

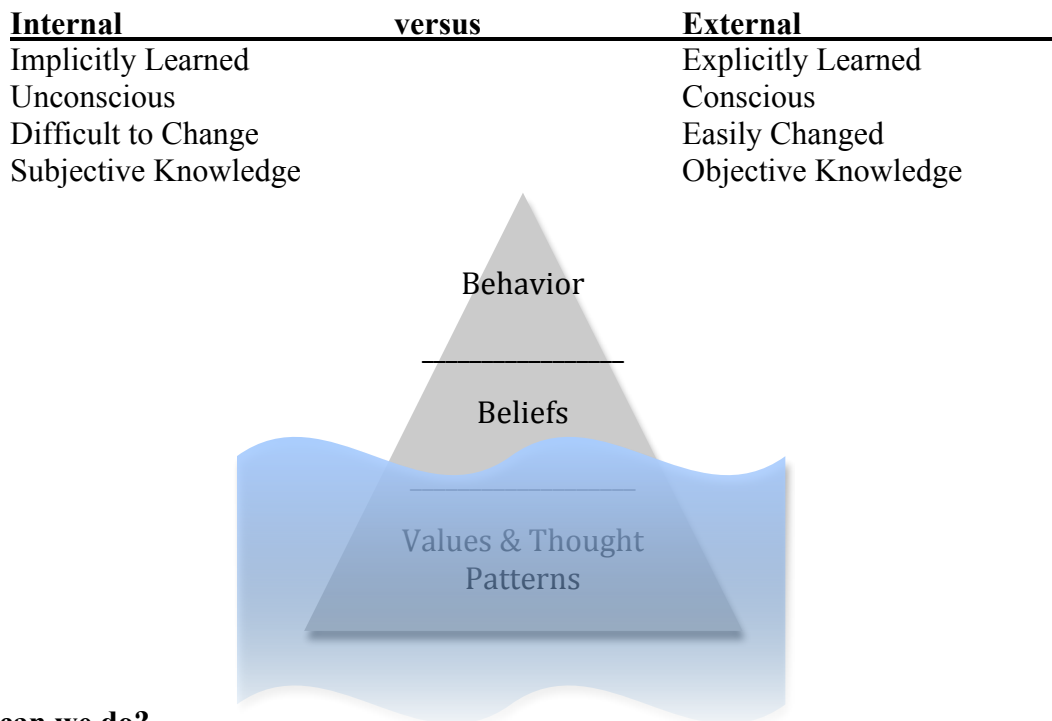
Edward T. Hall's Cultural Iceberg Model

In 1976, Hall developed the iceberg analogy of culture. If the culture of a society was the iceberg, Hall reasoned, then there are some aspects visible, above the water, but there is a larger portion hidden beneath the surface.

What does that mean?

The external, or conscious, part of culture is what we can see and is the tip of the iceberg and includes behaviors and some beliefs. The internal, or subconscious, part of culture is below the surface of a society and includes some beliefs and the values and thought patterns that underlie behavior.

There are major differences between the conscious and unconscious culture.



What can we do?

Hall suggests that the only way to learn the internal culture of others is to actively participate in their culture.

When one first enters a new culture, only the most overt behaviors are apparent. As one spends more time in that new culture, the underlying beliefs, values, and thought patterns that dictate that behavior will be uncovered.

What this model teaches us is that we cannot judge a new culture based only on what we see when we first enter it. We must take the time to get to know individuals from that culture and interact with them. Only by doing so can we uncover the values and beliefs that underlie the behavior of that society.