
Cultus

THE JOURNAL OF INTERCULTURAL
MEDIATION AND COMMUNICATION

TRAINING FOR A TRANSCULTURAL WORLD
2012, Volume 5

ICONESOFTE EDIZIONI - GRUPPO EUROSAN ITALIA
BOLOGNA - ITALY

Registrazione al Tribunale di Terni
n. 11 del 24.09.2007

Direttore Responsabile Agostino Quero
Editore Iconesoft Edizioni - Gruppo Eurosan Italia

Anno 2012

ISSN 2035-3111

Policy: double-blind peer review

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via Persicetana Vecchia 26 – 40132 Bologna

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the Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication

TRAINING FOR A TRANSCULTURAL WORLD

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Foreword

This issue asked for contributions focussing on research, models, strategies, and also practical exercises which either break new ground on classic linguacultural divides, or are able to reach beyond static, stereotypical 'cultural differences' and make some headway in improving communication and mutual understanding in an increasingly transcultural and virtual world. As we had such a response, boosted through the active contribution of SIETAR Europe papers given at Krakow "Interculturalism Ahead: Transition to a Virtual World?" (September 2011), instead of our usual 5-6 papers we have 10 but, sadly perhaps, no interview this year.

The first papers in this issue offer specific frameworks or models, all of which move us on from the static cultural-difference models, and chart how the transcultural turn is developing; while those on university training and translation give us a stark reality check. Though there is some light, and much investment in training, especially through foreign study, the picture regarding student perception of the training and of 'the Other', along with actual professional translation highlights the fact that there is still some way to go before we can talk of a real 'transcultural turn' in practice.

We hear much about EU supported initiatives in education and training. In particular there is FREPA a Council of Europe 'Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures' (Daryai-Hansen & Schröder-Sura) and INCA, the "Intercultural Competence Assessment" suite of tools (Cano). From the business world we have a fusion of cultural dimensions with the Reiss Life motives (Konigorski), rhizomatic (rather than tree diagram thinking) embodied in the analogy with the Mobius strip (Hale); WorldWork's 'International Profiler' (IP) and International Preference indicator' (IPI) (Ewington & Hill) along with a more communication focussed enhancement (Spencer-Oatey and Stadler).

Areas of perception of cultural difference include a German-American study of Facebook (Reeves), the intercultural benefits of EU supported 'Applied Language Europe' (ALE) European university study exchange

(Morón-Martín) and the 'Mobility in Higher Education' project (Cano). With regard specifically to translation and transculturality there is a discussion on the use of corpora and travel insurance texts (Peruzzo and Durán-Muñoz) and a case study on the translation of film titles.

David Katan
Cinzia Spinzi

Motivation in Multicultural Settings – Using the Synergy between Cultural Dimensions and the Reiss Profile

Susanne Konigorski

Abstract

In the light of international trends towards globalization, and the individualization and feminization of societies, new challenges are arising for managers, consultants and teaching personnel: the effective motivation and leadership of multicultural teams, as well as the preparation of students and expatriates for international careers.

Participating in multicultural teams requires a wide individual and intercultural awareness.

Hall, Hofstede, Trompenaars, the GLOBE project and others have identified and validated several behavioral ‘cultural dimensions’. Their models and country ‘scores’ are generalizations of culture-determined behavioral patterns based on large international databases. These models are useful in determining and understanding the various interactions between people from different countries and cultures.

However, these categories may fall short when dealing with individuals who have been exposed to more than one cultural environment, through extensive travel, study or work abroad, or who are bicultural by birth.

Here, the Reiss Profile comes into play. Reiss developed a scientifically substantiated tool to analyze and visualize individual drivers and motivational patterns, composed of sixteen ‘life motives or basic desires’. They are: power, independence, curiosity, acceptance, order, saving, honor, idealism, social contact, family, status, vengeance, romance, eating, physical activity, tranquility.

This study is a first attempt to derive a meaningful correlation between ‘cultural dimensions’ and individual motivational profiles. Combining knowledge and data derived from both approaches – as presented in this study – can support leadership to raise motivation and thus tap into the innovative and creative potential of multicultural teams. It can also facilitate effective and efficient training of expatriates as well as aiding vocational decision-making.

1. Introduction

The preparation and support of individuals to facilitate their work in multicultural settings is becoming increasingly important, indeed inevitable. Why do we waste time with foreseeable or even avoidable cultural misunderstandings that demotivate and drain energy and resources? Hence, using the innovative and creative potential of multicultural teams is becoming a necessity.

In most industrialized countries of the so-called old world, the population is shrinking, ageing and simultaneously diversifying. Increasingly, women are being recruited into middle and senior management, repatriates and other employees from diverse cultural backgrounds are entering the workforce, and the experience and knowledge of employees of retirement age are being sought. Other groups that have been excluded for various reasons, e.g. the disabled, are being reintegrated. These trends are in part due to globalization, skills shortage and the “brain drain”.

Team leaders, HR personnel, mediators, coaches and other communication specialists are helping to empower heterogeneous groups of people to work together more effectively, thereby avoiding friction in the work environment. The issues that have to be addressed are

- Motivating students and employees in a multicultural work environment
- Preparing expatriates for their foreign assignment considering their individual motivational pattern in context with the cultural environment of the host country
- Exploring and solving causes of misunderstandings, frustration and conflicts in multicultural teams – ideally, preventing issues from becoming obstacles to efficient working.

In this study, I have merged two scientifically proven approaches with the intention to combine the knowledge and expertise of experts in the fields of motivational and intercultural science. I have developed a simple, useful tool to visualize an individual’s motivational pattern (Reiss Profile) in context with *cultural dimensions* (Hall 1976, Hofstede 1980, Trompenaars, House et al. 2007, House & Hanges et al. 2004). It is my hope that this approach will be an asset in consulting, training, mediation and coaching.

2. The impact of culture on motivational systems and process

What moves people “to act under certain situational conditions, and why do they pursue their activities with a certain intensity for a certain period of time”? (Heckhausen 1977).

Two motivational systems appear to be at work:

- Firstly, implicit motivation, reflecting our biological heritage as shaped by evolutionary forces and represented by biologically based and emotionally saturated implicit motives (e.g. Hofer & Bond 2008: 102). In motivational analysis these implicit motives are called *life motives* or *basic desires*, e.g. acceptance (Reiss 2008: 4).
- Secondly, the explicit motivation that evolves later in ontogeny when cognitive structures have developed further. As soon as children have acquired language mastery, they are able to grasp the significance of linguistic information, and to organize its meaning (e.g. Hofer & Bond 2008: 100; McClelland & Pilon 1983). “More complex learning mechanisms less saturated with emotions allow the taking into account of immediate environmental pressures, demands, incentives, and expectations.” (e.g. Hofer & Bond 2008: 100).

People all over the world seem to be motivated by the same sixteen *basic desires*, although “cultural peculiarities” may channel motivational realization in a culturally appropriate way (Reiss 2008: 5; Hofer & Bond 2008: 101).

Most experts in the field agree that both motivational systems are affected by cultural context (e.g. Smith, Bond & et al. 2006). The explicit system seems to be more influenced by cultural conditioning and likely to be shared by most members of a given ethnic or social group. (e.g. Phalet & Lens 1995). This goes hand in hand with Hofstede’s defining culture as “collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes one group from another” (Hofstede 1980).

Motivation can be defined as reasons for acting in a particular way. To analyze motivation in complex multicultural life situations, we propose to use and adapt the “Expanded Cognitive Motivation Model” established by Heckhausen & Rheinberg (1980). According to this model motivation is a product of person (needs, implicit and explicit motives) and situation (intrinsic and extrinsic incentives or threats). *A person gets into a situation;*

the personal *perception* of the situation leads into particular *behavior/action*, anticipated *results*, and anticipated *consequences*.

Cultural influences all six elements of the process: person – situation – perception – action/behavior – results – consequences. We perceive a situation through our cultural glasses; we (re)act within the framework of our cultural heritage and upbringing. The cultural context influences the results and our perception of the results as well as the consequences, as shown in Figure 1.

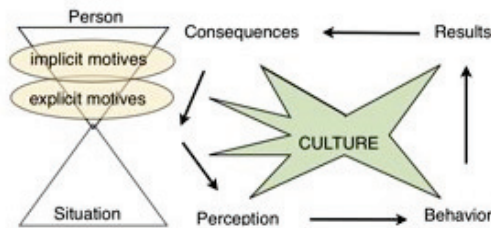


Figure 1. Culture influences the motivational systems as well as the elements of the motivation process. (based on Heckhausen & Heckhausen 2008: 3; adapted and expanded by Konigorski)

3. Cultural dimensions can be related to basic desires

In order to visualize similarities and relevant differences between the cultural preferences of a country and the motivational pattern of an individual, I developed the following tool. By matching and correlating *cultural dimensions* with Reiss' individual *basic desires* and transferring the data into the Reiss Profile format, I created a series of *country profiles*.

3.1. Concept of cultural dimensions

Intercultural scholars developed the concept of *cultural dimensions* in order to define quantifiable aspects of culture. Analysis of ethnographic observation along with small scale experiments (Hall 1976; 1983) and large databases (Hofstede 1980, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2007, House et al. 2004) enabled them to identify key areas that affect all cultures – e.g. allocation of power and status in societies, relationships between groups and individuals, dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity, attitude to time

and space. *Cultural dimensions* help explain the values of a particular culture and how they affect the workplace, organization and ‘mainstream’ social behavior, but have little to offer at an individual level.

3.2. Individual *life motives*

Analyzing individual motivation, Reiss defined and validated (Reiss & Havercamp 1998) sixteen intrinsic *life motives* or *basic desires* that “drive the human psyche and potentially explain a wide range of human behavior” (Reiss 2000). These individually, intrinsically held values are ordered along continua of varying intensities and visualized in the Reiss Profile – which demonstrates our personal motivational pattern (Reiss 2008: 6). To obtain a Reiss Motivational Profile, there is an online questionnaire. Answers are processed by computer, and then a Reiss Profile Master will discuss the results together with the client.

Here follows the matching of seven *life motives* from the Reiss Profile with *cultural dimensions* used by Hall, Hofstede, Trompenaars, and the GLOBE team. (The following *basic desires* or *life motives* of the Reiss Profile can not yet be matched or correlated to *cultural dimensions* – “curiosity, social contact, status, savings”, neither the more private *life motives* – “family, romance, eating, physical activity”.)

<i>life motives</i>	<i>cultural dimensions</i>			
	Reiss	Hofstede	Trompenaars	GLOBE (House et al.)
independence		individualism / collectivism	individualism / communitarianism	
acceptance				in-group collectivism II
honor			universalism / particularism	
idealism				humane orientation assertiveness
vengeance, competition		Masculinity / Femininity		
tranquility		uncertainty avoidance		uncertainty avoidance

Table 1. Matching of *cultural dimensions* and individual *basic desires, life motives*

<p>Independence (Reiss 2008: 45)</p>	<p>Individualism vs. Collectivism (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 76)</p>	<p>Individualism vs. Communitarianism (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2007)</p>
<p>“Independence is the universal desire for self-reliance. [...] Your desire for independence motivates your attitude toward individuality.”</p>	<p>In “individualism [...] ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family.”</p>	<p>“Individualism is about the rights of the individual. It seeks to let each person grow or fail on their own, and sees group-focus as denuding the individual of [...] rights.”</p>
<p>Acceptance (Reiss 2008: 40)</p>	<p>In-Group Collectivism II (House et al. 2004: 30)</p>	
<p>“Acceptance is the universal desire not to be criticized and rejected. [...] Adolescents and adults want to be accepted by people they care about apart from any extrinsic benefits”</p>	<p>“The degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.”</p>	
<p>Order (Reiss 2008: 46)</p>	<p>Monochronic vs. Polychronic (Hall 1983)</p>	
<p>“Order is the desire for structured and stable environments. [...] The desire for order motivates you to plan, schedule, and organize.”</p>	<p>“Monochronic cultures like to do just one thing at a time and value orderliness. They do not value interruptions [...] doing one thing at a time. It assumes careful planning and scheduling”</p>	
<p>Honor (Reiss 2008: 43)</p>	<p>Universalism vs. Particularism (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2007)</p>	
<p>“Honor is the desire to behave morally. Honor is primarily about embracing traditional codes of conduct. ... Honor motivates your loyalty to your parents and clan. [...] It motivates you to be honest, loyal, trustworthy, and responsible.”</p>	<p>“Universalism is about finding broad and general rules. When no rules fit, it finds the best rule. Particularism is about finding exceptions. When no rules fit, it judges the case on its own merits, rather than trying to force-fit an existing rule.”</p>	
<p>Idealism (Reiss 2008: 44)</p>	<p>Humane Orientation (House et al. 2004: 30)</p>	

“Idealism is the desire to improve society. [...] Idealism motivates you [...] to have compassion for unfortunate people you do not know.”	“The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others.”	
Vengeance (Reiss 2008: 54)	Masculinity vs. Femininity (Hofstede 2004)	Assertiveness (House et al. 2004: 30)
“Vengeance is the desire to get even with people who frustrate or offend us. [...] Competitive people are not necessarily physically aggressive, but they are quick to confront others [...] and value winning.”	A high score on masculinity “indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the winner / best in field.”	“The degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationship with others.”
Tranquility (Reiss 2008: 53)	Uncertainty Avoidance (Hofstede 2004: 167)	Uncertainty Avoidance (House et al. 2004: 30)
“Tranquility is the desire to avoid experiencing anxiety or pain. [...] This desire influences your attitudes toward safety, danger, adventure, and possibly financial risk.”	“Uncertainty Avoidance [...] can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations.”	“The extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events.”

Table 2. Definitions of matching *cultural dimensions* and *life motives*

I converted the quantitative data of the matching *cultural dimensions*, and transferred them into the Reiss Profile system, and thus established *country profiles*.

Hall’s descriptions of ‘monochronic’ and ‘polychronic’ cultures match well with the Reiss *life motive* “order”. He related these cultural preferences to certain countries and regions; however, he did not publish numerical data on his findings. Hence, his cultural characterizations were used in coaching but not for calculating the *country profiles*; summarized in tables 1 and 2.

3.3 “Power” and “Power Distance”

The dimensions *life motive* “power” (Reiss: 2000) and *cultural dimension* “power distance” as defined by Hofstede and House et. al. – as shown in

table 3 – cannot be matched directly, though I would suggest a correlation. These dimensions were considered during coaching but not included in calculating *country profiles*.

Power (Reiss, 2008: 47)	Power Distance (Hofstede, 2005: 46)	Power Distance (House et al., 2004: 30)
“Power is the universal desire for self-assertion (influence of will). [...] Power drives achievement motivation, willpower, determination, and leadership [...] and how hard you are willing to work to get ahead.”	“The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.”	“The degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equally.”

Table 3. Correlation of *cultural dimension* and individual *basic desire*

4. Applications and implications

4.1. Intercultural coaching to assist in making career choices

Jenny, age 17, asked for vocational guidance after her parents (US-American and German) had pushed her to study in the US in order to set the stage for a business career in the US. However, as a teenager she had become very interested in Asia. Consequently, she started studying Asian languages and realized that she had a different view of her professional future. She wanted to live and work in Korea. How to convince her parents?

Reviewing her Reiss Profile in relation to the *country profiles* of Korea and China, we are not surprised to find a good match: Jenny is not really interested in independence, instead she prefers to be with other people (“social contact” high), and she wants to be the same as everyone else, avoiding standing out (“status” low). These motives are highly valued in collectivistic societies such as in most Asian countries (see figure 2).

In contrast to her parental countries, USA and Germany, her “independence” score is noticeably low. Furthermore, Jenny tolerates much more flexibility (“honor” low). She does not think in terms of right

or wrong (“honor” high) as most US-Americans; she prefers to consider concomitant circumstances; “it depends” (“honor” low). Acclimatization should not be a problem for her as she scores low in her need for “tranquility”, she bears up well against uncertainty.

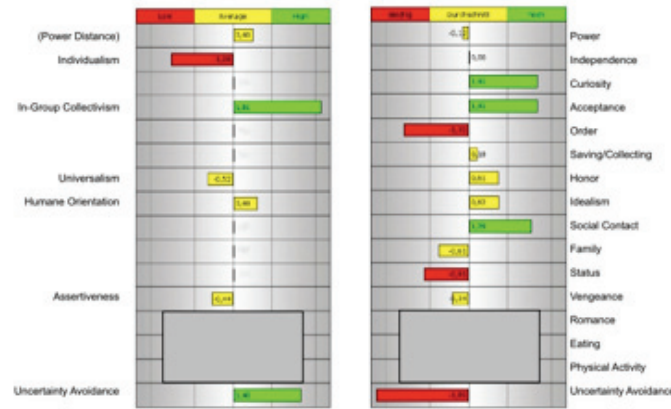
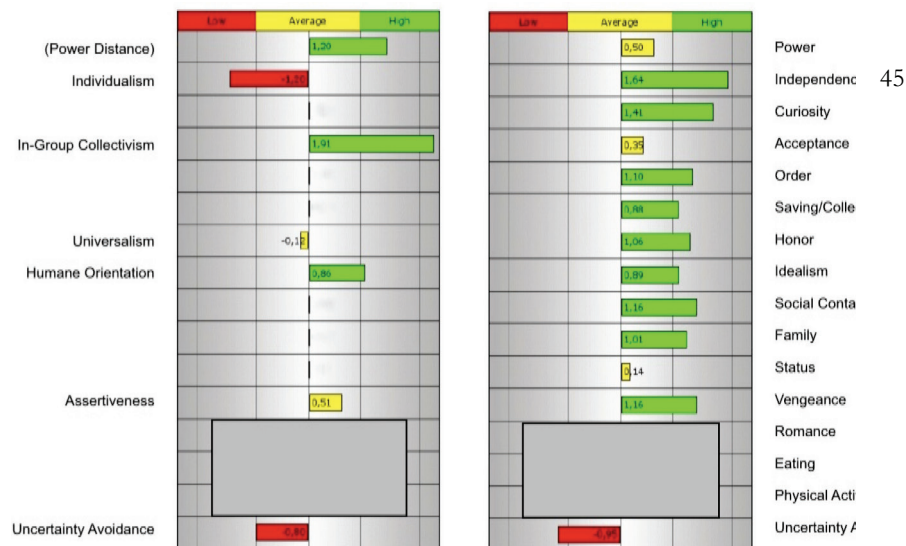


Figure 2. Country profile Korea (left) and Reiss Profile Jenny (right)

4.2. Intercultural coaching for expatriates

In the course of preparing Tom, a German engineer born in Poland, for his secondment in China, his Reiss Profile was established. He scored high in “independence” and “vengeance”. China is a “collectivistic” country and has a high “power distance” index; managers have to know their place in the hierarchical order and adjust their behavior accordingly (see figure 3). As leader of his own development team in China Tom is expected to be a directive strong leader and undisputed expert in his field. Though, when dealing with customers or colleagues on the same hierarchical level, Tom should not stand out as an individual.



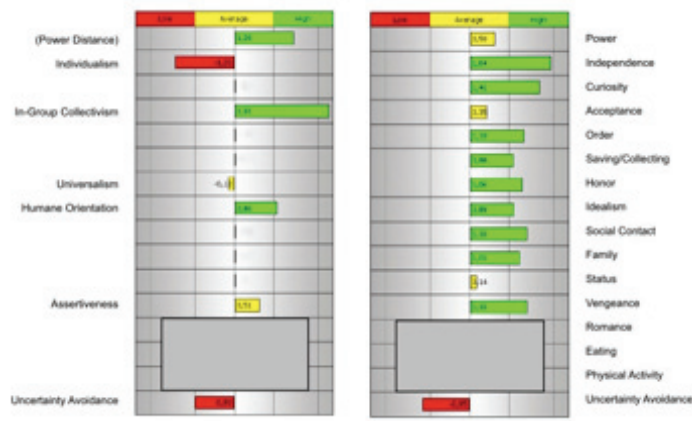


Figure 3. *Country profile* China (left) and *Reiss Profile* Tom (right)

By raising Tom’s awareness of these significant differences we could anticipate and prevent potential intercultural problems in his future Asian work environment.

4.3. Leadership in multicultural teams

A US-American, Betty, with Russian and German roots is based at the German headquarters of an international IT company in Frankfurt. She is a newly appointed leader of a multicultural team including virtual team members in other European countries. After their first week of face-to-face meetings in Germany she asked for advice – after having run into problems with team members from Slovakia.

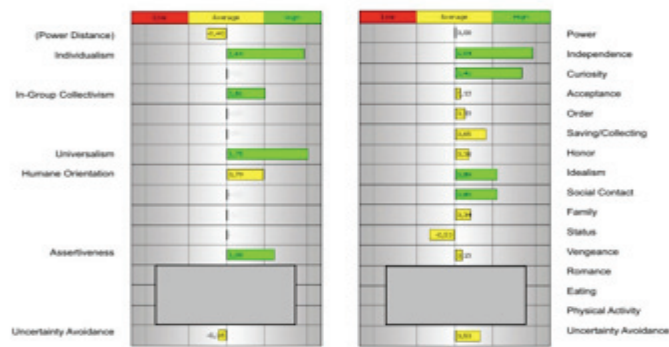


Figure 4. *Country profile* U.S.A. (left) and *Reiss Profile* Betty (right)

In Betty's personal Reiss Profile (see figure 4) we find two life motives that tend to interfere with each other if both score high – “independence” and “social contact”. On the one hand, Betty seeks and enjoys social interaction; on the other hand, she needs and defends her independence, both on-the-job and in private.

Like Betty, the majority of US-Americans score high in “independence”, they prefer flat hierarchies (“power distance” low) and appreciate an egalitarian work environment. Female team leaders are common in the U.S.A.; diverse leadership styles are widely accepted.

Apart from “independence high” some of Betty's internal drivers in her Reiss Profile differ from mainstream US-American values. For instance, while exhibiting a tendency to perfectionism, she is not interested in competition and winning, thriving instead on harmony (“vengeance” low). According to Hofstede's research on “masculinity” and the GLOBE work on “assertiveness”, most of her US-American fellow countrymen prefer competitive environments.

Slovakia, on the contrary, is a collectivistic society, organized hierarchically, with an extremely high “power distance” index. Moreover, it scores very high in “masculinity” – matching with a high score in “vengeance” in the Reiss Profile – indicating that the Slovakian society is driven by competition, achievement, success and winning. The less powerful members of these societies and organizations expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. From their boss the Slovakian team members expect clear guidance, directive or authoritarian decision-making and competitive spirit – and a certain distance related to hierarchical status.

Betty was unaware of those hidden *cultural dimensions*. During their face-to-face training week in Frankfurt she had suggested socializing after work, sharing beers and pizza. The young male Slovakian team members felt uncomfortable with such close contact and hence minimized direct contact with Betty over the remaining days in the office. All parties seemed relieved when the Slovakian employees finished their training week in the headquarters and resumed working as a virtual team out of their local office in Slovakia. From that time on they had trouble accepting Betty as their leader.

In order to raise team motivation and performance, Betty needed to find ways to reestablish the power distance. During the subsequent coaching process we raised Betty's awareness of cultural and individual preferences in her own life and in her team. A team leader acting in “high

power distance” settings should strictly draw the line between work and personal life and minimize talking or asking about private issues. Furthermore, it proved beneficial to clearly delegate tasks and responsibilities with set timeframes – for the blame or the glory – to compliment team members on achievements or give constructive criticism where appropriate.

Through the application of the Reiss Motivational Profile and developed insights into her own individual and cultural background, Betty has been empowered to foster improved team relationships, better results and greater motivation towards the communal project.

5. Summary and Conclusion

In multicultural settings it proved to be valuable to reflect individual motivational drivers in context with ‘mainstream’ cultural preferences. To anticipate intercultural problems, this broader view may even become a necessity when people move into a different cultural context, e.g. as expatriates.

Multicultural teamwork may also benefit from integrating individual and cultural values. Team leaders will be enabled to adapt their communication and leadership style to address individual needs in the light of cultural context (personal background, company headquarters, local offices, etc.). This strategy may result in raised motivation (Brand & Ion 2009) and increased team performance. It could also help team leaders to tap into the innovative and creative potential of multicultural teams.

This study is a first attempt to derive a meaningful correlation between *cultural dimensions* and individual *life motives* and to visualize the data in a single format. The combined tool proved to be valuable for leadership and communication issues, as well as for decision-making processes in coaching, training and mentoring. Furthermore, the synergetic potential of the described approach has already demonstrated itself as an asset to the training of expatriates.

The examples given in this article represent only a small taste of the wide range of applications for which this new tool could be used.

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