
Dimensions of Culture and Experience of Support: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Volunteers from Poland and Uganda

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Abstract:

Purpose: International non-governmental organizations operating in Sub-Saharan Africa, due to their nature and specific dynamics, play an important role in the local community by providing social support and assistance in resolving difficult situations without involving their governments. The aim of the study was to answer the following questions: (a) What cultural differences exist between volunteers from Poland and Uganda? (b) Do cultural values influence the experience of social support, and if so, how? The relationship between values, social capital, and support networks was examined.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study employs a cross-cultural comparative analysis based on empirical data collected from a sample of 136 volunteers, including students, teachers, and medical professionals from Poland and Uganda. Quantitative and qualitative data were examined to assess the interplay between cultural values, social capital, and social support networks.

Findings: Analysis of the collected data reveals cultural differences in the perception of certain values (particularly attitudes toward time and success) and the relationship between these values and sociodemographic variables (community orientation), as well as the recognition of the negative consequences of the influence of Western values related to social capital.

Practical Implications: The findings provide valuable insights for international non-governmental organizations operating in Sub-Saharan Africa, enhancing their capacity to manage cross-cultural volunteer teams, optimizing social support networks, and mitigate the unintended negative consequences of introducing Western-centric values into local community structures.

Originality/Value: This study fills a gap in the literature on the cross-cultural dynamics of volunteering between Central Europe (Poland) and East Africa (Uganda) by demonstrating how cultural dimensions, such as time perception and collectivism, transform social capital in developing regions.

Keywords: Cultural attitude, values, non-governmental organizations, support, attitude toward time, collectivism/individualism.

JEL codes: L31, Z13, O15, F35.

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1. Introduction

Contemporary globalization processes and the intensification of intercultural contacts make understanding the role of cultural values in the functioning of individuals and organizations one of the key research challenges in the social sciences. This takes on particular significance in the context of the activities of international non-governmental organizations, which operate at the intersection of different value systems, social norms, and behavioral patterns. These organizations not only carry out aid activities but also serve as a space for negotiating cultural meanings, modes of cooperation, and understandings of social support.

The literature on the subject emphasizes that cultural values constitute a fundamental component of the organization of social life and determine both the way reality is interpreted and the actions taken (Schwartz, 2006; Cieciuch, 2013). According to Schwartz's approach, values form relatively stable belief systems that organize the behavior of individuals and social groups, and their cross-cultural diversity can influence the effectiveness of development activities and forms of international cooperation. At the same time, classical concepts of organizational culture (Schein, 2010) indicate that deeply rooted cultural assumptions and norms determine how an organization functions, including the relationships among its members and the ways in which support is given and received.

Cross-cultural research based on the models of G. Hofstede (1980) or F. Trompenaars and Ch. Hampden-Turner (2002) demonstrates that differences in dimensions such as individualism–collectivism, attitudes toward time, power, or social relations have significant consequences for the functioning of international teams. In highly culturally diverse environments—such as organizations operating in Sub-Saharan African countries—these differences can lead to both synergy and tensions, as well as communication misunderstandings.

One area where cultural differences are particularly evident is the experience and perception of social support. This support—understood as the resources available to an individual within social relationships—is crucial for psychosocial functioning and the effectiveness of assistance efforts. At the same time, its forms, meaning, and the expectations placed upon it are strongly culturally conditioned. In collectivist cultures, support is often embedded in community relationships and social structures, whereas in more individualistic cultures, it takes on a more individualized and instrumental character.

Despite the growing body of research on cultural values and the functioning of international organizations, relatively little attention has been devoted to analyzing the relationship between value systems and the experience of social support in volunteer communities operating in intercultural contexts. It seems particularly important to compare these relationships in groups originating from different cultural backgrounds and operating in socio-economically diverse conditions.

Considering the above, the aim of this article is to analyze the relationship between cultural values and the experience of social support among a group of volunteers from Poland and Uganda involved in the activities of non-governmental organizations operating in high-risk environments. The research aims not only to identify cross-cultural differences in attitudes and values but also to determine their significance for the formation of support networks and the social functioning of the study participants.

2. Dimensions of Culture as Factors Shaping the Culture of Non-Governmental Organizations

Cultural values, alongside socioeconomic and political factors, constitute a significant element of the organization of social life. According to Shalom Schwartz, understanding the cultural map of the world can support development efforts and the fight against poverty; however, the compatibility or conflict of value systems can both enhance and hinder the effectiveness of these efforts (Munene *et al.*, 2005).

Research based on Schwartz's values model, conducted globally using various methods (Cieciuch, 2013), indicates that cultural values form the context in which societies and organizations function. Poland is positioned closer to the pole of harmony than mastery and to hierarchy than egalitarianism, while the profiles of some countries are more distinct—for example, China scores high on hierarchy and mastery, with low levels of egalitarianism and autonomy.

Sub-Saharan African countries, on the other hand, are characterized by high embeddedness and hierarchy, often linked to traditional power structures. Differences in value systems between developing and developed countries can hinder the effectiveness of development aid, as confirmed by studies conducted, among others, in Uganda (Munene and Schwartz, 2000).

Cultural factors, including tribal conflicts, can further increase costs and limit the effectiveness of non-governmental organizations' activities. Other researchers also emphasize the importance of cultural context. Geert Hofstede (1980) points to the need to take local socio-cultural conditions into account in the activities of international organizations, while Edgar Schein (2010) highlights the role of basic assumptions and beliefs as the foundation of organizational culture.

Jeremy Rifkin, in turn, emphasizes the differences between the American model, based on individualism, and the European model, which focuses on solidarity, sustainable development, and human rights—a distinction reflected in the idea of civil society and the principle of “think globally, act locally.” Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (2002) proposed a model of cultural values combining the concepts of Hofstede and GLOBE, drawing attention to a very significant fact that contradicts the theory that economic globalization has led to the emergence of a single universal culture.

They emphasized that residents of different countries—and thus those from distinct national cultures—differ in their approaches to solving problems related to people, time, and the environment.

On this basis, F. Trompenaars and Ch. Hampden-Turner (2002) developed seven fundamental dimensions of culture, in which they describe the characteristics of individual cultures in an international context.

Table 1. Specifics of selected experiences and expectations

Category	The American Dream	The European Dream	The African Dream
Individualism	Very strong	Moderate, varied	Weak
Collectivism Community spirit	Implemented at the meso- and microsocial levels, confessional in nature	Implemented at the macrosocial level, regional development	Implemented at the tribal level, belonging to a local community
Masculinity/Femininity	Focus on professional success, assertiveness	Division of roles Equal participation	Submissive role for women. Clear division of roles
Work	Value in itself “I live to work”	Indirect value “I work to live”	Added value “I work to survive”
Freedom	Achieved through independence Individual responsibility	Realized through belonging Personal and group responsibility	Realized through belonging and tribal responsibility
Experiencing oneself in time	A purely economic—utilitarian and task-oriented—approach to time. Adherence to a plan, a deadline	Goes beyond purely economic categories, provocative “uselessness,” Deadlines, plans	Synchronic time (past, present, and future intertwine). Building relationships
Success	Closely linked to abundance Task-oriented	Closely linked to quality of life, Task-oriented	Closely linked to hierarchy Relationship-oriented
Cooperation	Less emphasized Strong emulation	Strongly emphasized Universalism	Strongly emphasized in tribal groups

Source: Author's own work based on: G. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*, Sage, Beverly Hills 1980. P. Passowicz, P. Słowik, *Variation in individual experience of the social context, depending on the strength of influence of American and European cultures*.

Taking these analyses into account and drawing partly on the above assumptions, I characterize below the American, European, and African models of the “American Dream” (Table 1). Selected values of various cultures have been placed within these three categories. Collectivist societies—those most found in Sub-Saharan Africa—make decisions collectively. This lengthens the decision-making process but accelerates its implementation. A decision made authoritatively in an individualistic

culture, or a decision passed by a majority vote, often encounters resistance during the implementation phase (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2002).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, one of the most distinguishing values in community life is the approach to time. Anna Kwiatkowska and Joanna Sztuka (2010, p. 17) emphasize that “the issue of intercultural differences in the conceptualization of time is of immense importance. Anthropologists agree that the way a culture treats time is key to understanding its nature, to understanding the priorities and life choices of its members (...). The way people manage time has far-reaching practical consequences for establishing and maintaining intercultural contacts, e.g., in business.”

American anthropologist Edward T. Hall (1999) emphasizes that the inconsistent understanding of time stems from cultural differences. Accordingly, people who use monochronic time function better when they can separate individual activities from one another in space.

In contrast, people who operate in a polychronic manner try to gather everything in one place. Different understandings of time use can lead to misunderstandings or conflict. People belonging to a “clock time” culture keep scheduled appointments, live according to dates written in the calendar and a daily schedule, ensure their watches show the correct time, and are very unhappy when someone disregards deadlines.

People from relational time cultures organize their day around various events. Africans are certainly not clock enthusiasts. For them, time flows uniquely, at varying paces. Ryszard Kapuściński suggested that the differences between European and African time can best be illustrated by the example of bus schedules—in Europe, a bus departs according to the schedule at specific times, while in Africa, a rickety vehicle departs not according to a schedule—which, incidentally, does not exist—but on a contractual basis, that is, when a sufficient number of passengers has gathered, and the number of people is usually greater than the number of seats.

Those who are late do not apologize, do not feel guilty, do not see a problem, and ignore the passage of time. Time used effectively is invested in social relationships; no importance is attached to schedules or punctuality. The priority is the meeting and its significance, not the meeting schedule. The conceptualization of time in the capitalist world is closely linked to the understanding of time in terms of money: “Time is money” (Adam, 2004).

Another cultural conceptualization of time distinguishes between an orientation toward the past, the present, or the future. In the first case, attachment to tradition and established solutions is characteristic; in the second, only what is “here and now” matters, as expressed, for example, by the pursuit of hedonistic pleasures; in the third, innovation and forward-thinking are valued. Some cultures are

characterized by behaviors dictated by the clock (*clock time*), while others by the natural course of events (event time) (Kwiatkowska and Sztuka, 2010).

Western societies are deeply tied to clock and calendar time; they expect specific behavior from their peers to such an extent that they often judge violations of time norms negatively (Harber *et al.*, 2003), which can lead to significant cross-cultural differences. Time perspectives include cognitive, emotional, and social components, and their formation is influenced by a range of factors both within the individual (e.g., age) and outside of them (e.g., cultural background, religion, historical events).

3. Methodological Assumptions of the Study

The study was conducted among respondents in two significantly different cultural contexts: in Poland and in Uganda. Respondents from Uganda completed the survey questionnaire in English, which is the official language of Uganda. Respondents from Poland completed the same set of questions in Polish. The first part of the questionnaire focused primarily on the responses preferred by the respondents, i.e., questions regarding human and social capital and support networks. The second part included the PK—the Cultural Attitudes Questionnaire by Piotr Passowicz. The original versions were used.

Study population: The study included Polish and Ugandan volunteers (students, teachers, medical professionals, and social workers) engaged in pro-social activities for the benefit of Sub-Saharan African countries, primarily Uganda. The Polish respondents consisted of a group of 67 volunteers (48 women and 19 men), with a mean age of $M=26.42$ years.

The Ugandan respondents numbered 69 (40 women, 29 men), with a mean age in this group of $M=23.62$ years. The quantitative study was conducted among a group of adults ($N=136$), specifically Ugandans affiliated with NGOs living in the Kyenjojo district.

4. The Organizational Culture of Members of the Support Network – in the Context of the Research Findings

Factor analysis of cultural attitudes was performed using the principal component method with VARIMAX rotation. Initially, the KMO indices were checked and Bartlett's test was conducted.

Table 1. Adequacy of sample selection and sphericity test

		Result
KMO measure of sample adequacy		.70
Bartlett's sphericity test	χ^2	1897.62
	df	465

	<i>p</i>	<.001
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Source: Author's calculations.

The method allowed us to examine the strength of the influence of selected cultural dimensions such as: the temporal aspect, the experience of self in time, individualism and collectivism orientations, communality, attitudes toward cooperation and competition, and attitudes toward work, status, and social prestige resulting from professional and material success.

Cronbach's α values ranged from 0.75 to 0.84, indicating satisfactory reliability of the method and allowing for its use in scientific research. Table 2 presents the values and percentages of variance explained by the factors (after rotation) for the Polish and Ugandan groups. Only factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1.5 were included.

Table 2. *Factor eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained*

No.	Factor name	Eigenvalue	% of explained
1	Recognition of work as the highest value	6.66	20.17
2	Attitude toward work—professional and material success	3.23	9.79
3	Community orientation. Cooperation, interpersonal relationships, and belonging to a group	3.14	9.52
4	Acceptance of a liberal economy	2.87	8.69
5	Individualism and the belief that personal success is determined by the individual	2.36	7.14
6	Defining quality of life through social ecology	2.10	6.38
7	Task-oriented attitude toward one's time	1.84	5.59
8	Building happiness through bonding and action	1.83	5.56

Source: Author's own research.

Subsequent studies aimed to identify potential differences and correlations between organizational culture and the capital of individuals representing two groups that are significantly diverse in terms of culture and socioeconomic status. Indicators from individuals in Poland and Uganda were collected and compared; these were again volunteers (students—teachers, medical personnel).

Overall, the factors explained a total of 72.84% of the variance in the scale items. The eigenvalues of the factors and the percentage of the variance explained were determined by the following component items:

The first factor of attitude combined beliefs about human work and life success, which were perceived as closely linked to a person's wealth, with all activity subordinated to the economic principle of efficiency. This was further reinforced by the values expressed in the second factor, which defined the self-discipline, sacrifice,

and entrepreneurship necessary to achieve success and increase one's own productivity, thereby securing greater prestige and societal recognition.

The third factor reflected the belief that the quality of human life is dominated by one's well-being in the context of commitment and prioritizing cooperation over competition, the common good over individual self-interest, and nurturing interpersonal and community ties. Furthermore, the importance of working for NGOs was emphasized.

The fourth factor encompassed views on values linking liberal economic methods with the belief in the economy's inherent ability to solve social problems. Acceptance of liberal economic methods and emulation of the socio-economic life of the United States, where free market forces should remain unchecked; thus, a well-functioning economy should be based on the principles that everyone pursues their own goals and thereby contributes to the prosperity of society as a whole.

The fifth factor, however, emphasized the belief that personal success is controlled by the individual, who, if they wish to achieve material success, must increase their productivity, and no external force can hinder this success.

The sixth factor reflects the belief that the quality of the natural environment and a sense of security—expressed through mobility and self-determination regarding one's life and success—as well as the quality of relationships with others. This is further reinforced by the seventh factor, which celebrates a task-oriented approach to one's time.

Thus, a utilitarian and task-oriented attitude toward relationships with others and the time one has at one's disposal should be subordinated to the requirements of the market economy. The opposite trend could be observed in the eighth factor, where a sense of belonging to a community and the strength of bonds with other people, combined with professional and material success, played an important role. Importantly, this is also achievable for poor people, who can escape poverty if they so desire. This last belief is reinforced by the view reflected in the following statement: *Happiness must be pursued through action.*

Table 3. Differences between countries

	Mean		Std. Dev.		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>
	Poland	Uganda	Poland	Uganda			
PK1 factor	3.88	6.06	1.00	.66	-13.78	136	<.001
PK2 factor	4.67	5.91	1.29	1.04	-9.73	136	<.001
PK3 factor	4.82	5.85	.68	1.11	-6.39	136	<.001
PK4 factor	3.95	4.37	1.12	1.39	-1.86	136	.066
PK5 factor	3.78	2.39	.87	1.00	8.17	136	<.001
PK6 factor	4.55	4.86	1.07	1.79	-1.18	136	.242
PK7 factor	3.56	3.98	1.11	1.86	-1.55	136	.125

PK8 factor	5.46	5.69	.94	1.67	-1.00	136	,322
Posture	4.33	4.88	1.04	1.54	-1.09	136	,128

Source: Author's own research.

At the level of individual factors, results significantly higher than the average were observed for the first three factors (PK1, PK2, PK3) among respondents from Uganda, where, in the case of the first factor (PK1), work was considered the highest value in human life. *The importance of work as the most important value in itself* was emphasized, and *everything a person does in their life should be based on the principle of productivity*.

For the second factor (PK2), which was expressed through Attitudes toward work and professional and material success, where *Increasing one's own productivity ensures higher prestige and social recognition*, and *Self-control, sacrifice, and entrepreneurship are necessary for achieving success*. Above-average scores were also recorded for the third factor among the group of students from Uganda, where the following beliefs were held: *A person's quality of life depends on the quality of interpersonal relationships and on their earnings, cooperation should be more important in life than competition*, and *my security depends mainly on my sense of belonging within a group of other people*, and *I work or intend to work in the near future for a nonprofit organization*.

A score significantly above the average was observed for factor eight (PK8) in both groups. Both Ugandans and Poles emphasized that *it is not true that maintaining one's privacy is more important than involvement in community life*, *that poor people can escape poverty if they want to*, and *that happiness must be pursued through action*.

In contrast, a below-average score was recorded in the Ugandan group only for factor five (PK5), reflecting "Individualism and the belief that personal success is controlled by the individual," as represented by the following items: *A person's quality of life depends on their well-being*; *Each person is individually responsible for their own life and success*; *Responsibility, self-reliance, and free-market mechanisms are the best guarantee of improving the lot of the poor and disadvantaged*; *Valuing one's own privacy is more important than involvement in community life*.

Comparisons between the nationalities surveyed revealed two distinctive results in cultural attitudes: Polish respondents exhibited a significantly higher level of factor five (PK5) than the Ugandan group ($F(1,103) = 9.64$; $p < 0.001$), while Ugandan respondents scored significantly higher on three factors (PK1, PK2, PK3) than the Polish group ($F(1,103) = 27.08$; $p < 0.01$).

However, the overall attitude, treated as a direct indicator of the strength of the influence of American values, reached a mean value of 4.33 in the Polish group,

while the overall attitude among the Ugandan respondents was slightly higher at 4.89; these differences were not significant. This may have been due to differences in individual factors of cultural attitude. Some cultural attitude factors yielded high scores in one group of respondents and low scores in the other, and vice versa.

This is why the overall results were, in a sense, balanced out. It should also be noted that this type of research reflects the opinions of the respondents, which does not mean that this is how they actually behave. Often, they would like to strengthen their potential weaknesses, while easily attainable values do not attract as much attention.

This may mean that certain values (e.g., community spirit) will not be appreciated, while others will be particularly sought after (e.g., success). No statistically significant differences were observed between men and women in either Poland or Uganda.

5. Relationship between Socio-demographic Variables and Values

In the first stage of the analysis, comparisons were made of the results obtained by groups of Polish and Ugandan respondents regarding social capital, support networks, life satisfaction, and cultural value profiles. Analysis of the data collected in the study of the Polish and Ugandan samples revealed significant differences between them in terms of human capital, support networks, and cultural values; no differences were identified regarding life satisfaction.

Further analyses aimed to examine the relationships between selected sociodemographic variables and specific cultural dimensions in both national groups. The results were interpreted in relation to the specific social, economic, and cultural contexts of the student groups studied. The levels of the measured variables in the group of Polish and Ugandan students did not indicate significant differences by gender.

Table 4. *Correlations between variables - Poland*

Poland	PK1	PK2	PK3	PK4	PK5	PK6	PK7	PK8	Posture
Age	,17	,05	,33**	,17	-,24	,15	,16	,22	,12
Support Network	-,16	-,06	,21	-,11	-,11	-,14	-,28*	,18	-,06
Human capital	-,10	,05	-,06	-,05	-,15	-,02	,11	,06	-,12
Parents' education	,22	,05	-,06	,12	,23	,53**	-,20	,38**	-,05
Financial situation	,29*	,11	-,21	,20	,24	-,06	-,15	,05	,32**
Number of people in the family	,17	-,23	,18	-,11	-,10	-,06	,03	,16	-,26

Note: *The correlation was significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). **The correlation was significant at the 0.01 level, two-tailed

Source: Own study.

Table 5. Correlations between variables - Uganda

Uganda	PK1	PK2	PK3	PK4	PK5	PK6	PK7	PK8	Posture
Age	,13	-,21	-,06	,05	-,17	-,13	,41**	-,18	-,25
Support network	,05	-,17	,17	-,18	-,19	-,20	-,07	,36**	,13
Human capital	-,17	,29*	-,10	-0.16	-,07	-,05	-,06	,05	,06
Parents' education	-,05	-,21	,24	,17	,03	-,28*	,11	-0.23	,03
Financial situation	,09	-,06	-,33**	,04	-,16	-,05	-,06	-,11	-,32*
Number of people in the family	,16	-,26	,18	-,21	-,10	-,18	,04	-,12	,02

Note: *The correlation was significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). **The correlation was significant at the 0.01 level, two-tailed

Source: Own study.

The relationship between individual variables and cultural attitude in both study groups is presented above in Tables 5 and 6, which contain the results of the correlation analysis between the aforementioned variables. Pearson's *r* correlation coefficients between cultural attitude and its individual factors and age, support network, human capital, parents' education, financial situation, life satisfaction, and the number of people living in the same household in the Polish and Ugandan groups.

An interaction effect between country and cultural attitude was observed in several cases. The following results were obtained for the summary attitude: in the group of Polish respondents, the level of the summary attitude was positively influenced by the fact that, in someone's view, their family was in a better economic situation.

The summary cultural attitude was perceived conversely—American values among Ugandan respondents were negatively correlated with the family's financial situation. The research results suggest that the higher the economic status of a Polish family, the greater the appreciation of American cultural values and *the recognition of work as the supreme value* (PK1).

Paradoxically, however, research among Ugandan respondents shows that the better the economic situation of an individual's family, the lower the acceptance of the American cultural attitude. A negative correlation was also observed among the Ugandan respondents between the family's economic situation and the third factor

of cultural attitude, meaning that the better the economic situation, the weaker the commitment to *Community Orientation* (CO3).

A significant portion of the respondents showed a weakening of the tendency toward group rootedness, cooperation, and the formation of interpersonal relationships. Another correlation of the summary attitude was observed in the group of Polish respondents, where life satisfaction negatively correlated with cultural attitude.

Analysis of the results indicates that life satisfaction in the Polish group is also related to one of the cultural dimensions—*Defining quality of life through social ecology* (PK6). The higher the life satisfaction, the more an individual associates their happiness with quality of life perceived through social ecology (PK6). A relationship was observed between age and the preference for specific cultural values.

A moderately strong Pearson's r correlation was found between age and variables measuring the level of *Community Orientation* (PK3) in the Polish group, where cooperation, interpersonal contacts, and rootedness in the group were prominent. The older the Polish respondents were, the more inclined they were to engage and prioritize cooperation over competition, the common good over individual self-interest, and the cultivation of interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging to the community.

In contrast, among the Ugandan respondents, a strong correlation was found between age and *a Task-Oriented Attitude toward One's Time* (, PK7). The older the person, the more inclined they were to subordinate the time at their disposal to the demands of the market economy in a utilitarian and task-oriented manner. In the Polish group, the social support network was negatively associated with *a task-oriented attitude toward one's time* (PK7); the situation was different in the Ugandan group. The size of the social support network was positively associated with *building happiness through relationship-building and action* (PK8).

This meant that the stronger the acceptance of a task-oriented approach to one's time, the weaker the support network among Polish respondents. In contrast, research on the same variable among Ugandan students suggests that the more an individual was oriented toward building bonds and taking action, the larger their social support network was, which was entirely understandable.

The examined relationships between human capital and cultural attitude and its factors showed no correlation in the group of respondents from Poland. Meanwhile, among the Ugandan respondents, there was a relationship between human capital and *Attitude toward work and professional and material success* (HC2), indicating that the higher an individual's level of education and their own and their parents' professional status, the more valuable to them was the belief that the principles of activity and productivity dominate human life.

The results for cultural attitudes presented above in Tables 5 and 6 showed that: The higher the parents' education, the greater the agreement on combining beliefs not only regarding *Defining quality of life through social ecology* (PK6) but also *Building happiness through forming bonds and action* (PK8) in the group of Poles. In the Ugandan group, there was also a relationship between parents' education and the sixth factor of cultural attitude—*Defining quality of life through social ecology*—which meant that the higher the parents' education, the lower the orientation toward *Defining quality of life through social ecology* (PK6).

In both the Ugandan and Polish groups, there were no statistically significant correlations between cultural attitude and its individual factors and the number of people living in a shared household.

6. Results Discussion

Based on research into the organizational culture of culturally diverse teams, there is a natural tendency to view other cultures through the lens of one's own beliefs. As Schwartz's research has shown, a range of attitudes and behavioral orientations—such as religious and political views, social relationships, as well as the structure and preferences of human values—vary across cultures.

The values adopted can play a significant role in the motivational system. It is common to rely on overly simplified stereotypes about people from diverse cultures. People from different parts of the world differ in how they express emotions during professional conversations, make decisions, and carry out charitable activities. In some cultures, schedules are strictly adhered to, while in others they are treated as mere suggestions.

For most Africans, five minutes can mean over half an hour, and “tomorrow” can mean “sometime in the future.” It would be disrespectful not to wait for latecomers. In Europe, failing to start a meeting on time may be seen as disrespectful to those who arrived on time. To effectively manage cross-cultural teams, every organization should adapt its own style to the needs of its audience, not its donors. It is not easy to go against one's natural preferences. Shalom Schwartz and colleagues, while studying the significance of national value differences for development in Sub-Saharan Africa, incorporated data from global surveys.

The collected research material highlighted the shared values of African culture, which placed a much stronger emphasis on rootedness and hierarchy, as opposed to self-control, autonomy, egalitarianism, and harmony². Consequently, leaders and

²The data obtained were consistent with the facts about Africa presented in numerous publications. The research showed that African managers were significantly more likely to emphasize reliance on formal rules and superiors in decision-making, consistent with the cultural profile predicted for them. Comparisons with samples from Western Europe

donors from NGOs operating in Africa frequently encounter difficulties. These misunderstandings stem from differing cultural profiles.

NGO staff and volunteers from Western and Northern countries expect cooperation and proactive action. Meanwhile, NNGO staff from Sub-Saharan African countries expect guidance from superiors and tasks that respect hierarchy and tradition. This means that instructions must be directed from the person with the least seniority and the youngest age to the oldest, waiting until they pass through all levels of the hierarchy and are accepted by the tribal leadership.

Making important decisions, such as sending a family member to study or building a well or a school, requires convening a special family council consisting of elders (usually men), who determine the validity of the action, the amount of fees, the direction, and other details regarding the matter. However, people in their own environment may feel inauthentic and incompetent if people from another country dictate how they should behave in reality, there are many intercultural training programs that focus on memorizing cultural differences, which can reinforce stereotypes rather than highlighting conditions for cooperation and opportunities for integration. There is a definite lack of educational initiatives in Africa for adults living in specific regions.

7. Conclusions

The establishment of increasingly large international NGOs and the raising of funds from around the world has become a symbol of the “African dream”—of collective action on behalf of the suffering, the disadvantaged, the lonely, the vulnerable, and often minors who, without this help, would have no chance of survival. The fulfillment of this dream involved the aid organizations progressing through successive stages, from humble beginnings as a single-person foster family to a period of intensified work and the hiring of an ever-growing number of staff.

The position of international aid organizations began to be shaped, in a way, by American and European interventions and investments. The consequences of these actions were—and still are—a shift that increasingly highlights the presence of elements from foreign cultures.

This shift concerns the manner and scope of communication among members of society: from the traditional directness of human contact to a new form—indirect communication through the written word, the media, and the Internet. Managers of international organizations operating in high-risk environments have begun to treat

indicated that these nations have the opposite cultural profile. Managers in Western Europe emphasized autonomy and consultation with subordinates. The implications of these contrasts are significant for development in Africa and effective cooperation within donor agencies and multinational companies (Schwartz et al. 2000).

children's homes as a profitable venture. The pursuit of success through the establishment of very large non-governmental organizations, the hiring of an ever-increasing number of people, and a changing and unqualified teaching staff can lead to the fragmentation of relationships.

Underestimating family and community ties results in a lack of familial relationships between the children and their caregivers. It is important to remember that international NGOs, in order to engage in multilateral cooperation, must prioritize "better before bigger." Consequently, care and educational centers need not only intercultural education based on the acceptance of different values but should also strive to find optimal solutions beneficial to the development of the entire local community.

Research can expand knowledge about the organizational culture of international NGOs and their social functioning. The conceptualization discussed in this article can serve as a basis for reflection on issues related to integration and intercultural education.

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