminine culture. The first four dimensions in Hofstede's framework were identified in an extensive study of thousands of employees of a multinational corporation operating in more than 40 countries.[ix] The fifth dimension of long-term/short-term orientation was added from research conducted by cross-cultural psychologist Michael Bond and his colleagues using the Chinese Values Survey they developed.[x]

Research methodology

This research paper used a descriptive analysis of different personal traits which are useful to construct a matrix table. The matrix is a conceptual design of based on two major traits i.e. Value oriented traits and Goal oriented traits as the two dimensions. Further these traits are divided in to two sub groups on their excess and deficiencies. The interaction among these two components and further sub components gives four different combinations, which gives a basic concept to classify all the countries in four basis types. The detailed structure of the matrix is given below.

Picture: 1 (F-M-C-G matrix)
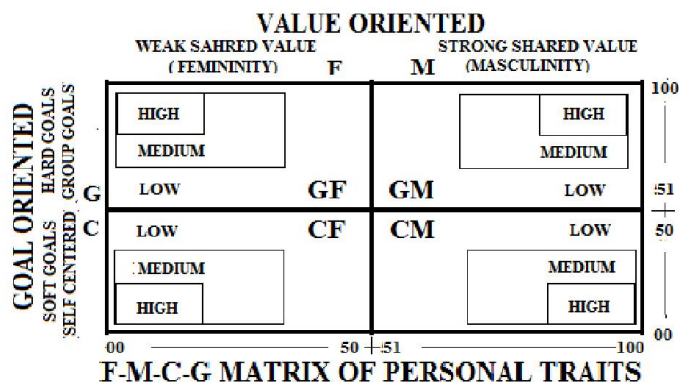
F-M-C-G MATRIX OF PERSONAL TRAITS
Source: by the author

The matrix given in the above Figure 1, is named as F-M-C-G matrix, the major components of the above matrix are based on the major personal traits which guides an individual how to behave in a particular situation. The basic components of this model are based on two types of traits. These are

(a) Value oriented traits and
(b) Goal oriented traits.

These are further divided in to two sub groups as per the extreme and excess.

The value oriented traits are further divided in to

(I) Feminine, expressed as **"F"** with weak shared values.
(II) Masculinity expressed as **"M"** with strong shared values

Also the Goal oriented traits are divided in to

(I) Centered (self) goal, expressed as **"C"** with soft goals
(II) Group goal, expressed as **"G"** with hard goals.

F: Feminine is a Weak shared value culture where there is a weak alignment with organisational values and control must be exercised though extensive procedures and bureaucracy.
**M:** Masculinity is a Strong shared value culture where there is a strong alignment with organisational values. Strong Culture is said to exist where staff respond to Stimulus because of their strong alignment to organisational values. I.e. Firms operate like a very well oiled machine.
C: Centered (Self/Individual) oriented goal is a Soft goal culture where the employees pursue their own personal goals and give less importance to the organisational goals.
G: Group oriented goal is a Hard goal culture where the employees consider more on Group l goal than of their own goals.

The score of FMCG matrix lies between zero (00) to hundred (100), where the soft goals and weak values lies between zero (00) to fifty (50). Beyond fifty (50) up to hundred (100) it is the range for hard goals and strong values. The above traits give four different types of combinations, which give a specific feature to each group. These are as follows.

a.CF (self Centered and Feminine): it is the cultural trait where the people believe neither in group goals nor in strong shared value. They are centered with weak shared cultural value.
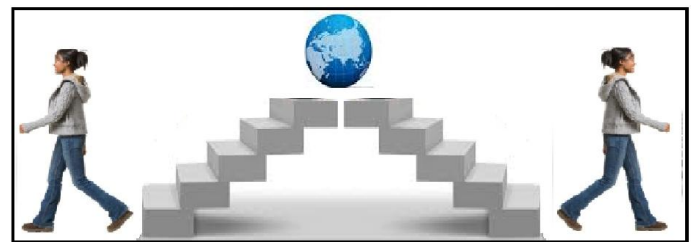

CF (self Centered and Feminine)
Source: by the author

Figure 2.

In this situation individuals are not interested in organization goals. The score of both the traits lies below the level of fifty on both the parameters of value orientation and goal orientation.

b.CM (self Centered and Masculinity): it is the cultural trait where the people don't believe in group goals but believe in strong shared Organizational value. Hence they feel individually they must achieve the desired organizational goal.
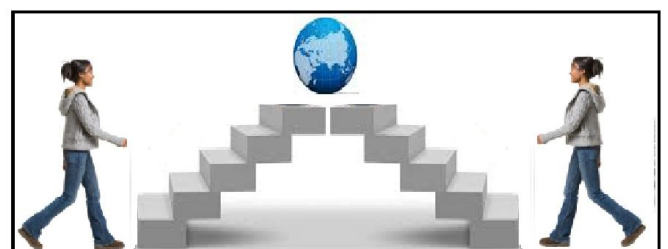
C M (self Centered and Masculinity
Source: by the author

Figure 3.

This is the situation may lead to a situation of interpersonal conflict, if they are not properly managed. The score of group goal lies below fifty but the score of Masculinity remain higher than fifty one.

c.GF (Group Goal oriented and Feminine): it is the cultural trait where the people believe in group goals but they don't believe in strong shared Organizational value. Hence they feel safe in remaining in group and perform as a group but the goals are not concentrated to organizational value system, rather to their individual goals.

GF (GROUP GOAL ORIENTED AND FEMININE)
Source: by the author

Figure 4.

This is the situation where they form unions to protect their own livelihood, this may lead to a situation of conflict of interest between personal and professional interest. The score of group goal lies above fifty one but the score of Masculinity remain lower than fifty.

d.GM (Group Goal oriented and Masculinity): it is the cultural trait where the people believe both in group goals and also in strong organizational shared value. They are highly organized and desire to achieve and align with organizational values.

GM (GROUP GOAL ORIENTED AND MASCULINITY
Source: by the author

Figure 5.

In this situation the whole group tries to achieve the organizational objective working with each other. The score of both the traits remain above the level of fifty one on both the parameters of value orientation and goal orientation.

The Affinity Index

Each block in the FMCG matrix represented are outcomes of different combinations of four different traits, which enables to create the differences among different countries an on basis of specific and distinct traits. This results in identifying and distinguishes the countries in four basic groups i.e. CF, CM, GF & GM. But practically the fact is that all the countries falls in a single group may be identical but not absolutely equal. So the question arises here is how to make differences among the countries fall under a specific group? Hence to resolve this

issue, each of the groups under the FMCG matrix is further divided into three distinct sub groups to measure the intensity of affinity of people towards the goals and values. These are expressed in terms of nominal value carried by each country.

The intensity of affinity of variables within each group is called as Affinity index, given as follows

Higher Affinity: Higher affinity says that greater the nominal values of the traits greater the affinity for that activity. **It** is the Excess value of a particular trait, e.g. 100, 99, 98 97 etc. in a Strong value and hard goals. And also values like 50, 49, 48 etc in weak values and soft goals.

Lower Affinity: lower affinity says that smaller the nominal value of the traits lower the affinity for that activity. It is the Deficiencies in values which are near to zero or fifty in weak and strong values or soft and hard goals respectively. E.g. 00, 1,2,3,4 etc, for Weak values and Soft goals, while 50, 49, 48, 47 for hard goals and strong values.

Medium Affinity: It lays an average between lower and higher values**. It** is also the golden mean between Excess and Deficiencies of values.
With the above treatment, the matrix gives basic 12 sub groups with 24 treatments. The detailed sub groups with its treatment are given below

CM: (C with either Higher, Lower or Medium affinity) + (M with either Higher, Lower or Medium affinity) gives total of six treatments. Hence total of Six sub groups.

CF: (C with either Higher, Lower or Medium affinity) + (F with either Higher, Lower or Medium affinity) gives total of six treatments. Hence total of Six sub groups.

GM: (G with either Higher, Lower or Medium affinity) + (M with either Higher, Lower or Medium affinity) gives total of six treatments. Hence total of Six sub groups.

CF: (G with either Higher, Lower or Medium affinity) + (F with either Higher, Lower or Medium affinity) gives total of six treatments. Hence total of Six sub groups.

The above data gives a total of 12 sub-groups with 24 treatments.

There is a great chance that the countries in border line may switch over between different traits from time period. This may led to the cross country switch over of traits. These countries shall be under the close look, because there are different external and internal factors which may affect and influence the individual traits of the people.

Implication of the study

As per the design of the FMCG matrix, now we can evaluate the countries on 24 different parameters as per the different traits. As per the score we can assign a status to the country. Once we came to know about the status of country as per the FMCG matrix, it will enable a government or corporate to make or modify for a perfect strategy. Because each country has its own dynamics we can understand the basic nature of traits possessed by the average people of that country and accordingly a cautious decision can be taken. This matrix

model can be used to make strategies at global and national level. Further if the relevant data can be collected at regional and local level, then it could have a practical implication in local and regional level strategy.

Case study

Table 1.

	Centered vs. Group orient	Masculinity v Femininity
Australia	90	61
China	20	66
UK	89	66
India	48	56
South Korea	18	39
Singapore	20	48
U.S.A.	91	62

Source: Geert Hofstede

From the above table 1shows the different points each country has got on the parameters of Individualism and masculinity. From this, we can take analyze the category of each country in specific to the treatments it got. We may start serially from top to bottom, hence Australia as the first case to study.

Australia carries value of Individualism 90 and Masculinity 61. Putting the above values in its proper place on FMCG matrix table, we will find that the country belongs to CM category on its first look. The further treatments give the sub groups, which say that the people of this country are having a high affinity for Individualism vs. group goals. This means that they believe that individually they can perform better than that in a group. On the parameters of masculinity it scores 61, this means people are value oriented and aggressive workers but don't score high on this parameter. In gross the personal traits says that people have higher level affinity for individual goals with a lower level affinity for masculinity.

China belongs to the GM category; the sub group says that people are having higher level affinity for group objectives and lower level affinity for masculinity.

UK belongs to the CM category like China; the sub group says that with higher level affinity for individual goals and a medium level affinity for masculinity.

India belongs to the GM category. Further, the sub group says that there is a very lower level affinity for group goals or objectives (52) along with very lower level affinity for masculinity (56). This says that the people prefer to work in an organization rather than as individuals. But the affinity is only 52 which says that only two points above the borderline case, hence the perception that people can perform batter in group may become controversial any point of time. Also it scores 56 on masculinity says that just 6 points above the borderlines contains a lots of inconsistency towards the affinity for value.

South Korea belongs to GF category, and the sub group presents that there is a higher affinity for Group goal, but individually they are with a lower affinity for femininity.

Singapore belongs to GF category, and the sub group presents that there is affinity for Group goal, but individually they are with average affinity for femininity..

USA, like that of China and UK belongs to the CM category, but the sub group presents that there is a higher level affinity for individual goals and a medium to lower level of affinity for masculinity.

Conclusion

The matrix designed is based on the secondary data available from the different sources. The FMCG matrix tried to include the important traits of individuals which may assign a specific feature to that country. The matrix is composed of two major Traits, each of these traits are further divided in to two parts, which generates four major groups. These major groups are further divided in to twelve sub groups, and it ends with 24 treatments. As per the treatments each country can be reviewed and hence a specific strategy can be applied to get the best result from the population.

Scope for further research

This is a conceptual research, which did not included mathematical or statistical treatment, hence in this ground this research can be further extended
This is an analysis on global prospective, this can be extended for local and regional strategy.

REFERENCES

[i]   Professor Geert Hofstede conducted one of the most comprehensive studies of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture. He defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others". The six dimensions of national culture are based on extensive research done by Professor Geert Hofstede.

[ii] Organisational Behaviour By Mirza S. Saiyadain, page-254.

[iii] http://study.com/academy/lesson/strong-vs-weak-organizational-cultures-examples-differences.html

[iv] Organizational Behavior by John R. Schermerhorn Jr., Mary Uhl-Bien, Richard N. Osborn, page number-226

[v]   Organizational Behavior by John R. Schermerhorn Jr., Mary Uhl-Bien, Richard N. Osborn, page number-225

[vi] https://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html

[vii] Hofstede, op. cit. 1980. Geert Hofstede and Michael H. Bond, "The Confucius Connection: From Culture Roots to Economic Growth," *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol. 16 (1988), pp. 4–21.

[viii] http://www.tutor2u.net/business/reference/hofstedes-national-cultures

[ix] Hofstede, op. cit. (1980).

[x]   Chinese Culture Connection, "Chinese Values and the Search for Culture-Free Dimensions of Culture," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, Vol. 18 (1987), pp. 143–164.

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