



**MIND: INTERCULTURAL MODEL OF NEGOTIATION FOR DECISION-MAKING**

**RESEARCH GROUP OF INTERCULTURAL NEGOTIATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Today's world is a communications network where business and international trade take place. Day by day, technological advances facilitate communication between people, but the cultural barrier is a decisive factor in the success of a negotiation if it is not handled with care. Taking into account the above, MIND is a model where the research of important authors of interculturality (Hofstede, Trompenaars, House, T. Hall) is unified, which allows taking into account the dimensions or key aspects of a culture, in a way that these can intervene in a negotiation from its preparation to the culmination. This model is faced with an analysis of the culture of China and Colombia, where there are important similarities in the type of communication, power perception and group relations, but, on the other hand, there are differences in the handling of uncertainty, time and the type of negotiation. Thus, the recognition of these aspects becomes a significant tool to explain, understand and predict the behavior of the parties and the results of a negotiation process.

**KEY WORDS:** *Intercultural negotiation, Model, Culture, Intercultural Dimensions, Communication, Integrative / distributive bargaining, China, Colombia.*

## INTRODUCCIÓN

Peter Drucker, considered the greatest philosopher of administrative science of the twentieth century, stated that: "The most important thing in communication is to listen to what is not said" and good communication is the way by which a successful negotiation is achieved. However, it is impossible to say that a negotiation is summarized in the development of strategies and agreements between two parties, even more, if we talk about intercultural negotiation. If the exchange of proposals and concessions is the core of a negotiation between two parties with different cultures, that "which is not said" would be its periphery. And what is not said, is all that set of rituals, beliefs, customs and ways that define the culture of each party.

The differences between people who are part of an intercultural negotiation are definitely perceived, but often they are not known in depth or not given enough importance. However, these differences are decisive in this process, so much so that, if not taken into account, it could end in the premature termination of the negotiation, without a successful outcome. From the language, to the conception of time, among other types of beliefs, these are aspects that must be contemplated, because if they do not, the development of the negotiation can be impaired.

Intercultural researchers such as Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars, Robert J. House, Edward T. Hall, Manoella Wilbaut, have developed models and dimensions that facilitate the "measurement" of cultures and their impact on negotiation. For this reason, it is considered necessary to unify the information provided by each of these exponents in order to create a tool that facilitates the negotiation between different cultures, with access to anyone interested in venturing into international business. This is how MIND was born, the Intercultural Model of Negotiation for Decisions is a proposal that aims to be applied in the counterpart of any culture, in such a way that planning and decision-making is improved during the negotiation process. MINDS mainly take culture and its impact on negotiation. Additionally, this guiding model will be applied to the negotiation case in which the parties belong to the Chinese culture and the Colombian culture.

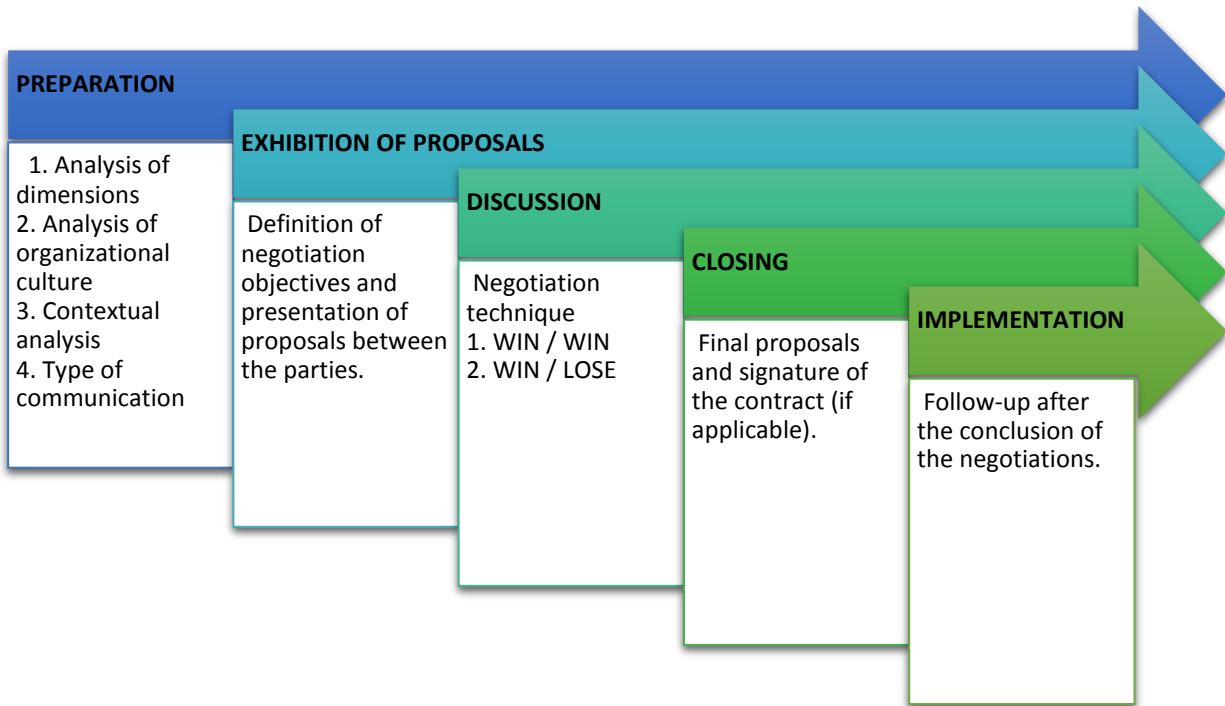
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### **MIND: INTERCULTURAL MODEL OF NEGOTIATION FOR DECISION MAKING**

The model proposed below is based on the SNA (Successful Negotiation Activator) by Manoella Wilbaut. In the SNA, certain guidelines, steps and variables are offered that the employer should take into account in order to prepare a negotiation in an organized and favorable manner, so that it can later be applied to any type of negotiation. But along with the research of other authors (Hofstede, Trompenaars, House, Hall), a model is created that considers the most salient aspects of culture that can be decisive in the success of a negotiation within an international environment. This is how the Intercultural Model of Negotiation for Decision Making, MIND, is born from the synergy of more than 30 years of research and multiple theories, hypotheses and points of view.

The objective of the model is to become a tool for consultation and support for people who want to venture into international business or who wish to have greater understanding, control and, therefore, success in their negotiations. In this way, the interested party would be provided with a complete description of the country according to the phases and variables that intervene in the negotiation model, leaving an optional space for the person to supplement the information of the investigation according to their negotiation case.



The phases proposed by MIND consist in segmenting the negotiation in the following way: 1) Preparation, 2) Exhibition of proposals, 3) Discussion, 4) Closing and finally, 5) Implementation.

## PHASES OF THE MODEL

### 1. PREPARATION

For MIND, preparation is a crucial phase that allows a thorough and thorough analysis to the negotiating counterpart, laying the foundations for the way in which the meetings will proceed, guiding points to identify to design convenient negotiation strategies and also to anticipate negotiation patterns, as well as possible novelties and potential conflicts that may arise during the following stages. The foregoing, because it is vital not to fall into stereotypes, or predispositions for lack of knowledge and / or negligence to obtain it.

In this way, the first stage will be divided into three parts:

#### 1.1. Analysis of dimensions

Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars and Robert J. House (creator of the GLOBE model: Global Leadership & Organizational Behavior Effectiveness), are pioneering researchers

in theories related to culture, from which the study of a series of dimensions referring to cultures has arisen. With this analysis, it is intended to give a general look at the characteristics of the cultural group or nation to which the counterpart belongs. Understanding by cultural group a series of countries and / or regions that can be grouped by their history, geographical location, language or beliefs; and understanding by nation, according to the Royal Spanish Academy (2017), the "set of inhabitants of a country governed by the same government and the group of people of the same origin, who generally speak the same language and have a common tradition". For greater accuracy, MIND suggests making the analysis based on the nation to which the counterpart belongs.

The dimensions that the model contemplates are:

**a) Distance to power**

According to Hofstede, this dimension expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect power to be distributed unequally (Hofstede, 2001). In societies with a high degree of distance to power, power is seen as an instrument to provide social order; they accept a hierarchical order in which everyone has a place reflected in the differentiation between social classes; Upward social mobility is limited and resources are available for a few (Virkus, 2009). In societies with low distance to power, people strive to equalize the distribution of power. Society has a broad middle class; upward social mobility is common and there is greater access to resources and information (Virkus, 2009).

**b) Individualism vs. Collectivism**

Individualism is the preference of an individual to take care of himself and his family and / or closest people. On the other hand, in collectivism, individuals expect their relatives or members of a particular group to deal with them in exchange for unconditional loyalty (Hofstede, 2001). If the result of this dimension is high, it refers to an individualistic society, and if it is low, to a collectivist society.

According to the GLOBE model (House et al., 1999), it is important to consider two types of collectivisms.

- i) **Collectivism I (Institutional collectivism):** it reflects the degree to which the organization's practices encourage and stimulate the collective distribution of resources and collective action. For individuals with a high level of institutional

collectivism, members assume that they are highly interdependent with the organization; loyalty is encouraged, group decision making and the fulfillment of the interests of the group beyond the individual ones. In addition, the rewards are based on equity within the group (Virkus, 2009).

For those with a low level, members assume that they are quite independent of the organization; Critical decisions are made by individuals and the pursuit of goals and the maximization of individual interests are fostered, even at the expense of group loyalty. In addition, the rewards are based on the merit of each person (Virkus, 2009).

- ii) **Collectivism II (In-group collectivism):** Aversion to Uncertainty expresses the degree to which members of a society feel uncomfortable / anxious about uncertainty and ambiguity, as well as the way they treat it (Hofstede, 2001). Societies that have a high level in this dimension demonstrate great resistance to change, handle established procedures and policies, maintain rigid codes of beliefs and behavior and are intolerant of non-orthodox behaviors and ideas. They use formality in interactions with others and take moderate and carefully calculated risks. By contrast, those with a low level maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles. They show moderate resistance to change and take more risks, while not limiting themselves to following formalities (Virkus, 2009).

iii)

**a) Uncertainty Avoidance**

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**b) Time perspective (Long/short term)**

Societies with long-term orientation (high level) prefer to maintain traditions and norms respected by time while contemplating social change with suspicion. They have a propensity to save for the future and emphasize work for long-term

success. A culture with short-term orientation (low level), on the other hand, adopts a more pragmatic approach: they encourage economics and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future. In addition, they have tendencies to spend in the present, instead of saving, because they prefer gratification as soon as possible (Hofstede, 2001).

### **c) Universalism vs. Particularism**

Universalism is the belief that ideas and practices can be applied everywhere and with any member of a society without losing validity, whereas particularism is the belief that circumstances dictate how ideas and practices should be applied. Cultures with high universalism see a reality and focus on formal rules. Business meetings are characterized by rational and professional arguments with a proactive attitude. Cultures with high particularism see the more subjective reality and place greater emphasis on relationships (Montt & Rehner, 2012).

### **d) Neutral vs. Emotional**

A neutral culture is one in which emotions are kept under control and decisions are made objectively, while in an emotional culture emotions tend to be expressed in an open and natural way (Montt & Rehner, 2012).

### **e) Sequential vs. Synchronous**

This dimension refers to the management of time, then a sequential culture is one in which events will happen in a logical and orderly manner, usually according to a plan. Contrary to this, synchronous cultures tend to work on several events at the same time without adhering to a specific plan that is modified when necessary (Mindtools, 2014)

### **f) Gender equality**

It is basically the degree to which gender inequality in a society is minimized.

Societies with a high level in this dimension have more women in positions of authority, lower occupational sex segregation, and similar levels of educational attainment for men and women. On the other hand, those with a low level present the opposite (Virkus, 2009).

## **1.2 Organizational culture analysis- (optional)**



Geert Hofstede (1990) defines the organizational culture as: "the way in which the members of an organization relate to each other, their work and the outside world in comparison with other organizations". In this sense, this analysis works as an opportunity to reinforce and / or rethink the strategies that have been developed to advance the negotiation, because not only would the nation or culture of those involved in the process be taken into account, but also also the specific company from which they come. However, precisely as it refers to the particular case of the company / institution with which it is negotiating, it is an analysis that corresponds to the interested party.

Next, the dimensions that are suggested to take into account:

**a. Media oriented vs. Objectives oriented**

According to Hofstede et al. (1990) in a culture oriented to the media, the key feature is the way in which the work has to be carried out, avoiding risks during the process as long as possible and people identifying with the "how". In a goal-oriented culture, people identify with the "what", employees are mainly dedicated to achieving specific objectives or internal results, even if they imply greater risk.

**Key questions:**

- What are the objectives of the counterpart?
- What is more important? The process or the result?
- How much are they willing to give in order to close the negotiation?
- What kind of risks or sacrifices are they willing to take?

**b. Simple work discipline vs. Strict work discipline**

Hofstede et al. (1990) refers to this dimension as the amount and complexity in the internal structure, control and discipline in a company. However, a very relaxed culture (easygoing) reveals a loose internal structure, lack of predictability and little control and little discipline; There is a lot of improvisation and surprises. A very strict work discipline reveals the opposite. People are very aware of the costs, they are punctual and serious.

**Key questions:**

- How close are the people who are part of the negotiation group?

- How committed and loyal are people to the company / institution to which they belong?
- Does the professional relationship or personal relationship between the negotiation group prevail?
- How is the internal structure of the company?

### **c. Open system vs. Closed system**

This dimension is related to the accessibility of an organization. In a very open culture newcomers (both the company and external people) are immediately welcome. While, in a very closed organization, it is basically the opposite (Hofstede et al., 1990).

#### **Key questions:**

- What issues related to the counterpart company, but not related to the negotiation are mentioned?
- Is it possible to know the internal panorama of other areas of the company during the negotiation?
- Is it possible to establish a relationship beyond the professional with the members of the negotiating group?
- Is it possible to relate to other people in the company outside the negotiation group?

### **1.3. Contextual analysis**

To start a negotiation, it is crucial to understand who is going to be treated and what kind of culture it comes from. This is why a contextual analysis must also be carried out in which a proper identification of symbols, rituals, and customs of the culture of the counterpart, "the upper part of the iceberg", is made. It is also important to take into account the current panorama, both of the country, and of the company from which they come, emphasizing issues that may be sensitive or that it is advisable to avoid. Once the information has been compiled and analyzed, the most suitable personnel can be defined to be part of the negotiation, the way to approach and discuss issues and, finally, to choose a strategy and negotiation style to apply in the first formal meeting.

The suggested format for condensing the information related to the contextual analysis of a culture is the following:

<b>CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS (COUNTRY) _____</b> <b>COMPANY: _____</b>	
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	
<b>PRACTICES AND RELIGION</b>	
<b>HISTORY</b>	
<b>POLITIC ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>CURRENT CRISIS WITH ANOTHER COUNTRY</b>	
<b>MAIN ALLIED COUNTRIES</b>	
<b>POSITION AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE</b>	
<b>CURRENT SITUATION OF THE COMPANY (Goals, crisis, projects)</b>	

**1.4. Communication type: high or low context**

Taking into account the research of Edward T. Hall, in a high context communication, most of the information is taken from the physical surroundings, from the social context, implicit and non-verbal messages. High context cultures do not rely on verbal communication to understand the full meaning of a given interaction. In contrast, low context cultures rely mostly on the explicit verbal message and rarely seek additional information in the environment. In these cultures, personal relationships usually occur because people engage in certain activities and it is necessary for people to provide more contextual information in the daily interaction, that is, to provide additional information through other spoken or written communications (AFS, 2011). .

<b>HIGH CONTEXT VS LOW CONTEXT</b>		
The counterpart handles a high use of non-verbal elements, voice tones and varied gestures that they consider an important part of the conversation.	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>	The counterpart handles a low use of non-verbal elements. Messages are transmitted more through words than through non-verbal means.

People interpret non-verbal expressions unilaterally.	1 2 3 4 5	People do not give much importance to non-verbal expressions. The words are what are taken into account.
The verbal message of the counterpart is implicit and the context is more important than the words.	1 2 3 4 5	The verbal message of the counterpart is explicit and the context is not relevant in the communication.
The verbal message is indirect; They tend to address several issues related to the main topic.	1 2 3 4 5	The verbal message is direct; The fear is addressed in an exact and concrete way.
The communication is considered as a tool to get involved with the counterpart in a closer way.	1 2 3 4 5	Communication is considered as a way of exchanging information, ideas and opinions with the counterpart.
<p>TO CONSIDER:</p> <p>What is more important, information or dialogue?</p> <p>What languages are spoken?</p> <p>What non-verbal expressions do they handle?</p>		

## 2. EXPUSURE PROPOSALS

After carrying out the analysis corresponding to the topics dealt with in the preparation phase, the way in which the first meeting with the counterpart will proceed will also mark the beginning of the negotiation. In this planning, it is already possible to have an idea of how to approach the counterpart efficiently, contemplating gestures and conversation topics to avoid, possible negotiation conditions, expectations of a person of the culture in question; and anticipating the requirements and / or setbacks that may arise with said culture. Even more so if they have opposite results in the preliminary evaluation of dimensions. The dimension of high context and low context is placed as one of the main ones to impact this part of the negotiation process.

## 3. DISCUSSION

At this stage, it is important to ratify how the counterpart negotiates, emphasizing the type of communication (high or low context) mentioned above and the negotiation technique that they handle, which can be:

- **Negociación gana/gana o gana/pierde**

The negotiation wins / wins or integrative seeks to achieve the best distribution of benefits between the parties and create value between them. On the other hand, in the win / lose or integrative negotiation there is a tendency for one of the parties to try to take advantage over the other, ending in a situation of conflict of interests (Rojas & Bertran, 2010).

Among the variables to identify to impact on the negotiation technique practiced by the counterpart, it is advisable to take into account the balance of power, management of the environment, notion of trust, synchronous or asynchronous communication that establish the rhythm of the negotiation process.

#### **4. CLOSING**

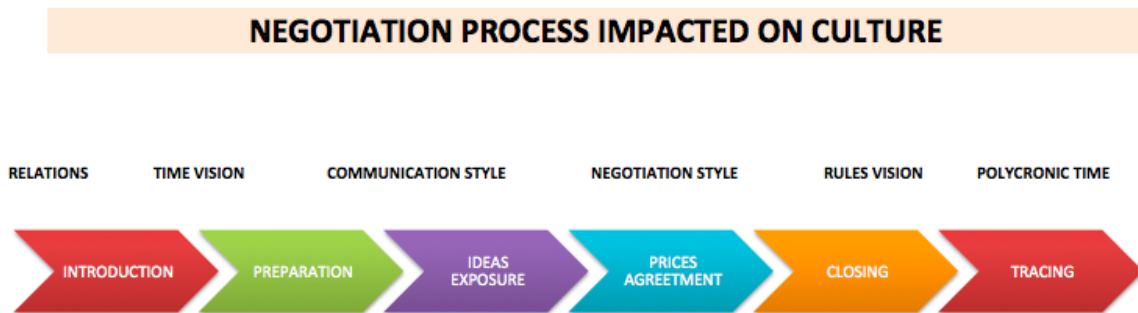
This stage requires permanent observation in the dimensions of: Uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation vs. Short-term orientation, since in this phase the final provisions of the contract are determined such as when it will start, when it will be signed, the way in which the interests of the parties will be respected through clauses and / or compliance policies, penalties, among others. Likewise, the closing includes the final offers and the result of the discussions and conflicts that took place during the entire negotiation process. In this stage, the balance of power between both parties will be materialized and will normally conclude with the signing of a contract that supports the agreement. The contract according to the universality or particularist culture can be interpreted differently as a strict document to be followed or as an intention to start working together.

#### **5. IMPLEMENTATION**

Between what was discussed in the previous phases, it is advisable to determine the manner and time in which the negotiation will begin to be applied. The empowerment or the embauntable of the culture. This is how in this phase the implementation of the contract and its respective commitments are monitored. Taking into account how well the agreement is carried out, the parties could enter into other negotiations in the future and / or take the decision to renegotiate or add more conditions to the agreement..

## CONCLUSIONS

The negotiation is influenced in all its phases by culture as the following graph demonstrates:



### CULTURE (TIME- COMMUNICATION)

MIND is a model that will allow preparing and creating successful negotiations.

#### NEXT STEPS:

#### EVALUATION OF THE DIMENSIONS OF THE MODEL

The questionnaire handled in MIND in the preparation phase, is based on the one proposed by Hofstede; which consists of a series of 5 questions per dimension and / or aspect to be evaluated, but in this case, from the point of view of the negotiators. The answers are determined by a scale of 1 to 5, to which the respondent will respond according to the statement with which they agree. The chosen answers must be added and multiplied by 4 to determine a representative value of each dimension or aspect on a scale of 1 to 100. In addition, each worksheet contains open questions in the lower part whose objective is to expand the perspective of the dimension, contemplating more specific aspects that are identified during a negotiation process.

Now, the objective of this questionnaire is to give a more particular approach to the interpretation of the dimensions proposed by Hofstede, Trompenaars and House (GLOBE), directing them towards intercultural negotiation. All the questions designed for the questionnaire applied in the analysis of dimensions of MIND (see annex 1), as well as the key questions for the analysis of organizational culture and the type of communication, are framed in a negotiation environment between individuals from different backgrounds. Countries For this reason, the sample to evaluate the panorama of each country should be of people who have already had experience and significant immersion in this field.

After carrying out the surveys and a focus group for the evaluation of a country, a proper analysis of data is made to complement the study of the theoretical dimensions of the country under observation. In this way, when a person wants to do the follow-up of a negotiation based on MIND, he will be provided with the theoretical framework of the country with which he wants to negotiate, corresponding to the first stage.

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