

Foreword

Starting point for Sebastian-Dominik Jais' dissertation is the insight that – despite the relevance of national culture on the one hand and the use of information on the other – there is only little research on the relationship between the two variables. Thus, the author aimed at a better understanding of the influence of national culture on the use of information. To that end, Jais has carried out a survey with asset managers of a renowned global company in Germany, South Korea and the United States of America. Since there is only little relevant knowledge available, the author has chosen an explorative setup.

In his research, Sebastian-Dominik Jais finds that differences between the samples are only observable where the adequate type of information use is determined neither by technical necessity nor the task to be fulfilled. Accordingly, national culture can only exert its influence when the information user has some degree of freedom when fulfilling his task. In addition, the findings of Jais' research provide first evidence for the existence of cross-national effects on the managerial use of information in general. In particular, the results show that power distance and uncertainty avoidance affect the managerial use of information most strongly. This confirms Hofstede's prediction and underscores the frequently made statement that not all cultural dimensions are similarly important as determinants of managerial behaviour.

Furthermore, Sebastian-Dominik Jais shows a moderating influence of national culture on the interactive, diagnostic and symbolic use of information. Other types of information use, such as the instrumental/conceptual use of information, proved not to exert significant effects.

This dissertation is the first in a row of similar projects, in which the influence of national culture shall be analyzed to better understand its effects in a business environment. Based on the results of this research series, eventually, suggestions as to how to adapt information systems and other management tools to the prevalent cultural environment shall be derived.

Utz Schäffer