

Theory: emic and etic approaches

Source: Carla I Koen, *Comparative International Management* (McGraw Hill, 2005, pp. 8-11 (adapted))

Irrespective of the level of analysis, in social science there are two long-standing approaches to understanding the role of culture: (1) the inside perspective of ethnographers, who strive to describe a particular culture in its own terms, and (2) the outside perspective of comparativist researchers, who attempt to describe differences across cultures in terms of a general, external standard. These two approaches were designated the emic and etic perspectives, respectively, by analogy to two approaches to language: phonemic analysis of the units of meaning, which reveals the unique structure of a particular language, and phonetic analysis of sound, which affords comparisons among languages (Pike, 1967).

The emic and etic perspectives have equally long pedigrees in social science. The emic, or inside, perspective follows in the tradition of psychological studies of folk beliefs (Wundt, 1888) and in cultural anthropologists striving to understand culture from 'the native's point of view' (Malinowski, 1922). The etic, or outside, perspective follows in the tradition of behaviourist psychology (Skinner, 1938) and anthropological approaches that link cultural practices to external, antecedent factors, such as economic or ecological conditions (Harris, 1979).

The two perspectives are often seen as being at odds – as incommensurable paradigms. An important reason for this perception lies in the differences in constructs, assumptions and research methods that are used by the two approaches (see Table 3).

Emic accounts describe thoughts and actions primarily in terms of the actors' self-understanding – terms that are often culturally and historically bound. In contrast, etic models describe phenomena in constructs that apply across cultures. Along with differing constructs, emic and etic researchers tend to have differing assumptions about culture. Emic researchers tend to assume that a culture is best understood as an interconnected whole or system, whereas etic researchers are more likely to isolate particular components of culture, and to state hypotheses about their distinct antecedents and consequences.

As indicated, in general, both approaches use differing research methods.

Methods

in emic research are more likely to involve sustained, wide-ranging observation of a single cultural group. In classical fieldwork, for example, an ethnographer immerses him or herself in a setting, developing relationships with informants and taking social roles (e.g. Geertz, 1983; Kondo, 1990). Emic description can also be pursued in more structured programmes of interview and observation.

Methods in etic research are more likely to involve brief, structured observations of several cultural groups. A key feature of etic methods is that observations are made in a parallel manner across differing settings. For instance, matched samples of employees in many different countries may be surveyed to uncover dimensions of cross-national

variation in values and attitudes (e.g. Hofstede, 1980), or they may be assigned to experimental conditions in order to test the moderating influence of the cultural setting on the relationship among other variables (e.g. Earley, 1989).

Assumptions of emic and etic perspectives and associated methods

Features	Emic, or inside, view	Etic, or outside, view
Assumptions and goals	Behaviour described as seen from the perspective of cultural insiders, in constructs drawn from their self-understandings Describes the cultural system as a working whole	Behaviour described from a vantage point external to the culture, in constructs that apply equally well to other cultures Describes the ways in which cultural variables fit into general causal models of a particular behaviour
Typical features of methods associated with this view	Observations recorded in a rich qualitative form that avoids imposition of the researchers' constructs Long-standing, wide-ranging observation of one or a few settings	Focus on external, measurable features that can be assessed by parallel procedures at different cultural sites Brief, narrow observation of more than one setting, often a large number of settings
Examples of typical study types	Ethnographic fieldwork; participant observation along with interviews	Comparative experiment treating culture as a quasi-experimental manipulation to assess whether the impact of particular factors varies across cultures

Theory: Individualism and Collectivism

Source: Christine Gillies, <http://suite101.com/a/individualism-versus-collectivism-a336272>

Individualism Versus Collectivism: Social Behaviour

Individualism and collectivism are terms used to describe cultural differences in social behavior.

Do you prefer to meet your own individual personal goals, or your collective family goals? Do you place your own preferences before those of the culture in which you live? Patterns of social behavior and psychology vary from culture to culture, and from individual to individual. The psychologist Harry Triandis (1995) proposed that patterns of social behavior could be explained by two constructs: individualism and collectivism.

What is Individualism?

Individualism is a social pattern consisting of loosely linked individuals. People living in individualistic cultures view themselves as independent to the larger society.

An individualist is primarily motivated as follows:

- by their own preferences
- by their own needs and rights
- will give priority to their own personal goals over the goals of others
- will rationalise the advantages and disadvantages of associating with others

Individualistic cultures include most western countries such as: United States, United Kingdom, Australia, France, and Germany; to name a few.

What is Collectivism?

Collectivism is a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who view themselves as part of one or more collectives. For example: a collective may be the persons' family, workplace, or group of friends.

A collectivist is primarily motivated by:

- the norms and expectations of the collective
- gives priority to the goals of the collective over their own personal goals
- will emphasise the connections they have with members of the collective

Collectivistic cultures includes countries such as: Brazil, India, Russia, most eastern nations, such as Japan and China

Theory: Proxemics

Source: Neuliep, James, *Intercultural Communication. A Contextual Approach*, Los Angeles et al., 2009, pp. 263-265 (abridged)

Proxemics

Proxemics refers to the perception and use of space, including territoriality and personal space. Territoriality refers to physical geographical space; personal space refers to perceptual or psychological space—sometimes thought of as the "bubble" of space that humans carry with them in their day-to-day activities. [...]

In cultures whose population density is high, personal space and territoriality are highly valued. Privacy in densely populated locations is often accomplished psychologically rather than physiologically. In Calcutta, India, for example, there are nearly 80,000 persons per square mile. There is literally not enough room in the city to claim any personal space. Touching and bumping into others while walking through the streets of Calcutta is quite common and to be expected.

Socioeconomic factors can also affect a culture's perception of space. Cramped and insufficient housing is common in much of Sri Lanka. In the 1980s, most housing units were quite small. Thirty-three percent of the homes had only one room, 33 % had two rooms, and only 20% had three rooms. Moreover, the average number of persons per home was five. (Overcrowding in Sri Lanka is declining, however, since the government initiated intensive housing programs in the 1990s.) The Moroccan perception of space reflects the culture's valuing of community. Personal space during a conversation is typically less than an arm's length. In mosques, worshipers line up shoulder to shoulder to pray. Houses typically have very little space between them as well. Because Kenyan culture values harmony and sharing, Kenyans tend to be less aware of personal territory than people in the United States. For example, many Kenyans do not designate specific rooms in the home for specific activities, such as a living room or a dining room. In addition, the personal space distance between interactants is much closer than in the United States. Saudi Arabians, too, are known to favor closer personal proximity than Americans. Saudis typically enjoy getting very close, face-to-face, and engaging in direct

eye contact. Many other studies support the link between culture and proxemic behavior in comparing Americans with Arabs, Latin Americans, Pakistanis, Germans, Italians, Japanese, and Venezuelans. These examples suggest that culture plays a decisive role in how spatial distances are maintained during communication. Other variables besides culture can affect proxemic distances, however, such as the age and sex of the interactants, the nature of the relationship, the environment, and ethnicity. Several studies have documented that in most cultures, the need for personal space increases with age. In addition, the use of space as influenced by sex seems to vary significantly by culture.

Theories often distinguish between several kinds of space:

Intimate space / distance

Personal space / distance

Social space / distance

Public space / distance

And you can consider other nonverbal aspects of crosscultural difference:

haptics – touch and touching

olfactics – smell

gestures and body language

facial expressions

Theory: Monochronic and Polychronic Time

Source: Neuliep, James, *Intercultural Communication. A Contextual Approach*, Los Angeles et al., 2009, pp. 140-42 (abridged)

MONOCHRONIC VERSUS POLYCHRONIC TIME ORIENTATION

In addition to its physical and spatial components, the built environment also contains a perceptual-temporal feature. Human communication occurs in a physical space and perceptual time. Edward Hall is well known for his discussion of time across cultures. As Hall asserts, time talks. It speaks more plainly than words. The message it conveys comes through loud and clear. Because it is manipulated less consciously, it is subject to less distortion than the spoken language. It can shout truth where words lie.

Like other components of the environment, the perception and use of time is cultural. Unlike other elements of the built environment, time is not physical or tangible; it is a psychological component of the environment. Regarding time, Hall categorizes cultures as either monochronic or polychronic. Monochronic- and polychronic-oriented cultures organize time and space differently. According to Hall, people with a monochronic (M-time) time orientation emphasize schedules—the compartmentalization and segmentation of measurable units of time. Conversely, people with a polychronic (P-time) time orientation stress multiple activities with little emphasis on scheduling. P-time cultures stress involvement of people and the completion of tasks as opposed to a strict adherence to schedules.

In M-time cultures, such as the United States, time is thought of as almost physical, like something you can touch and hold in your hand. Time is treated like money. We talk of saving, spending, wasting, and losing time. Hall argues that for M-time people, time is linear and compartmentalized into discrete units (e.g., minutes, hours, days). The schedule is paramount in monochronic cultures. In M-time cultures, scheduling dictates just about every activity of every day. But in some ways scheduling is like a computer program, specifying what actions will be performed while prohibiting others. Moreover, asserts Hall, scheduling allows only a limited number of activities to be performed in one place at one time. In M-time cultures, people are concerned with doing only one activity at a time.

Hall maintains that although an M-time orientation is learned and completely arbitrary, it becomes so ingrained in people that they have no other way of thinking about their world. At an early age, children are taught the importance of time, scheduling, and promptness. Moreover, they are often punished if they fail to adhere. A child learns when to eat, nap, and play. In schools, subjects are taught at certain times of the day for a specific duration. Through compartmentalizing and segmenting time, a person's day is completely planned and scheduled, including sleep, work, leisure, and even sex. Hall

notes that lateness and missed appointments are a source of extreme anxiety for many M-timers.

On the other hand, Hall argues that in P-time cultures, schedules are not important and are frequently broken. Polychronic people can do many things at once, and relationships take priority over schedules. In P-time cultures, a person may be engaged in several activities, in the same space with several people, simultaneously. P-time people are more interested in completing the task at hand than leaving it because of some predetermined schedule. Hall contends that people in P-time cultures are not slaves to schedules and are frequently late for appointments or may not show up at all. The guiding principle behind polychronic cultures is that the natural context, in the present, guides behavior.

Consequences of Monochronic and Polychronic Orientations

Monochronic people have a particularly difficult time adjusting to polychronic-oriented cultures. To an M-timer, people in P-time cultures may appear disorganized or even lazy. Harris and Moran warn American businesspersons traveling to Arab countries that they may find themselves waiting for days or even weeks to meet with their Middle Eastern affiliates. "Bukra insha Allah," meaning "tomorrow if God wills," is a favorite expression. Unlike M-timers, Arabs believe that time is controlled by Allah. Hence, when trying to schedule an appointment, the Arab may respond "insha Allah," or "if Allah wills," and he means this quite literally. To the Arab, a person who tries to influence the future via scheduling is either insane or irreligious.

Theory: High and Low Context

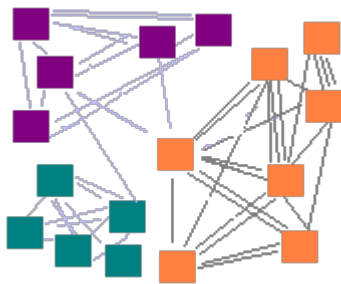
Source: <http://www.culture-at-work.com/highlow.html>

The general terms "high context" and "low context" (popularized by Edward Hall) are used to describe broad-brush cultural differences between societies.

High context refers to societies or groups where people have close connections over a long period of time. Many aspects of cultural behavior are not made explicit because most members know what to do and what to think from years of interaction with each other. Your family is probably an example of a high context environment.

Low context refers to societies where people tend to have many connections but of shorter duration or for some specific reason. In these societies, cultural behavior and beliefs may need to be spelled out explicitly so that those coming into the cultural environment know how to behave.

High Context



Less verbally explicit communication, less written/formal information

More internalized understandings of what is communicated

Multiple cross-cutting ties and intersections with others

Long term relationships

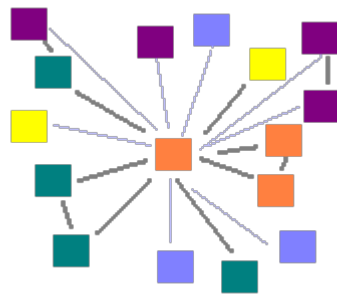
Strong boundaries- who is accepted as belonging vs who is considered an "outsider"

Knowledge is situational, relational.

Decisions and activities focus around personal face-to-face relationships, often around a central person who has authority.

Examples: Small religious congregations, a party with friends, family gatherings, expensive gourmet restaurants and neighborhood restaurants with a regular clientele, undergraduate on-campus friendships, regular pick-up games, hosting a friend in your home overnight.

Low Context



Rule oriented, people play by external rules

More knowledge is codified, public, external, and accessible.

Sequencing, separation--of time, of space, of activities, of relationships

More interpersonal connections of shorter duration

Knowledge is more often transferable

Task-centered. Decisions and activities focus around what needs to be done, division of responsibilities.

Examples: large US airports, a chain supermarket, a cafeteria, a convenience store, sports where rules are clearly laid out, a motel.

While these terms are sometimes useful in describing some aspects of a culture, one can never say a culture is "high" or "low" because societies all contain both modes. "High" and "low" are therefore less relevant as a description of a whole people, and more useful to describe and understand particular situations and environments.

Ways that High and Low Context Differ

1. The Structure of Relationships

High: dense, intersecting networks and longterm relationships, strong boundaries, relationship more important than task

Low: loose, wide networks, shorter term, compartmentalized relationships, task more important than relationship

2. Main Type of Cultural Knowledge

High: more knowledge is below the waterline, implicit, patterns that are not fully conscious, hard to explain even if you are a member of that culture

Low: more knowledge is above the waterline, explicit, consciously organized

Theory: Task or Relationship Oriented?

The task-relationship model is a model of leadership which maintains that most leadership behaviors can be classified as “performance maintenance or relationship maintenance.” Task-oriented leadership is a behavioral approach in which the leader focuses on the tasks that need to be performed in order to meet certain goals, or to achieve a certain performance standard. Relationship-oriented leadership is a behavioral approach in which the leader focuses on the satisfaction, motivation and the general well-being of the team members.

Task-oriented leadership

Task-oriented leaders focus on getting the necessary task, or series of tasks, in hand in order to achieve a goal. These leaders are typically less concerned with the idea of catering to employees and more concerned with finding the step-by-step solution required to meet specific goals. They will often actively define the work and the roles required, put structures in place, and plan, organize, and monitor progress within the team.

The advantage of task-oriented leadership is that it ensures that deadlines are met and jobs are completed, and it's especially useful for team members who don't manage their time well. Additionally, these types of leaders tend to exemplify a strong understanding of how to get the job done, focusing on the necessary workplace procedures and delegating work accordingly to ensure that everything gets done in a timely and productive manner.

However, because task-oriented leaders don't tend to think much about their team's well-being, this approach can suffer many of the flaws of autocratic leadership, including causing motivation and retention problems.

Relationship-oriented leadership

Relationship-oriented leaders are focused on supporting, motivating and developing the people on their teams and the relationships within. This style of leadership encourages good teamwork and collaboration, through fostering positive relationships and good communication. Relationship-oriented leaders prioritize the welfare of everyone in the group, and will place time and effort in meeting the individual needs of everyone involved. This may involve offering incentives like bonuses, providing mediation to deal with workplace or classroom conflicts, having more casual interactions with team

members to learn about their strengths and weaknesses, creating a non-competitive and transparent work environment, or just leading in a personable or encouraging manner.

The benefits of relationship-oriented leadership is that team members are in a setting where the leader cares about their well-being. Relationship-oriented leaders understand that building positive productivity requires a positive environment where individuals feel driven. Personal conflicts, dissatisfaction with a job, resentment and even boredom can severely drive down productivity, so these types of leaders put people first to ensure that such problems stay at a minimum. Additionally, team members may be more willing to take risks, because they know that the leader will provide the support if needed.

The downside of relationship-oriented leadership is that, if taken too far, the development of team chemistry may detract from the actual tasks and goals at hand.

The term "people-oriented" is used synonymously, whilst in a business setting, this approach may also be referred to as "employee-oriented".

Adapted from:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Task-oriented_and_relationship-oriented_leadership

Theory: Face

Some keywords here:

face, self-face, other-face, mutual face

saving face, losing face

facework

Facework

Actions concerning “face saving” are known as “facework.” In communication and conflict facework has several functions. It can make communication easier and it can resolve conflict, but it can also lead to conflict, be used to avoid communication or conflict. Facework is a way of managing your own identity and relationships.

Facework and Culture

In a study in conflicts in families in Germany, Japan, Mexico and the USA, Oetzel et al. (1999) looked at facework and communication strategies ranging from showing aggression, to defending your own position, to using direct language or indirect language, to using third parties as intermediaries, to apologizing, to avoiding conflict, and others. They concluded that Germans often communicate directly and use confrontative “facework” strategies, while the Japanese avoid the conflict (act as if it does not exist).

There are three strategies in facework:

Self face – communication is aimed at saving your own face, not losing your own face
Other face – communication is aimed at saving the face of the other, concern for the other

Mutual face – communication is concerned with both sides saving face, with the relationship in focus

Neuliep, James, *Intercultural Communication. A Contextual Approach*, Los Angeles et al., 2009, S. 329

Stella Ting-Toomey, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQJcMas_dnw

Theory: Power Distance

Source: Neuliep, James, *Intercultural Communication. A Contextual Approach*, Los Angeles et al., 2009, pp. 67-69 (abridged)

All cultures must deal with the issue of human inequality. Some form of inequality exists in virtually every culture. Inequality can occur in areas such as prestige, wealth, power, human rights, and technology, among others. Issues of inequality fall under the rubric of what Geert Hofstede calls “power distance”. He defined power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.” Power distance can be seen in families, in bureaucracies and even in friendships. For example, inequality of power within organizations is inevitable and desirable in many cases. Military organizations are defined by power distance.

Hofstede sees cultures as possessing either large or small power distance. Cultures with a smaller power distance emphasize that inequalities between people should be minimized and that there should be interdependence between less and more powerful people. In cultures with smaller power distance family members are generally treated as equal and familial decisions are made together. In small power distance schools, teachers expect initiative and interaction from and with students. The overall education process is student oriented. In class, students are expected to ask questions and even challenge their teachers. In organizations, decentralization is popular, where subordinates engage in participative decision making. The organizational power hierarchy is mostly for convenience, where the persons who occupy powerful roles may change regularly. In fact, workers are expected to “climb the ladder of success” to more power and prestige. In this sense, persons in small power distance cultures may recognize “earned” power, that is, power that people deserve by virtue of their drive, hard work, and motivation. Moreover, small power distance cultures tend to resent those whose power is decreed by birth or wealth (positional power).

In cultures with a larger power distance, inequalities among people are both expected and desired. Less powerful people should be dependent on more powerful people. In larger power distance cultures, children are expected to be obedient. There is a strict hierarchy among family members where typically the father rules authoritatively, followed by the eldest son. In education, teachers are treated like parents, with respect and honour, especially older teachers. Students who disobey may be punished severely. In the workplace, power is usually centralized, and workers and bosses are treated unequally. Superiors are entitled to special privileges and status – sometimes even by law.

Large and small power distance cultures may value different types of power. Large power distance cultures tend to emphasize positional power. Positional power is based on formal authority (e.g. rank). Persons with positional power have control over rewards, punishments, or information. Small power distance cultures recognize and respect earned power. Earned power is based on a person’s accomplishments, hard work or effort.