

# GEB 3373 Homework 4

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### Chapter 4

1. What is culture?

- "Collection of values, beliefs, behaviors, customs, and attitudes that distinguish and define a society."

1. What are the primary characteristics of culture?

- The primary characteristics of culture is that it reflects a learned behavior from those around you such as talking with your hands if you're Italian, the elements of the culture are related, the culture is adaptive, and that the culture is shared "by members of the society and indeed defines the membership in the society".

In list form:

1. Culture reflects *learned behavior*
2. The elements of culture are *interrelated*
3. Culture is *adaptive*
4. Culture is *shared*

2. Describe the difference between high-context and low-context cultures.

- **Low-context culture:** "Culture in which the words being spoken explicitly convey the speaker's message to the listener."
- **High-context culture:** "Culture in which the context in which a discussion is held is equally as important as the actual words that are spoken in conveying the speaker's message to the listener."
- "Anglo-Saxon countries, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and Germanic countries are good examples of low-context cultures. In a **high-context culture**, the context in which a conversation occurs is just as important as the words that are actually spoken, and cultural clues are important in understanding what is being communicated. Examples are Arab countries and Japan."
  - When I took Mandarin in high school, I thought it was really cool how they don't have verb tenses but use context clues in the sentences or structure their sentences differently to give context to the action. For example, "I went running this morning" becomes "I run this morning" and if the morning already passed, then you know it's a past tense verb.

3. What are cultural clusters?

- A culture cluster is a region that shares many similar but different cultures such as Chinese

and Japanese culture or American and Canadian culture.

4. What are individualism and collectivism? How do they differ?

- **Collectivism:** "The belief that the group comes first."
- **Individualism:** "The cultural belief that the person comes first."
- Capitalism is a practice of *individualism* where everyone fends for themselves. Social democracy can be individualist but primarily works towards *collectivism* where benefitting the group will also benefit the individual.

5. Discuss the differences in pay systems between U.S. and Japanese firms. To what extent are these differences culturally determined?

6. What is power orientation?

- **Power orientation:** "Cultural beliefs about the appropriateness of power and authority in hierarchies such as business organizations."
- *Power orientation* has two ends, *power tolerance* and *power respect*. The former can be found in the USA, Israel, Ireland, or New Zealand while the latter can be found in France, Mexico, Brazil, and Singapore.

7. What is uncertainty orientation?

- "Cultural beliefs about uncertainty and ambiguity."
- *Uncertainty orientation* has two ends, *uncertainty acceptance* and *uncertainty avoidance*. The former is all about using uncertainty and opportunities to move upwards while the second recognizes uncertainty and change as a threat.

8. What are aggressive and passive goal behaviors? How do they differ?

- **Aggressive goal behavior:** "Behavior based on the cultural belief that material possessions, money, and assertiveness underlie motivation and reflect the goals that a person should pursue."
- **Passive goal behavior:** "Behavior based on the cultural belief that social relationships, quality of life, and concern for others are the basis of motivation and reflect the goals that a person should pursue."
- *Aggressive goal behavior* is more material goal oriented and keeps work and home life entirely separate but they are both equally important. *Passive goal behavior* places higher value on

9. What is the self-reference criterion?

- **Self-reference criterion:** "The unconscious use of one's own culture to help assess new surroundings."
- It's really hard to go to a new place and not take your history and pre-conceived notions with you.

## Chapter 5

### 1. What are ethics?

- **Ethics:** "An individual's beliefs about whether a decision, behavior, or action is right or wrong."
- I don't know if you've ever seen the show *The Good Place*, but it's a wonderful show from the creator of *The Office* and *Parks and Rec* and focuses on ethics and their application. It's one of my favorite shows and I highly recommend it.

### 2. Distinguish between ethical and unethical behavior.

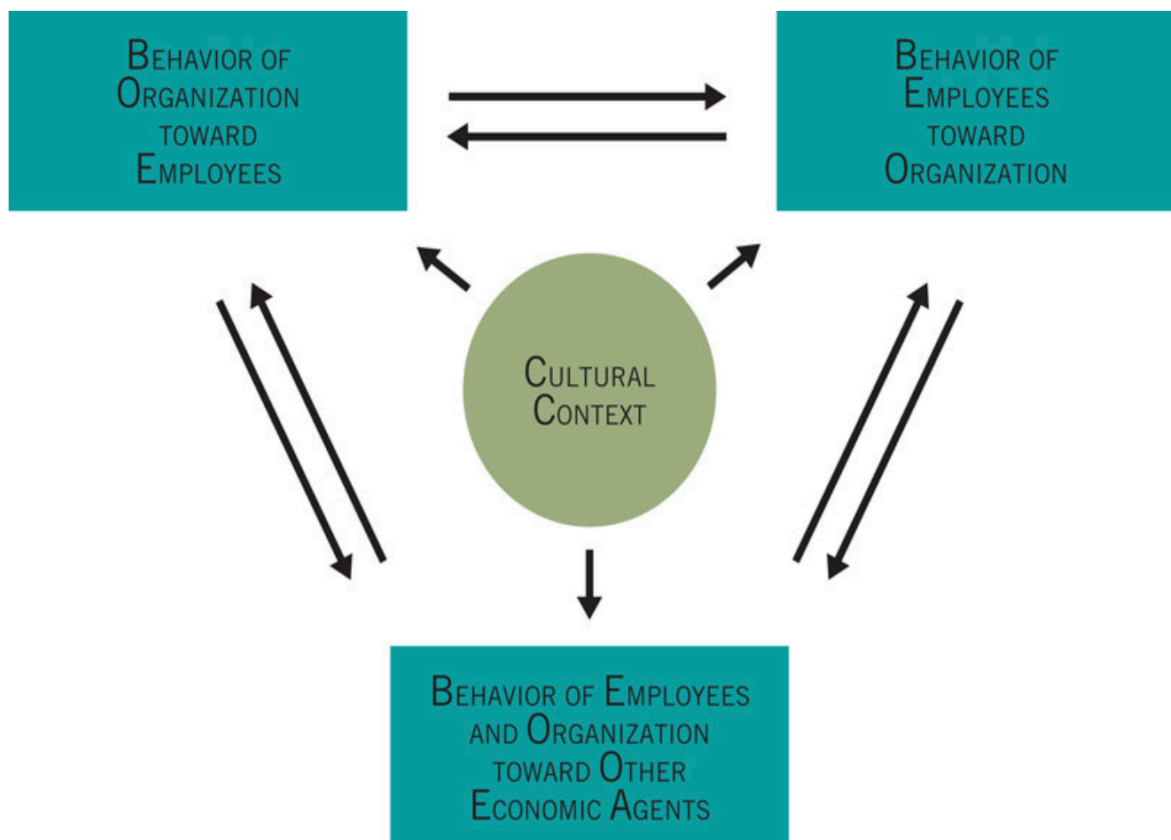
- **Ethical behavior** is behavior that "conforms to generally accepted social norms".  
**Unethical behavior** is exactly the opposite in that it is behavior that "does not conform to generally accepted social norms."

### 3. What role does culture play in the formation of ethics?

- Because ethics are based in the accepted social norms, and social norms are created by culture, it would follow that culture plays a role in the formation of ethics.

### 4. How do organizations attempt to manage ethical behavior across borders?

**Figure 5.1 Ethics in a Cross-Cultural Context**



- Managing ethical behaviors across international borders is incredibly tricky because of how interrelated culture and ethics are. Depending on the roles of the employees, the guidelines for ethics across borders may change. The chart above from the book illustrates the balance needed to make sure that employees are acting appropriately in every context.

5. What is social responsibility?

- **Social responsibility:** The set of ethical obligations one follows "to protect and enhance the society in which it functions."

6. What is the difference between ethics and social responsibility?

- Ethics is the baseline for social responsibility. One can think of ethics as the rulebook for how to live their life while social responsibility is the application and action of following those rules.

7. Identify the major areas of social responsibility for international business.

1. "Fulfilling their economic mission, delivering profits for their shareholders, and creating value for their stakeholders"
  2. "Protecting the natural environment"
  3. "Enhancing the general welfare of society"
- These three can be condensed into the phrase "people, planet, and profits."

8. What are the four general approaches a firm can take regarding social responsibility?

1. **Obstructionist stance:** These companies do the bare minimum to fulfil their social responsibility. They tend to deny crossing any ethical lines and will deflect accusations or try and draw attention away from themselves. Some examples are Nestle and Danone.
2. **Defensive stance:** These companies will do only what they are obligated to do by law and nothing else.
3. **Accommodative stance:** These companies will also only do the bare minimum, but may go above and beyond in rare cases such as matching charitable donations made by employees or donate to youth sports.
4. **Proactive stance:** Proactive companies will go above and beyond in many areas because they see themselves as a member of society and that this means they have a level of social responsibility to meet.

9. What is a whistle-blower?

- **Whistle-blower:** "a person who informs on a person or organization engaged in an illicit activity." (Oxford Languages)
- Ed Snowden became famous for blowing the whistle on all the sorts of data that the government collects about people.

10. Identify and briefly summarize representative laws and regulations that attempt to address international ethics and social responsibility.

- A more extreme example of international laws and regulations about ethics are the Geneva conventions which cover humanitarian treatment in wars.
- While the Paris Climate Agreement is not a set of laws, it is a set of international guidelines on how countries can become more environmentally friendly to combat global warming.