

Финал рассказа формально открыт: автор не говорит прямо, останутся ли герои дома. При этом именно мифологема дома позволяет нам понять, что разрыв с семьей, с традицией, со своей культурой является для молодого поколения японцев окончательным: они отказываются «пить» из колодца, который служил источником семейных преданий, не узнают на фото мать, которая слилась с чернотой, превратилась в призрак, не понимают отца, видят только поверхностные, «западные» смыслы происходящего, а дом для них ассоциируется с пустотой. Исигуро не морализирует, не утверждает, что это плохо, а скорее показывает нам неминуемый ход вещей, разницу двух культур и двух миров, выраженную в конфликте двух поколений. Настораживает только намек на фатальность такого хода вещей.

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*T. N. Persikova (Moscow, Russia)*  
*Diplomatic Academy of Russia's Foreign Ministry*

## **Intercultural Communication: Interaction Between National and Corporate Cultures**

В статье рассматривается взаимодействие между национальной и корпоративной культурой. Автором охарактеризованы различные подходы к умению справляться с культурным разнообразием, отмечаются некоторые неожиданные тенденции во взаимодействии

между национальной и корпоративной культурой. Объясняя, как организовать успешное взаимодействие между ними, автор ссылается на 10 положений, сформулированных Ф. Харрисом, Р. Мораном и С. Моран.

**Ключевые слова:** межкультурная коммуникация; национальная культура; корпоративная культура; синергия; приоритет

The article looks into interaction between national and corporate cultures. The author first speaks about different approaches to the management of cultural diversity and then notes some surprising trends in interaction between national and corporate cultures. Explaining how to promote successful interaction between corporate and national cultures, the author refers to ten concepts for successful global performance suggested by P. Harris, R. Moran, and S. Moran.

**Keywords:** intercultural communication; national culture; corporate culture; synergy; take precedence

The era of globalization in which we live today makes it impossible to imagine our life without intercultural communication. We work for transnational corporations, cooperate with our foreign partners, join international professional organizations, combat global problems together or just travel abroad. Within the international business environment, activities such as exchanging information and ideas, decision-making, negotiating, motivating and leading are all based on the ability of specialists from one culture to communicate successfully with professionals from other cultures. The development of this ability should become a part and parcel of educational programmes in business and economics, and a significant role in them can be played by ESP/BE courses.

When we speak about intercultural communication, we mainly mean interaction between different nations or countries or their representatives. We often forget about various subcultures that coexist within a certain national culture – gender, professional, business, organisational and others. The phenomenon of corporate or organisational culture has given rise to much interesting research. It is viewed either as a subculture within a national culture, or as a complex combination of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and methods of management that exists today in international organizations in the world of politics, business, education, medicine, etc.

When people from more than one culture work together, they interact regularly and they face the same questions. Do national cultural differences affect a multinational organisation? Do international managers recognise cultural differences? What are the best strategies for managing corporate multiculturalism? How do national and corporate cultures interact? What guarantees the success of global leadership?

National culture affects many aspects of human and organisational behaviour. N. Adler [1] has concluded that national culture impacts a business corporation differently at different levels of the organisation. At the macro level of organisational structure, the influence of national culture may be less important than that of such

variables as technology. At the micro level of individual behaviour, the influence of national culture takes precedence. But one has to admit that at every level national culture profoundly influences organisational behaviour. The process becomes even more complicated in multinational corporations (MNCs) that are “organisations composed of two or more parent companies of different nationalities linked together by means of shareholdings, common directorial control, or contract; subject to a single managerial direction; and consisting of networks of connected companies of many nationalities” [6].

Every time a multinational corporation establishes itself in a certain country, its corporate culture experiences the impact of that country’s national culture. The national cultural environment of any MNC includes national/local languages, religion, values and attitudes, education, social organisation, technology, material culture, politics and law. Some managerial functions are more sensitive to local culture than others and this sensitivity depends on the importance of the direct exchange between that particular function and the cultural environment. Functions such as marketing and public relations generally demand more interaction with local culture that, for example, the functions of finance or production.

Multinational organisations and their cultural environments are elements of an interactive system, and interaction is a two-way process. It is important to recognise that MNCs are not passive in relating to the cultural environment. They possess some degree of control over it, and their actions may influence it. Organisational activities, such as applying new technologies, offering training programmes, introducing new products, making contributions to politicians, or advertising may alter the cultural environment in which an MNC operates. Within limits, therefore, multinational corporations may be able to manipulate environmental elements which act as constraints [5]. This issue of an organisation’s impact on the cultural environment is critical in international business. Foreign firms tend to be agents of change in host countries. And their operations inevitable induce cultural change of both an intended and unintended nature, thus not only affecting the country’s economy but having a broader cultural impact.

Moreover, different cultural environments require different organisational behaviour. Strategies, structures and technologies that are appropriate in one cultural setting may lead to failure in another, and very often do [7, p. 29].

We have so far discussed intercultural communication between corporate and national culture on the external level – between a multicultural corporation and the cultural environment of the host country. But it also exists on the internal level within the MNC itself – between the corporate cultures on the one hand and the national cultures of its members on the other. The extent to which managers recognise cultural diversity within their organisation and its potential advantages and disadvantages finally defines the organisation’s success or failure. N. Adler [2] analyses different strategies for managing cultural diversity:

1. The most common response of members of an organisation to cultural diversity is parochial – they do not recognise cultural diversity or its impact on the organisation. In parochial organisations, members believe that “our way is the *only* way” to organise and manage and thus the selected strategy is to ignore cultural diversity. This strategy precludes the effective management of diversity as well as the possibility of minimising negative impacts and enhancing positive ones.

2. The second most common response is ethnocentric – members recognise diversity, but only as a source of problems. In ethnocentric organisations, members believe that “our way is the *best* way” to organise and work; they view all other ways as inferior. Their strategy is to minimise the sources and impacts of cultural diversity within the organisation. It can be implemented in a number of ways: for example, by attempting to select a culturally homogeneous work force or by socialising all workers into the behaviour patterns of the dominant culture. Ethnocentric organisations preclude the possibility of benefiting from the many cultures present, by minimising their diversity.

3. Only in those cases in which members of an organisation explicitly recognise the concept of culture can the response to cultural diversity be synergistic – seeing cultural diversity as leading to both advantages and disadvantages. In synergistic organisations, members believe that “our way and their way differ, but neither is inherently superior to the other”. Members of synergistic organisations believe that the combination of “our way and their way” produces the best way to organise and work. Their strategy is to manage the *impact* of cultural diversity itself [9, p. 188-189]. Such organisations minimise potential problems by managing the impacts, minimising the diversity. Similarly, they maximise the potential advantages by managing the impacts, rather than ignoring the diversity. Synergistic organisations train their members to recognise cultural differences and to use those differences to create advantages for the organisation.

The first two strategies – ignoring and minimising cultural differences – occur naturally and are therefore quite common. Only when members of the organisation recognise both the cultural diversity and its potential positive impacts is it probable that an organisation will choose to manage the diversity rather than ignore or minimise it. Cultural diversity can potentially have both positive and negative impacts on the organisation. The approach to diversity, and not the diversity itself, determines the actual positive and negative outcomes [8].

Over the past few years, managers and researchers have increasingly recognised the importance of corporate culture as a factor of social influence. Unfortunately, our understanding of organisational culture has tended to limit, rather than enhance, our understanding of national culture. Many international managers believe that corporate culture moderates or erases the influence of national culture. They assume that employees working for the same organisation – even if they are from different countries – are more similar than different. They believe that national differ-

ences are only important in working with foreign clients, not with colleagues from the same organisation. Does the corporate culture erase, or at least diminish, national culture? Surprisingly, the answer is “No”. Employees and managers do bring their ethnicity to the workplace.

A. Laurent [4] found cultural differences more pronounced among foreign employees working within the same multinational organisation than among employees working for organisations in their different native lands. After observing managers from nine Western European countries and the US who were working for organisations in their native countries (e.g. Swedish managers working for Swedish companies, Italian managers – for Italian companies, etc.), Laurent repeated his research in one multinational corporation with subsidiaries in each of the ten original countries. He assumed that due to the influence of unifying corporate culture, employees working for the same multinational corporation would be more similar than their colleagues working in their own countries, but instead found the MNC employees maintaining and even strengthening their national cultural differences. There were significantly greater differences between managers from ten different countries working within the same multinational corporation than there were between managers working for companies in their separate native countries. It appears that when working for a multinational corporation the Germans become more German, the Americans become more American and so on.

Why might organisational culture enhance national cultural differences? At this point neither managers nor researchers know the answer. Perhaps the pressure to conform to the corporate culture of a foreign-owned company brings out employees’ resistance, causing them to cling more firmly to their own national identities. Perhaps our ethnic culture is so deeply ingrained in us by the time we reach adulthood that it cannot be erased by any external force. Perhaps other as yet unexplained forces are operating. The indisputable conclusion is that employees maintain or enhance their culturally specific ways of working when placed within a multinational corporation.

Finally, in trying to understand how to promote successful interaction between corporate and national cultures, let us consider the following ten concepts for successful global performance suggested by P. Harris, R. Moran, and S. Moran [3]:

- *Global Leadership* – being capable of operating effectively in a global environment and being respectful of cultural diversity.
- *Cross-Cultural Communication* – recognising what is involved in one’s image of oneself and one’s role, personal needs, values, standards, and expectations, all of which are culturally conditioned.
- *Cultural Sensitivity* – integrating the characteristics of culture in general with experiences in specific organisational, minority, or foreign cultures.
- *Acculturation* – effectively adjusting and adapting to a specific culture, whether that be a subculture within one’s own country or abroad.

- *Cultural Influence on Management* – understanding that management philosophies are deeply rooted in culture, and that management practices developed in one culture may not easily transfer to another.
- *Effective Intercultural Performance* – applying cultural theory and insight to specific cross-cultural situations that affect people's performance on the job.
- *Changing International Business* – coping with the interdependence of business activity throughout the world, as well as the subculture of the managerial group.
- *Cultural Synergy* – building upon the very differences in the peoples of the world to achieve mutual growth and accomplishment by cooperation, combining the best in various cultures and seeking the widest input.
- *Work Culture* – applying the general characteristics of culture to the specifics of how people work at a point in time and place.
- *Global Culture* – understanding that while various characteristics of human culture have always been universal, a unique global culture with some common characteristics may be emerging.

The influences of mass media, telecommunications, the Internet, etc. are breaking down some of the traditional barriers among groups of people and their diverse cultures, and global managers are using global strategies.

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