Seminar Objectives

In this seminar, our focus will be on understanding:

1. The significance of the construct of culture and cultural variations as one of the important determinants of individual and group behavior in work organizations in different national contexts.
2. Methodological issues in discerning the role of cultural variations in various dependant phenomena of interest in organizational sciences.
3. The nature and determinants of organizational behavior in a cross-cultural perspective.

We will review research on cultural variations in organizational phenomena dealing with:

1. Human stress, cognition and coping in the workplace
2. Individual performance effectiveness in different cultural settings
3. Group effectiveness and performance of multi-cultural groups
4. Technology transfer and knowledge management
5. Developing global mindsets- the role of cultural underpinnings
6. Temporal orientation across cultural boundaries
7. Cross-cultural issues in human resources management such as turn-over, employee development etc.
8. Cross-cultural and international perspectives on developing global mindsets in multi-national and global organizations.

Some of the fundamental theoretical perspectives for understanding cultural variations and their role in organizational behavior will be reviewed. The implications of frameworks advanced by Bhagat and McQuaid (1982), Ronen and Shenkar (1985), Hofstede (2001, 2005), Triandis (1972, 1989, 1995, 1998, etc.), Schwartz (1992, 1997), D. Oyserman (2002) and others will be explored in considerable depth. Also, level of analysis pertaining to the construct of culture will be discussed for rigorous research designs.

I start with the basic assumption that everyone in this seminar has a fundamental understanding of various concepts in organizational sciences concepts and issues. My goal is to broaden your understanding of these issues by examining their relevance and generalizability in a cross-cultural and cross-national perspective.

The topic of organizational culture will be examined in some depth before we move on to examining the relevance of cross-cultural perspective in organizational behavior. Issues of cultural variations have been central to my thinking for the past 25 years and I plan to share my current understanding regarding the role of cultural variations in various organizational phenomena in an increasingly interconnected global economy.
Seminar in Organizational Behavior II

Dr. Rabi S. Bhagat

Required Books


Seminar Requirements – there are three primary requirement for this seminar

Requirement 1 (25% of Grade)

I have assigned a number of readings for each class excluding the first class on Jan. 25th. I expect you to complete all of the readings and come to class prepared to discuss them, as well as share your insights with the class. From February 1st each seminar topic will be discussed by a doctoral student who might have some special interest or inclination to learn more about the topic. For example, someone interested in understanding the role of cultural variations on how humans around the globe perceive and organize the flow of temporal experiences will be assigned the discussion leader on the day when cultural variations on temporal orientation is discussed. The participants are expected to prepare first rate presentations for these seminars and give a handout for everyone in the class and discuss the thematic contents of the topic that he or she is assigned. I will clarify some complicated concepts only if I perceive that the discussion is getting less rigorous and is beginning to lack focus.

Requirement 2 (75% of Grade)

A research paper focusing on an issue of significant importance in the area of the cross-cultural study of management and organizations. You will be working on a paper that is reflective of your interest, past experience and future interest on the topic. I would like to make sure that the theme of your paper largely reflects the central theme of the seminar on the day in which you will be assigned to act as a discussant leader.

I have scheduled sessions March 15, & March 22 in which you are to present a detailed outline of the paper you are developing during the course of this semester. The outlines that you present should be in such a format that you can integrate the feedback that you get from me and the seminar participants. Perhaps the most important requirement in this seminar is to come prepared to discuss issues from a theoretically rigorous point of view. While issues of application will be alluded to, it is not a seminar where applied concerns are of significant importance. I echo Kurt Lewin: “There is nothing as practical as a good theory.” In this seminar, we focus on advanced issues on the role of cultural variations. This field is vast and has been growing rapidly since the landmark work of Professor Hofstede in 1980. My objective is to cover the fundamental issues dealing with the concept of culture and culture variations in cross-national studies on management and organizations, and international management.
Seminar Outline

January 25: Culture and cultural variations in organizations

The assigned reading of Hofstede (2005) should be completed by Feb. 8th (Monday). Each participant in the class will discuss various parts of this book that provide the foundations of cross-cultural research in management, international management and international business.

February 1: Discussion and Critique of Hofstede’s International Study


Each participant will present a summary and critical review of the assigned chapters. I will provide the significance of Hofstede cross-national work involving 50 countries and regions of the world for understanding the significance of cultural variations. Further details of Hofstede work is found in G. Hofstede (2001). Culture’s Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations.


Bhagat, R. S., & McQuaid, S. J. (1982). Role of subjective culture in organizations: A review and directions for future research. Journal of Applied Psychology Monograph. 67 (5): 653-685 (This paper of mine written with a doctoral candidate from 1980-1981 is one of the most highly cited articles in the field in international organizational behavior and international management. Twenty years later, we reviewed the field again and the next article focuses on newer issues that were more relevant from 1980-2002.)


Business Studies 36: 357-378. (This is the latest overall state of the art review of all of the recent developments in the area of cultural variations that the five of us completed after a major symposium on this topic at Duke University in March 2003. We will review this a number of times but it should give you an overall feel for the complete map of the field.)

February 8: Mapping the construct of culture: Also role of subjective culture in organizations

Part I from Bhagat and Steers (2009) pages 3 - 70


Also read from Tjosvold, D., & Leung, Kwok (2003) edited volume on Cross-Cultural Management: Foundations and Future. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Press the following chapters: (I will provide copies of these chapters)

Chapter 1: Forty-five years of researching the culture and behavior link.
H. Triandis (11-28)

Chapter 2: The universal and the specific in the 21st century management.
G. Hofstede (29-42)

Chapter 4: Meeting the challenge of cultural difference
P. Smith (59-72)

Chapter 5: Using emics and ethics in cross-cultural organizational studies: Universal and local, tacit and explicit
M. Peterson & S. Quintanilla (73-102)

Also, selected research papers from Psychological Bulletin (January 2002, Special Issue on individualism and collectivism will be discussed) I will try to have these papers copied for the class. Not the entire set of readings will be used, but the most important ones.

February 15: Overview of various cultural frameworks (Session 1)

Hofstede, G. 2001. Culture’s Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations. Sage Publications. Read Chapters 1, 5, 10 and Appendix. (you have already read the 2005 book. In this 2001 book he provides greater details regarding the nature of the
various cultural variations involved. I will provide an overall summary based on my 2002 review of this book in the July issue of AMR.)


Triandis, H.C. (1989). Self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts. Psychological Review, 96: 269-289. (Read this paper very carefully. This is a classic paper that provides the foundations the most important concepts that we will discuss in this seminar and later in numerous research investigations. )


February 22: Overview of various cultural frameworks (Session 2)
Rethinking Individualism and Collectivism


Oyserman, D., H. Coon & M. Kemmelmeier. (2002). Rethinking individualism and collectivism:


This is the final chapter of the cross-cultural management: Foundations and future research volume. In this chapter we provide a integrative framework for innovative research on organizational behavior and processes by utilizing the various constructs of individualism-collectivism and other related constructs that are relevant for studying cross-national differences.

March 1: Overview of various cultural frameworks (Session 3)

Culture Frameworks – Trompenaars

Culture Frameworks – Schwartz (one additional paper will assigned)


Cultural Frameworks – Bond

(Note: During the spring break, you should be able to develop a detailed outlines of the paper that you are writing for this seminar. Three presentations are scheduled on the 13\textsuperscript{th}, 20\textsuperscript{th} and the remaining will be on the 27\textsuperscript{th}).

**March 8 - 14:** Spring Break

**March 15:** Presentation of Detailed Outlines of Research Papers (Session 1)

**March 22:** Presentation of Detailed Outlines of Research Papers (Session 2)

**March 29:** Research on Cultural Variations in Organization Behavior (Session 1)


Bhagat, R.S., Krishnan, B., Billing, T.K., Nelson, T.A., et al. (2005 - 2010) A series of papers on cultural variations in work stress and coping will be discussed

**April 5:** Culture and Organizational Behavior (Session 2)

Bhagat, R.S., & Steers, R.M., *Cambridge Handbook of Culture, Organizations, and Work* (2009), Part III, pages 334 - 490
April 12: Cultural variations on creation, diffusion, absorption and transfer of organizational knowledge


Bhagat, R. S., Kedia, B.L., Harveston, P.D. & Triandis, H.C. (2002). Cultural variations in the cross-border transfer of organizational knowledge: An integrative framework. Academy of Management Review. 27: 204-221. (This paper was one of the best papers published in the area of management studies in 2002, as noted by Emerald Business Reviews. This paper has been cited over 85 times by various research scholars throughout the world)


And the chapter on knowledge management by Bhagat, McDevitt & McDevitt (2009) Chapter 7

April 19: Future of research and theory on cross-cultural variations on management and organizations.


Hoppe, M. & Bhagat, R.S. (2006, in press). Leadership in the United States of America: The leader as cultural hero. In Robert House (ed.), Cultures, Leadership, and Organizations: A 62 Nation Globe Study. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications. This is a monograph summarizing the evolution of research on leadership since the early 1950’s. This chapter is written for the global project on leadership being conducted by the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.


April 26: Presentation of Research Papers

May 3: Papers due on this day