

Does national culture influence organizational culture across contexts? Elekta in Greece

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Abstract

This research deals with the influence of National Culture on Organizational Culture in Healthcare Services. We analyse how the national culture of a firm's home and host country and the cultural context affect the organizational culture in international marketing of healthcare services. We conducted a case study on Elekta a Swedish invention for radio surgery with a subsidiary, Elekta-Greece EPE, in its real life context. We collected qualitative data in form of semi-structured interviews by interviewing fourteen people during the years 2015-2016 in the host country of the subsidiary. We also used direct observation of the working environment and company documents as data sources. The study shows that the organisational culture of the Business Unit in Greece is flat and managers apply open doors culture trusting employees. Inequality between employees does not exist and the managers empower employees by involving them in the decision making process. Employees work as a team and share responsibilities and experience helping each other. They feel happy to work and perceive the challenges the company meets as their own challenges identifying themselves with the company. The study indicates that the context of the collectivistic and uncertainty avoiding culture of Greece influences managers to empower and motivate employees to work as a team developing good personal relationships in the company trusting each other. The results suggest that a balanced combination of national cultures makes the structure of the organisation flat, employees work as a team applying the Greek *Philotimo* helping and supporting each other to avoid ambiguity, reduce stress and unite in uncertain situations. We argue that a combination of the small power distance and femininity of the Swedish national culture combined with the cultural context of collectivism and strong uncertainty avoidance in Greece influence the organisational culture of the Business Unit. The local dynamic cultural context and the behaviour of the market, the customers, patients, service providers and the employees transform the organisational culture of Elekta-EPE Greece to a mixture of Swedish culture and Greek culture applying new organisational practices and models adapting to the values of the local context. The research contributes to the International services marketing literature developing a model of internationalization of healthcare services based on national cultural dimensions, organizational culture and contextualization. Managers who aim to establish businesses across borders need to balance the national culture of the head quarter and the one applied in units abroad with the unique context environment they operate to develop new organizational culture and be effective. A further study can include more companies and sectors to focus on the effect of national cultural context on organizational culture across countries.

Keywords: national culture, organizational culture, context, healthcare services, *Philotimo*.

Introduction

This article deals with the influence of national culture on organizational culture in healthcare services. Naidu means that healthcare service quality is difficult to measure as services are intangible, heterogeneous, inseparable and perishable (Naidu, 2009; Barry and Bendapudi, 2007). The authors argue, that healthcare services are characterised of credence quality difficult to evaluate and need customisation to customers' needs (Patterson, 2016) which challenges the international providers as people in different countries have different cultures and behave differently. This issue becomes a dilemma when different people and organisational cultures meet.

The role and importance of cultural context is an important issue in the international business literature (Cavusgil *et al.*, 2014; Davies and Olmedo-Cifuentes, 2016; McLeary and Cruise, 2015). Hofstede (1991; 2011) maintains that national culture affects people's perceptions and their values and belief, which challenges providers when they enter a new country. He defines culture as a collective phenomenon programmed (Hofstede, 2011) in the mind of people distinguishing categories of people. The national cultures that people acquire from early childhood are deep rooted than organisational cultures acquired in the working life. Hofstede *et al.* (2010) argue that national and organisational

cultures are different as national cultures affect peoples' values and organisational cultures are affected of the values of people and are a product of shared practices.

Different countries are linked to different national cultures (Hofstede *et al.* 2010; Trompenaars and Humpden-Turner, 2012). The authors mean that national cultures of a country can be linked to specific characteristics of organisational cultures of local companies. Hyder and Fregidou-Malama, (2009) assert that local cultures affect peoples' behaviour in the working places. They mean, when doing business in culturally distant cultures it is necessary to understand the local culture and structure of an organisation appropriately to overcome cultural differences. Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2015) reveal that in dealing with quality in healthcare services, predictability and standardized performance are required as healthcare services are complex and a holistic perspective is needed to understand the influence of context for successful operation in international markets .

We argue, it is necessary to highlight national cultures and company context in developing organisational culture in new establishments to ensure effective coordination. To our knowledge there are not studies examine the impact of national culture on a subsidiary's organisational culture. To fill this gap we emphasise the role of national cultures and context in developing organisational culture.

We address the following research questions:

1. How does national culture influence the organisational culture of a subsidiary?
2. What kind of organisational culture is developed in the subsidiary?

In this study, company context includes national culture of the investigated country in specific time and market. Our study focuses on how national culture influences organisational culture in Elekta, a Swedish multinational company listed on Nasdaq Stockholm and engaged in cancer treatment (Elekta, 2018). We chose Elekta for its high technological competence in radiation therapy, with a nearly 40% global market share. Almost 6000 hospitals in 120 countries use Elekta technology. To conduct our study, we collected data from Elekta's subsidiary in Greece in its real life turbulent context. We chose this subsidiary with Head Office in Athens as Sweden and Greece differ substantially in national cultural dimensions (Hofstede *et al.* 2010). A debt crisis began in Greece 2010, with deep economic, social and political consequences affecting the health care structure of the country (Economou, *et al.*, 2014) thus offering a specific context environment for our study.

This study makes the following theoretical contributions:

1. It explores the impact of national culture on organisational culture in International healthcare services marketing.
2. It analyses how context affects organisational culture.
3. It examines a case in a qualitative study to highlight the role of context in organisational culture development.

Theoretical background

Hofstede's work (1991; 1993) provides a framework for studying the influence of cultural contexts in international business. Hofstede *et al.* (2010) propose six dimensions of culture and assign a score for cultural dimensions, showing one country's cultural distance relative to others. Other researchers have criticized Hofstede's national cultural dimensions. Fang (2003), for example, finds Hofstede's model static and argues that culture-related issues are dynamic and complex and Minkov (2018) discusses the need of a revision of Hofstede's model of national cultures. However, considering the development of the original four-dimensional model of national cultures (Hofstede and Minkov, 2011) and the replication and use of Hofstede's model as a norm (Soares *et al.*, 2007) in international marketing studies, we apply his cultural dimensions. Hofstede *et al.*'s (2010) index scores for dimensions of culture show that Greece differs from Sweden in four dimensions: power distance, collectivism/individualism, masculinity/femininity and uncertainty avoidance (Table 1).

Table 1: Scores for dimensions of culture for Sweden and Greece

Cultural dimension	Sweden score	Greece score
Power distance	31	60
Individualism/ collectivism	71	35
Masculinity/ femininity	5	57
Uncertainty avoidance	29	112

Power distance highlights the role of authority and means inequality in the society. In countries with large power distance, the structure of a company is hierarchic and the leader is supposed to tell the subordinates what to do. In collectivistic countries, people are integrated and are encouraged to put the group interest first. Relationships are important and harmony should be maintained in contacts in the group and outside the company. In individualistic societies, laws and rules are formalized and formal and informal relationships between individuals confirm their rights and personal opinion matters. Masculinity deals with achievement, and femininity focuses on good relationships with others and balance between family and work. Uncertainty avoidance affect the way people feel comfortable or uncomfortable in new unstructured situations. In strong uncertainty Avoidance cultures people feel threaten and rules and laws are very important to maintain. In Weak Uncertainty Avoidance cultures, like Sweden, written and unwritten rules are unpopular and the unknown is accepted. (Hofstede et al., 2010)

Other authors like Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) discuss seven dimensions of national culture and highlight the importance of them when developing organisational culture. From Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), dimensions of culture universalism/ particularism maintain the importance of rules and the context of rules. Relationships, status and external factors affect the way an organisation is structured in a particularistic society. Individualism/communitarianism corresponds to Hofstede's dimension of culture of individualism/collectivism. In communitarianism societies, the importance of group is highlighted. Those authors mean that employees in an organisation will affect the organisational culture based on their own value programming. They distinguish four models of organisational cultures. The incubator, the guided missile, the family and the Eiffel tower by considering the relationship between employees and the organisation, the relationship between managers and subordinates and the importance of people or the task they perform in the organisation.

Hofstede (1993) maintains that national cultures show the invisible values of a majority of people, whereas organisational cultures show the visible practices that the members of an organisation acquire by socialisation. When studied the impact of national cultures on organisational cultures Hofstede *et al.* (2010) recognise differences in organisational practices and small differences in values. The authors present four models of organisational cultures by combining power distance and uncertainty avoidance: the pyramid of people, the well-oiled machine, the village market and extended family. According to Table 1, Greece is characterised of High power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance and is characterised of The Pyramid of people organisational model. Sweden characterised of a national culture with small power distance and weak uncertainty avoidance is characterised of the Village Market model. Discussing the context of the Greek culture several authors (Adamopoulos, (1977); Katerinakis, (2011); and Wright et al., (2001) maintain the importance of the Greek value of Philotimo. They define Philotimo as a cultural value respecting relationships and friendship to other people. They also consider Philotimo contributes to cooperation and sacrificing for others. Like Torelli *et al.* (2015), we assume cultural context is important and has an impact on organisational culture contributing to new cultures in international marketing of healthcare services. Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2015) mean that in healthcare trust and high-quality standards are necessary to maintain homogeneous quality. Schneider (1998) means that organisational culture can help a parent company to integrate and coordinate subsidiaries in other contexts.

Theoretical framework

We propose a theoretical framework for the development of organisational culture consisting of three constructs (Figure 1). It describes how cultural context and national cultures of the home and the host country influence organisational culture development for selecting a corporate culture model in international healthcare services marketing (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). Organisational culture facilitates healthcare service providers' communication with employees and customers (Patterson, 2016; Gilson, 2006) by choosing an appropriate marketing strategy (Singh *et al.*, 2005). We assume context as unique, dynamic and multidimensional construct and contextualize it in the different cultural environments (Michailova, 2011; Poulis *et al.* 2013).

Figure 1: The effect of national culture on organisational culture across borders

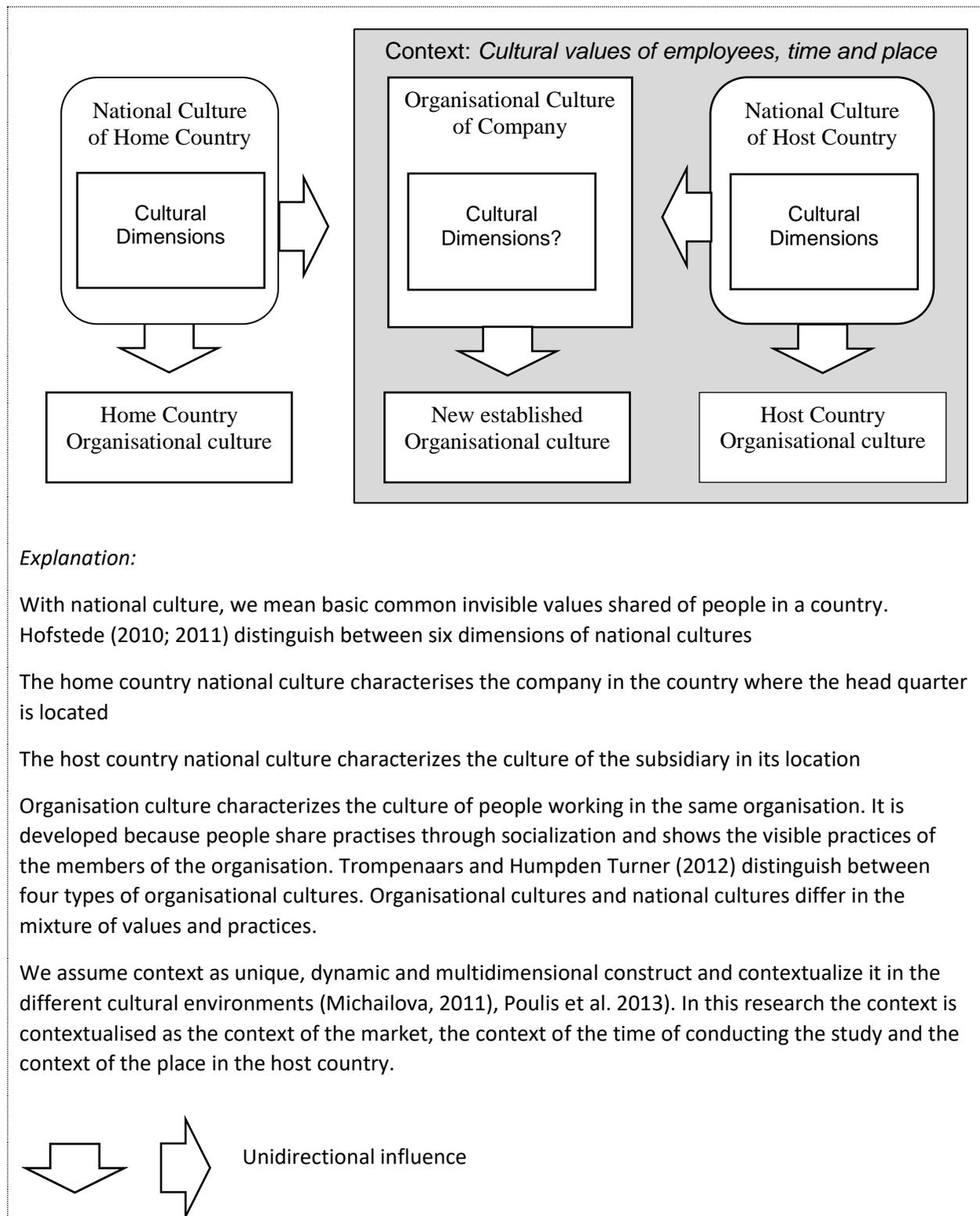


Figure 1 illustrates the importance of national culture of the host and the home country of a subsidiary, the organisational culture in host and home country (Hofstede *et al.* 2010, Hofstede, 2011; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012) and their effect on organisational culture. The subsidiary is embedded in the context of the host country (Poulis *et al.*, 2013; Michailova, 2011).

Methodology

A qualitative research method is applied to provide insights into real-life situations (Yin, 2014). Doz (2011) claims international services marketing is complex and data should be collected from different sources to understand actors in contextual settings and multifaceted international relations. We have used a case-study design where the unit of analysis is the firm Elekta in Greece (Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2011) and the level of analysis is individual respondents from different positions in the country context of Greece.

Case selection

Considering theory building (Eisenhardt, 1989) explaining the impact of national culture on organizational culture we selected the case of Elekta in Greece that provided us with exposure to different cultural context than Sweden (Hofstede et al., 2010) for contribution to developing new theoretical constructs (Burgess and Steenkamp, 2006). Elekta Greece was established in 2006 and the company is 100% owned by the parent company. We considered the form of business operation of subsidiary to allow us gather robust data and permit comparison between different professional experienced respondents within homogeneous setting. The selected firm was established and operated for more than ten years (Cassia and Magno, 2015) as we considered international experience, challenges the establishment met and the legitimacy in the local market context. Another purpose with the selection of case was to allow understanding of the case environment (Poulis et al., 2013) from different perspectives by using interviewers who speak the local languages in combination with English (Coviello, 2006). The interviews were conducted in Greek and English and written or transcribed into English.

During the case study period, Greece suffered of financial crisis and depression following the global financial crisis in 2007-2008. A debt crisis began in 2010, with deep economic, social and political consequences. The Greek healthcare system was not prepared to meet the problems the economic crisis caused (Economou, *et al.*, 2014), as it was already suffering from multidimensional structural problems. These problems created a health system that was susceptible to economic fluctuations and unprepared to meet the increasing needs of the population that also suffered of the economic crisis. Thus, our case is a unique case study surrounded by complex context.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews, observations and documents were employed to increase our understanding of the relationship between national culture and organisational culture. Twelve individual interviews (Perry, 2001) lasting 31-88 minutes were conducted during 2015 and 2016 at Elekta's head office in Athens in Greece and by skype from Sweden. Six interviews were made by using skype and six were face-to-face interviews. Four of the participants were interviewed twice both 2015 and 2016. We applied purposive sampling, allowing variation for triangulation (Patton, 1990). We approached key knowledgeable professional experts in healthcare and business issues working at the Business Unit office (Table 2). Our data from diverse participants reached saturation level (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), allowing us categorization (Bowen, 2008).

Considering cultural sensitivity, and to increase credibility, we made contextual observations while visiting and discussing with the employees in their working places, and we used annual reports and policy documents (Yin, 1981). We were able, for example, to observe the relationship between employees; be informed about the structure of the company and read about how the Business Unit shares responsibilities with the parent company in the head quarter in Stockholm. Poulis *et al.* (2013) mean that direct observation can allow researchers to understand dimensions of the context and help in the formulation of necessary interview questions. A research protocol covered the aim of the research and ethical considerations (Richards and Schwartz, 2002). We promised anonymity but the respondents allowed us to use their names. The study protocol included questions about the background of the respondents and the firm. Questions about cultural traditions, recruitment policy, relationships development and networking, how decisions were made, presentation of different episodes, challenges for marketing Elekta products and services in the Greek healthcare market, how the company was organised and advantages when working in this company and helped us to contextualize and adapt our questions to different respondents (Michailova, 2011; Corbin and Strauss, 1990). The multiple sources

of evidence, and the contextual knowledge the participants offered us enhance the credibility and the construct validity of our research (Yin, 2014).

Table 2. Interviews conducted in Elekta Greece

Name	Nationality/ Affiliation	Professional Role	Years in Elekta	Interviews Time (min) 2016	Interviews Time (min) 2015
John Peter Grant	Greek/ English	Business Unit Manager	11	56 min.	88
Evi Papadomarkaki	Greek	Service Coordinator/ Quality Manager	7	40 min.	36
Sotiris Gounaris	Greek	Field Engineer/ Service Team	8	31 min.	
Spyros Drosos	Greek	Sales and Account Manager	9	49 min.	37
Tassos Episkopakis	Greek	Field Engineer/ Service Team	11	38 min.	37
Maria Kaminari	Greek	Administrative Assistant	3,5	47 min.	
Ioannis Pantalos	Greek	Commercial Manager	10		54
Dimitrios Tsiaoutsias	Greek	Service Team Leader	7		42

Data analysis

We inductively coded the data manually in cooperation with the interviewers to avoid misinterpretation. However, our theoretical model influenced the coding. Gummesson (2005) argues qualitative research requires subjective interpretation to understand the diversity and uniqueness of the studied issues.

In this research we proceeded by finding similarities and differences in the obtained qualitative data to group similar phenomena. We could thus find common evidence allowing us to categorise (Braun and Clarke, (2006) the data in five categories: 1) Hierarchy and the role of the leader 2) Working as a team and motivating employees 3) Focus on quality and collaborating 4) Planning for facing uncertainty in the Greek market 5) Relationships and uncertainty inside the company. We critically examined and refined the research data and linked the findings to relevant theories. Figure 2 presents our empirically grounded emerging theory on organisational culture in the healthcare industry, along with the characteristics of organisational cultures.

Following the reasoning of Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, (2011) we observe that the unique case about Elekta Greece offered us the possibility to understand how two different national cultures can influence the organisational culture of the subsidiary developing a unique mixed organisational culture that fits in the new context. The fit between our empirical evidence and the constructed theory of corporate cultures and the confirmation between earlier theories and the extended theory of corporate cultures establishes internal validity and enhances the trustworthiness of our study. (Yin, 1981; Eisenhardt, 1989)

Empirical evidence

Hierarchy and the role of managers

Elekta Greece according to the manager employs 12 people and has almost 70% market share. The company also works on Cyprus, Malta and Albania. The respondents pointed out the importance of open doors. That means the managers are always available for the employees and the employees available for each other. In the company, people communicate with each other and seek support and consultation of the others to solve problems. The respondents maintained that the leaders in the company are democratic, participative and consultative. One respondent comments:

In Elekta Greece, our managers always say that we have open doors. So we all discuss with each other, the manager asks our opinion and together we try to complete what we will have to do (Interview, 2015).

The company is small and the employees must fulfil multiple task. This is also a cause to why communication with each other is important and required to fulfil customers' needs. The respondents mean that their leader has to be involved with all problems and support the employees. The business unit manager maintains that the Greek culture requires him to answer all questions the customers ask as they do not care for which function he is responsible for.

Working as a team and motivating employees

Employees and managers collaborate and try to solve problems as a team and a team spirit characterises Elekta Greece. Respondents mean if you are in a team, then you are not alone. All people face the same problem, try to do their best, and are united. To work as a team motivates employees and they share the same goals, avoid conflicts and must support each other. The business unit manager when asked what is important to consider as manager explains:

I think it has to show respect in all senses to the people you are working with and to win respect, to gain respect as an individual, as a person. You do not give an order... you have to show respect to the other person as an individual. In Greece, people are emotional and the interpersonal respect is a very crucial element. People do not accept being given orders. It is important to show respect and gain respect and be considered to be part of a team. (Interview, 2015)

This coordination of the work in team is considered as part of the success of the company. It is meant that teamwork and helping each other is a characteristic of the Greek culture defined as Philotimo. As an example respondents discuss the responsibility to the customers. The business is customer oriented and they mean the customer is always right and they must fulfil customers' requests. As the business is small and people have to meet customers outside of the office other employees may have difficulties in answering the customer questions but they always try and they do it.

Focus on quality and collaborating

The respondents state the importance of quality. They mean that quality is a key factor for the success of the company. Relationships with the customers are required so the customers can trust the company and feel safety. When selling a machine to a customer, they have to install the machine and to contact and communicate with the customer. After that, they must do preventive and corrective service maintenance. A problem they have, because they are a small team, is to coordinate technicians and engineers to go and fix the machines. This is very important as the machines should work 24 hours otherwise the patients become stressed. This healthcare treatment is about cancer and they want the therapies not to be interrupted. If the customer calls, Elekta coordinates and fix the problem quickly thinking about that the patient may wait for the therapy. It is also important when the employees meet customers in hospitals they have to be looked as individuals with personality and identity, people evaluate them as persons not only as a sales person. The business unit manager explains how meetings with customers can be:

People want your opinion about what is going on in current affairs, and what you think of the situation in general in the economy and in politics. They are curious to know what you think about major issues that are happening around you. Then you get into a conversation about economic crisis, political situation or your children. This would take 10-15 minutes and they probably would agree with your views.... you then start may be the more professional part of the discussion. (Interview, 2015)

The respondents mean this is a common procedure needed to allow you discussing then the Elekta issues. It is not only the quality of customer contacts that are important but also the quality of the managing the working environment. Employees like flat hierarchy and team spirit. This makes employees offer their free time and they see as the most important to finish assignments even if extra time is needed for it. Professionalism, team spirit and collective success encourage employees and make them supportive to the company and their co-workers.

Planning to face uncertainty in the Greek market

The respondents referred to the socioeconomic crisis in Greece. The economic climate and the depression is discussed everywhere in the society. This climate develops stress for the employees. Capital controls for example create byrocratic procedures and dysfunction for all businesses and makes it difficult to pay suppliers. Another stressful situation is the competition in the Greek market creating pressure during public tenders. It is also stressful to deal with the byrocracy in the Greek public sector. One respondent states:

I try to face our system because we live in Greece; we have a lot of byrocracy... You must find a way to convince people that are in the loop and are very important to find a way to solve problems. It is not easy, sometimes it is a nightmare, but because of our team collaboration, we find a way to deal with that. (Interview, 2015)

That Elekta Greece is a subsidiary of a bigger company facilitates and encourages employees. They mean that it is possible that the Greek unsafe environment can create economic problems for Elekta too and affect their salaries and they appreciate that they are a part of Elekta, Sweden. They try to avoid outside economic crisis and uncertainty by doing well in Elekta.

Relationships and uncertainty inside the company

Respondents discussed Elekta Greece relationships with the parent company. Decisions that the parent company makes should be followed. One such decision is the restructuring of the company. Elekta Sweden decided to create functional organisational structures. That means they divided the business in three parts. Sales, Service, Order fulfilment. As Elekta Greece is a small business unit, those professional roles are difficult to define. This creates anxiety both to managers and to employees. As employees work as a team and are multitasking helping each other for a successful company they do not understand why they have to change their working structure.

This issue developed a conflict between the parent company that takes a holistic responsibility for its business all around the world and a small business unit surrounded of a turbulent environment. It creates a problem in Greece as in the Greek culture people see the persons are responsible for the company and they do not care if they deal with service or the sale. The responsibility customers require from the company is a common responsibility for all employees. The manager means that this *silo structure* cannot function in the small Greek unit. He remarks:

We have a holistic relation with our customers where we are expected to and we want to take account and responsibility for the whole set of our concerns, from closing the contract to executing the contract... I am not for example responsible for service; this is in a different business line. The customers do not know and do not want to know that. They know me as a person in the market and they will call me for all issues concerning the service. (Interview, 2015)

Results and discussion

Hierarchy and motivation

Our research shows that employees point out the culture of open doors between managers and employees and between employees, discussing issues together, consulting and supporting each other. They work as a team helping them to face and avoid conflicts and find common solutions to problems within and outside the organisation. It is shown that this working culture contributes to the success of the organisation on the market and to satisfied customers. Working as a team and showing respect to each other develops them both to a strong professional team and individuals respected by the customers and the society. This behaviour can be linked to low power distance and to collectivism (Hofstede et al. 2010). It is also affected of the context where the culture value of Philotimo is important and encourage cooperative, self-sacrificing behaviour (Wright, et al., 2001; Katerinakis, 2011). The economic crisis (Economou et al., 2014) force the employees to cooperate and the healthcare industry affects the way the employees cooperate to respond to the patients and customers´ needs and fulfil their tasks..

According to Hofstede´s (1991; 2011) scores of the national cultural values, Greece is characterised by large power distance and hierarchical structure. Our research shows that the culture of the subsidiary is a flat hierarchy where decisions are made after consultation between managers and employees. This kind of culture where cooperation exists between employees and managers lead to equality and motivates employees to perform their best to succeed with the task assigned to them by the managers.

Our explanation is that the parent company's country of origin national culture affects the way the subsidiary works and transforms a hierarchical authoritative structure characterised the business structure in Greece to a democratic organisational culture.

We also saw that employees emphasise the relationship to the customers and what is needed to enhance this relationship. They point out the importance of a person in the relationship and the initial contacts with customers based on personal recognition and trust. Without this personal relation, it is not possible to develop a trusting relationship. We consider this because of the Greek national culture characterised of collectivism and cooperation in groups. This culture works together with the Swedish feminine culture emphasising relationships and personal contacts (Hofstede, 2011). Together they develop a strong team culture that is necessary in a small business where people must perform different tasks. We understand this because of the situation in the collectivistic context of the company requiring professionals to perform multitasking to finalize projects, which affects the behaviour of people (Hyder and Fregidou-Malama, 2009). This structure can also be explained by referring to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) research showing that communitarian cultures, as the Greek culture, are person orientated. In our case, low power distance is combined with group work inside the organisation to perform all tasks and offer quality to customers in healthcare services.

The respondents refer to the Greek Philotimo that as pushing them to work together to complete all the tasks and contribute to the success of the company and to satisfy patients and users. They state that even if they do not know exactly what a customer wants they find always the solution, as they do not want the patients to suffer or the customers to have equipment that is not working. Philotimo in Hofstede's (1991) words about culture can be characterised as programmed value in the minds of Greeks. Adamopoulos (1977) links Philotimo to standardised behaviour of an individual in a group, providing the individual with awareness and self-esteem. This Philotimo contributes to a specific organisational culture in the subsidiary in Greece characterised of hard work and sacrifices. The culture of the organisation can be linked to the model that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) define Incubator, as it is Egalitarian and person oriented and Guided Missile as it is Egalitarian and task oriented. They also position the Swedish organisational culture to the Incubator model and closed to the Guided Missile model and the Greek organisational culture as family oriented culture characterised of hierarchy and person orientation, but closed to incubator model. We place the Elekta subsidiary between those two organisational cultures and conceptualise its organisational model as Guided Missile culture and Incubator culture.

Uncertainty in the Greek market and between parent company and subsidiary

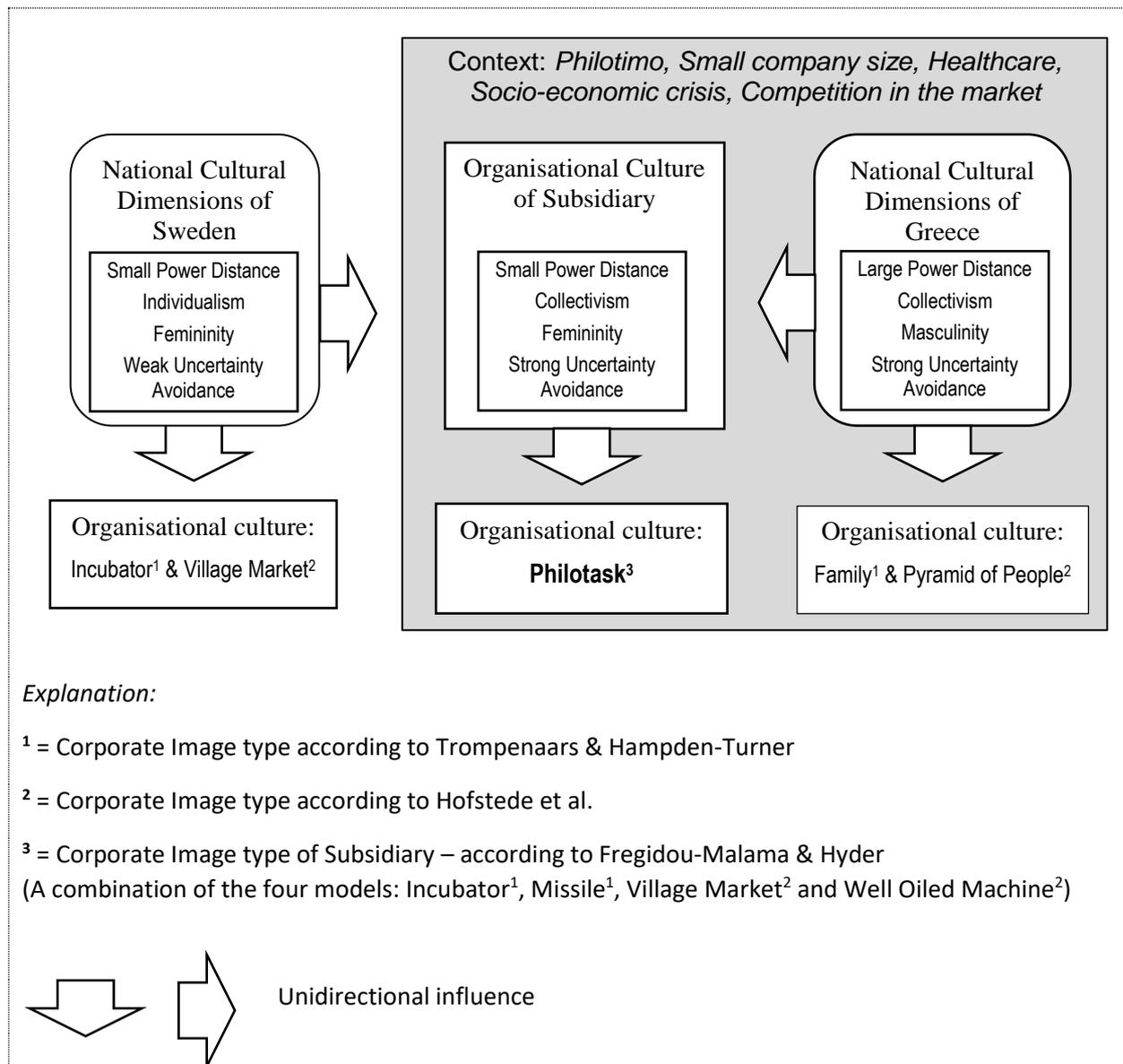
Our research shows how respondents are anxious about the economic crisis in Greece. They claim that bureaucracy in Greece makes is difficult for them. There are rules and procedures to be followed imposed by the public sector and showing the large power distance and uncertainty in the Greek society (Table 1). The bureaucratic rules can create time management problems to the employees. They can also create problems between the subsidiary and the parent company as assignments may not be completed in time and employees can be misunderstood.

Those external pressures create a fear in the employees thinking and they imagine about difficulties the company may face and consequently themselves facing unemployment. The study shows that the company can meet unpleasant situations in their relationship with the parent company. Trust is an important issue when related to business in other environments and our study reveals that the employees of the subsidiary feel, as they are not trusted of the parent company. Those unstructured situations in the minds of the employees are a result of the uncertainty avoidance value characterising the Greek society. Hofstede et al., (2010) discuss the effects of strong uncertainty avoidance and how it affects peoples' behaviour. They maintain that people from strong uncertainty avoidance societies work very hard and be busy which our case also shows. Combining large power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance Hofstede *et al.*, (2010) define Greek organisational culture as a pyramid culture and Swedish organisational culture as Village Market.

Our study reveals that the power distance in Elekta Greece is small and that strong anxiety about unknown situations characterises employees' behaviour. We conclude that hard working employees to complete assignments and small power distance between managers and employees may position Elekta Greece in the Well-oiled machine and Village market model of organisational culture. Our research suggests that the dichotomy models that Hofstede *et al.*, (2010) and Trompenaars and Humpden-Turner,

(2012) suggest do not function as ideal models in the Greek subsidiary of Elekta. We argue that the strong Philotimo value of the Greek culture, the size of the company, the type of the service, the socioeconomic crisis and the competition in the Greek market affect the organisation culture of the subsidiary. This culture is characterised of small power distance, strong uncertainty avoidance, collectivism/femininity and sacrifices to fulfil the task. We then position the culture of the subsidiary in the middle of the cultures the dichotomised models suggest and conceptualise the organisational culture of the subsidiary as *Philotask* culture (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The effect of national culture and context on organisational culture across borders



Conclusion

The aim of our research was to advance organisational culture theory in relation to national cultural dimensions and cultural context in healthcare industry. Our research shows:

1. We found that the national culture of the parent company and the national culture of the location where a subsidiary is established affects the subsidiary's organisational culture and act as mediators transforming the culture of the subsidiary.

2. Our research indicates that context matters and affects the organisational culture of the subsidiary. Factors as specific local cultural values, the size of the company, the socioeconomic situation in the country and the situation in the market strongly affect the organisational culture of a subsidiary.
3. We also show that dichotomised models of organisational cultures affected of the national cultural dimensions of countries is difficult to apply. The study suggests a structure where mediators are placed in the middle of the dichotomised factors and affect them. This allows the development of new organisational models solving problems by listening to the special context. In the Greek culture, the value of Philotimo is a neutralising variable between collectivistic and individualistic cultures and between large power distance and hierarchical structure and leads to equality and flat organisational culture.

Theoretical managerial and societal contribution

In this study, we made the following contribution. First, we contribute to national cultures theory by showing that national cultures matter and affects organisational cultures. We notice the double effect of the parent company's national culture and the national culture of the established unit's culture develop a new organisational culture and new practices different of the cultures of both countries.

Second, we advance context theory by showing that context matters and affects the organisational culture and practices of a subsidiary. Our study thus advances the context and organisational culture theory by showing that dichotomies make it difficult to characterise organisational cultures. By introducing the construct of context, we have shown that difficulties in positioning and defining organisational cultures can be possible.

Based on the results of our study we suggest managers who establish subsidiaries in new locations to take into consideration the context of the national cultural dimensions of the country they want to develop a business and context factors in the new location. Our research deals with a complex service that is very important for the health of people. To develop a healthcare focused organisational culture and establish the business in different parts of the world is essential and contributes to better treatment for people and to save lives. To be allowed to perform the treatment the firm must deliver good service quality and be trustworthy from patients, users and the society. It is crucial to show responsibility for people health and assume it as the first priority.

Limitations

Our study is limited to the selected subsidiary in Greece and to the context of healthcare industry and small business and situational market factors. Context variables can change during different times. How can a context specific theory be modified to be applicable to different environments?

By selection of other countries and context the theory we developed can be replicated and contribute to solve problems of generalisation.

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