

1. **Stereotypes and Bias.** Unconscious biases often influence promotion decisions, favoring candidates who resemble the decision-maker in terms of gender, age, and experience. This perpetuates a cycle of underrepresentation.

2. **Pipeline Leak.** The 'pipeline leak' phenomenon occurs when women disproportionately leave the career pipeline during advancement. It is increasingly clear that the gap starts early, often at the level of emerging leadership. Women are less likely to be promoted than their male coworkers.

To overcome these barriers, companies must adopt a multifaceted approach.

- **Integration of Gender Equality into Business Strategy.** Gender equality should be embedded in corporate strategy and supported by senior management.

- **Transparent Career Development and Remuneration.** Implementing clear and unbiased career progression and compensation policies can minimize the impact of gender bias.

- **Talent Development Investments.** Providing training programs and flexible work arrangements can help retain qualified employees, particularly women.

- **Performance Metrics.** Establishing metrics to track progress in gender equality can motivate employees and managers to prioritize inclusivity.

- **Salary Audits.** Conducting regular salary audits to close the gender pay gap can enhance employee confidence and attract talented professionals.

In conclusion, it is emphasized that gender equality is not only an ethical issue but also a critically important strategic asset. Companies that effectively implement its principles gain access to a wider talent pool, enhance innovation potential, and improve financial performance, which ultimately becomes the key to long-term competitive advantage.

## Reference

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**Е. Rublevskaya**

**Е. П. Рублевская**

**БГАТУ (Минск)**

*Научный руководитель Н. В. Сысова*

## CULTURAL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

### Культурные аспекты международного бизнеса

As our world grows increasingly interconnected through globalization, and commerce extends beyond individual nations to operate on an international scale, understanding the social and cultural environment is essential. The success of international activity directly depends on a company's ability to adapt to the cultural characteristics,

values, and norms of behavior in the countries where it operates. The social and cultural environment includes a wide range of factors influencing the behavior of people and organizations in a particular country or region. Underestimating or ignoring these factors can lead to serious problems, including financial losses, reputational risks, and even the failure of the entire project. These include culture, social institutions, demographic factors, ethnic characteristics, and education. The aim of this paper is to characterize the main sociocultural elements influencing international business operations and prospects for international business ventures.

International business operations are substantially influenced by sociocultural elements, encompassing areas such as

- **Marketing.** Cultural characteristics must be considered when developing advertising campaigns, selecting distribution channels, and adapting products to local needs.

- **Human Resources Management.** Cultural differences influence management styles, employee motivation, the formation of corporate culture, and the conducting of negotiations.

- **Production.** It is necessary to consider the peculiarities of labor legislation, workforce qualifications, resource availability, and environmental requirements.

- **Finance.** Cultural characteristics influence attitudes towards risk, investment strategies, and financial planning.

- **Ethics.** Local ethical norms and principles must be considered when conducting business, preventing corruption, and respecting human rights.

Key challenges of the sociocultural environment for international business are culture shock, intercultural communication, and corruption.

The social and cultural environment offers several prospects for international business ventures, notably:

- **Market Expansion.** Entering new markets allows companies to increase sales and gain access to new customers.

- **Risk Diversification.** Conducting business in different countries allows companies to reduce dependence on one market and mitigate risks associated with economic or political fluctuations.

- **Gaining Competitive Advantages.** Adapting to cultural characteristics allows companies to create more effective products and services that meet the needs of local consumers.

- **Increasing Innovation.** Interaction with different cultures can stimulate creative thinking and lead to the creation of new innovative solutions.

- **Improving Company Image.** Companies that demonstrate respect for cultural characteristics and comply with ethical norms gain the trust of consumers and improve their reputation.

Strategies for adapting to the social and cultural environment involve research, training, localization, partnerships, hiring local employees, creating cross-cultural teams, and developing a code of ethics.

In conclusion, it should be noted that companies that pay due attention to studying and adapting to the cultural peculiarities of the countries where they operate gain competitive advantages, reduce risks, and improve their image. In an era of globalization, where cultural boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred, the ability to communicate interculturally and adapt becomes an essential element of successful international business.

**A. Rusak**

**А. А. Русак**

БНТУ (Минск)

*Научный руководитель Д. И. Бондарчук*

## **CULTURAL FEATURES OF BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE**

### **Культурные особенности ведения деловых переговоров в международной практике**

In the modern world intercultural communication is necessary in connection with the growth of globalization, development of scientific and technical progress and intercultural trade. To achieve effective intercultural communication, traditional, linguistic, religious and social features should be taken into account in order to avoid disagreements and conflicts. As international relations are constantly developing, more research should be carried out for a better understanding of how to handle communication in an overseas field.

According to different researches, mainly three cultural groups are highlighted: «culture of dignity», «culture of honor», «culture of face». It is assumed that cultural differences appear due to geographical, political and economic conditions, in which previous generations lived. In general, there are two main factors that influence the formation certain type of culture – population density and predominant activity.

Culture of dignity developed in regions with abundant agricultural land and low population density. This type of culture occurs in USA, Canada and Northern Europe. Agricultural land was in suffice, so agriculture took on an individual rather than a collective character. This type is characterized by love of freedom and independence. People of this culture are interested in solving issues from a rational point of view, not emotional, as earlier there is no necessity to preserve good relationships. The opponents might never meet again over huge territories. In the society of culture of dignity people feel protected by the law, so they trust their partners in negotiations. Representatives of this culture consider opponents' interests, ask direct questions to solve the problem together, and see the opponent as an ally, not an adversary.

Culture of face appeared in areas, where agriculture was the main type of activity and the population density in these lands was very high. This type of culture occurs in East Asian countries like China and Japan. It emphasizes harmony, organization, and indirect