

POLISH PERCEPTION OF TURKISH NEGOTIATORS IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY: RESEARCH FINDINGS

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Purpose: This study aims to understand how Polish importers perceive Turkish exporters' negotiation behavior within the textile industry. It explores the cultural underpinnings that influence these perceptions and behaviors, utilizing Hofstede's cultural dimension framework.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study employed qualitative research through 27 in-depth interviews with Polish importers who had experience cooperating with Turkish textile and apparel exporters. This study was conducted from May to July 2023.

Findings: The findings reveal that Polish importers perceive Turkish negotiators as expecting long-term commitments, focusing on long-term benefits while being competitive yet ready to make frequent concessions. Respect and building trusting relationships were deemed crucial, with negotiations often being slow, and bargaining expected as part of the process.

Research Limitations/Implications: This study's limitation is its focus on Polish perceptions, which may not fully encapsulate the dynamics of Turkish negotiators' intentions. Future research could include perspectives of Turkish negotiators or explore negotiations in other industries for a broader understanding.

Practical Implications: Understanding these negotiation dynamics can improve cross-cultural business relationships between Polish importers and Turkish exporters, leading to more effective negotiation strategies and outcomes.

Social Implications: The research underscores the importance of cultural awareness in international business negotiations, which could foster better international cooperation and understanding.

Originality/Value: This study presents unique research findings and contributes to the existing literature by focusing on the specific context of Polish-Turkish negotiations in the textile industry, highlighting the role of cultural influences on negotiation behaviors and perceptions.

Keywords: cross-cultural negotiation, international negotiation, negotiation in textile industry, Turkish negotiation style.

Category of the paper: Research.

1. Introduction

The Republic of Turkey, which is located at the crossroads of southeastern Europe and western Asia, has textile manufacturing history dating back to the 16th century. Today, Turkey's textile and apparel industry is not only a generator of economic activity but also ranks among the leading exporters globally. Poland is one of Turkey's top textile export destinations in the world. Since Poland is one of the top export destinations, it is important to understand how understanding these two cultures can improve the relationship between exporters and importers. In this article, the author will try to show, first, how Turkish culture shapes negotiators' behavior and, second, will try to present how Polish importers perceive Turkish exporters' negotiating behavior.

2. Culture

Culture is a complex phenomenon. Deluga and Wallis (2009) observed that the notion of a culture is multivocal and is characterized by a great variety of definitions functioning both in theory and in practice, so a given definition may express only one selected aspect of a culture (p. 158). The complexity of culture makes it impossible to establish a proper definition. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) suggest that "culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (p. 4). Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) add that a culture is a mental programming which takes place throughout human's life, though programming some patterns like thinking and feeling take place in early childhood (pp. 2-3). In other words, culture defines people in a particular country. Thanks to mental programming, which stimulates certain behaviors, people feel committed to a particular culture. Bjerke (2004) states that culture, like many other subjects, is learned and shared within a given community (p. 19). Culture is a part of life that needs to be learned. Bjerke (2004) adds that culture is nothing else but a well-versed way of thinking and behaving. (p. 19). Salacuse (1994) emphasizes that culture is the heritage of a given community handed down through generations as a set of rules, categories, and concepts accepted by a community (p. 61). In addition, Lebaron and Pillay (2006) are based on Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), who claim that a culture is an unsaid agreement within a party that indicates its identity and links people (p. 26). In summary, as the definition of culture suggested by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) seems to be a foundation for all other definitions, it will also be the foundation of this article.

3. Hofstede's framework for assessing the role of culture in negotiations.

The effects of cross-cultural differences on international negotiations have been widely acknowledged. Cohen notes that cultural factors can complicate negotiations, and frustrate negotiators. There is substantial empirical evidence that negotiating tendencies differ by culture (Adair, Brett, Okumura, 2001; Graham, Mintu, Rodgers, 1994). It is crucial first to understand the dimensions of certain cultures to be able to understand the behaviors that stem from them.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2007) indicate that the values described below are the vital elements of a culture thus while conducting research on cultural dimensions it is crucial to focus on values. The dimensions of a culture allow people to compare one culture with another (pp. 33-36).

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) claim that "Power distance can be defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (p. 46). Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) describe above mentioned institutions as primary layers of community, namely a family, school and workplace (p. 46). Brown (2000) adds that power distance can define the range of scope to which a less powerful individual approves of the disparity of power within a community (p. 190). Brown (2000) states in his book that power distance exists in every culture, yet the tolerance of this inequality varies among cultures (p. 190). In other words, power distance indicates the degree of unequal division of power that a member of a group can accept. Although the above-mentioned division of power exists in each culture, members of a given culture have different attitudes toward it; thus, high- and low-power distance societies can be distinguished. Lebaron and Pillay (2006) observed that owing to gender, race, age, education, and social status in a high-power distance culture, some members are considered superior to others (p. 46). Lebaron and Pillay (2006) suggests that "high-power distance starting points shape more formal relations, while low-power distance starting points invite more open conflict and discussion between those at different levels within an organization" (p. 47). Thus, high-power distance cultures are not as flexible and low-power distance cultures are insofar as building relationships.

Table 1.

The key differences between high- and low-power-distance societies

High Power Distance	Low Power Distance
Hierarchical structures	Structures based on equality
Define status cleavages	Opportunities for all
"Acceptance of one's lot in life"	"Rags to riches"
Ascribed status	Achieved status
Special privilege	Earned accomplishment
Autocratic decision-making, leadership	Democratic decision-making, leadership
Clear authority figures	Shared authority
The right to use power	Use of power is limited
"Old money"	"The new rich"

Source: Lebaron, Pillay, 2006, p. 48.

According to the chart, in high power distance countries, it is allowed to preach power and wealth, while in low power distance countries, these values are de-emphasized. Moreover, these countries have focused on equality and opportunities for everyone. A high-power distance culture stresses that there must be a leader who should not hide his power, and people must depend on him. A low-power-distance culture follows the idea that inequality should be minimized.

Regarding negotiations, Lewicki et al. (2005) suggested that in low-power distance cultures, the process of making decisions depends on a group rather than a leader. A leader is respected by the group, but his/her decisions may be questioned. Negotiators from a high-power distance culture must meet the approval of their superiors in order to make a decision. Thus, the process of negotiations is longer with representatives of a high-power distance culture. What is more, 'internal' misunderstanding happens more often in low power distance cultures (p. 300).

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) say in their book that "individualism stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family only" (p. 401). In other words, a member of an individualistic society concentrates on the interests of his relatives. Hofstede (2005) adds that there are only a few societies in the world that might be called individualistic, and a great majority of societies are more interested in the common good than these societies are called collectivist (p. 74). Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) define collectivism as "societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-group's, which throughout people's lifetimes continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (p. 76). Thus, the post-important aspect that distinguishes collectivistic societies is the close bond between members of a group.

Table 2.

General Orientations Privileged by Individualism - Collectivism

Individualism	Collectivism
Relationship of separate co-existence	Relationship of living together
Competition	Cooperation
Independence	Filial piety (deference towards elders)
Individual achievement	Shared aspirations and progress
Personal growth and fulfillment	Reputation of the group
Self-reliance	Interdependence
Autonomy	Group harmony and cohesion
Individual responsibility for choices	Group responsibility for choices
Guilt (particularized blame Internalized by individual	Shame (global sense of unworthiness Projected by a group)

Source: Lebaron, Pillay, 2006, p. 38.

According to the chart, individualistic societies focus on the idea of self-actualization, whereas collectivistic societies emphasize the common objectives of the group. Individuality and individual rights tend to be crucial values for highly individual cultures. In contrast, in collectivistic cultures, there is a close tie between people; they take responsibility for other members of a group and protect one another in exchange for loyalty.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) mention that there is a negative correlation between individualism and power distance, namely, a country which is long-power distance is collectivist, whilst small-power distance countries and individualist (p. 82). As far as negotiations are concerned, Lewicki et al. (2005) indicate that individualism and collectivism have an impact on the process of negotiations. Negotiators of collectivistic cultures spend more time planning long-term aims. On the other hand, representatives of individualistic cultures offer more extreme offers than representatives of collectivistic cultures. The sense of responsibility competes with representatives of individualistic cultures, while representatives of collectivistic cultures cooperate (p. 298). Lewicki et al. (2005) put out, the collectivism and individualism have also an influence on the result of negotiation. Negotiators of collectivistic cultures reach more integrating solutions than those of individualistic cultures (p. 298). Finally, Lewicki et al. (2005) claimed that representatives of collectivistic cultures and representatives of individualistic cultures solve problems differently. Namely, people from a collectivistic culture prefer agreement, cooperation, or withdrawal, while people from an individualistic culture prefer rivalry. However, both people from individualistic cultures as well as from collectivistic cultures prefer negotiations than arbitration. Nonetheless, these are representatives of individualistic cultures who show a strong tendency to negotiate (p. 299).

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) suggest that “Masculinity stands for a society in which emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; woman are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life” (p. 402). Thus, in a masculine society, there is a strongly visible division between the roles played by men and women. According to Hofstede and Hofstede, contrary to masculine society is feminine, which is defined as a society in which men’s and women’s roles dovetail (p. 120). They claim in their book that masculine and feminine societies vary in solving global conflicts, namely feminine countries aim to negotiations and consensus whilst masculine societies achieve their goals by fight (p. 150).

Table 3.

Key differences between feminine and masculine societies: in workplace

Feminine	Masculine
Management as ménage: intuition and consensus	Management as manage : decisive and aggressive
Resolution of conflicts by compromise and negotiation	Resolution of conflicts by letting the strong win.
Rewards are based on equality.	Rewards are based on equality.
Preferences for smaller organizations.	Preference for larger organizations.
People work in order to live.	People live in order to work.
More leisure time is preferred over more money.	More money is preferred over more leisure time.
Careers are optional for both genders.	Careers are compulsory for men, optional for women.
There is a higher share of working women in professional jobs.	There is a lower share of working women in professional jobs.
Humanization of work by contact and cooperation.	Humanization of work by job content enrichment.
Complete agriculture and service industries.	Competitive manufacturing and bulk chemistry.

Source: Hofstede, Hofstede, 2005, p. 147.

According to the chart, as opposed to masculine culture, the degree of gender differentiation is almost invisible in feminine culture. In these cultures, females and males were treated equally in all aspects of life. Masculine cultures have a clear division of gender roles. In other words, men are dominant and assertive members of a community. As far as negotiations are concerned, Lewicki et al. (2005) suggest that the representatives of masculine culture have a tendency to rivalry, while the representatives of feminine culture show more empathy and a tendency to find a compromise (p. 300).

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) explain that “Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations” (p. 403). In other words, the uncertainty avoidance index indicates the degree to which members of a given community feel nervous in unknown situations. Brown (2000) makes an important point that countries with a weak uncertainty avoidance index tend to be contemplative, less aggressive, and relaxed, while countries with strong uncertainty avoidance seem to be more active, aggressive, and intolerant (p. 190). Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) theorize that communities with strong avoidance index tend to create wide range of laws and regulations in order to prevent uncertainty (p. 182). They add that countries with a weak avoidance index use common sense more often (p.184). To summarize, people derived from a high uncertainty avoidance culture fully respect the law and other regulations. In contrast, a low uncertainty avoidance culture is not rule-oriented, accepts changes, and is able to risk challenges.

As far as negotiations are concerned, Lewicki et al. (2005) indicate that the negotiators from a high uncertainty avoidance culture are less comfortable when the situation is unclear, and they try to find some rules and solutions whilst negotiating. The negotiators of a low uncertainty avoidance culture adapt to new surroundings with ease (p. 301).

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) define the term long-term orientation as “The fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular perseverance and thrift” (p. 401). As far as the short-term orientation is concerned, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) claim that the short term orientations is “The fostering of virtues related to the past and present- in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of ‘face’, and fulfilling social obligations” (p. 401). They mention that the opposite of long-term orientation is short-term orientation, where people respect tradition, and their main aims are past and present. In other words, long-term oriented countries accept changes with ease, while countries with short-term orientation are more conventional and traditional. Taking Hofstede’s and Hofstede’s (2005) view of the situation key features of short-term orientation are as follows: veneration of tradition, involvement in personal stability, social status and obligations, actions which will produce immediate results (p. 210). They remarked that perseverance as a tool that will bring slow results, veneration of circumstances, and forethought are the key features of long-term orientation (p. 210). To conclude, the crucial value of a long-term orientation culture is long-lasting commitment, while a short-term orientation culture is more flexible; thus, changes occur more frequently and

rapidly. People derived from a long-term orientation culture tend to accept slow results and are more persistent in achieving their aims.

Indulgence versus restraint (IVR)–The sixth dimension is based on Minkov’s World Values Survey and was added by Hofstede to his dimensions in 2010. It explains the importance of culture in the way people from different countries enjoy their lives. IVR is the degree to which a nation’s culture allows its members to live their lives as they wish without imposing tight social restrictions on them. The IVR has not yet been thoroughly reviewed and discussed in the literature.

4. Research method and findings

To see how Poles perceive Turkish negotiation behavior after completing literature studies, a series of 27 in-depth interviews with Polish importers cooperating with Turkish apparel and textile exporters were conducted. Table 1 presents the research sample. This study was conducted from May to July 2023.

Table 4.
Selected sociodemographic characteristics of respondents

Men 19	Women 8
Age - mean 46 years	Age - mean 39 years
Higher education 16	Higher education 8
Experience in textile industry -mean 22 years	Experience in textile industry -mean 16 years

Source: Own study.

The results of the interviews are grouped into a few sections and are presented below.

Building trust

Respondents agreed that maintaining cordial relations is crucial when it comes to trading with Turkey. Respondent 1 “Third party introductions can be very helpful as a starting point to building a trusting relationship with a potential partner, especially since Turks may initially not trust outsiders who are neither part of their family nor of their circle of friends”. Respondent 4 “People in this country usually want to do business only with those they know and like”. Building lasting and trusting personal relationships is very important for most Turks, who often expect to establish strong bonds prior to closing any deals.

Communication

Respondent 7 “Turks usually speak forcefully, though not overly loud. They may occasionally raise their voices to make a point or demonstrate passion”. Respondent 3 “Emotions are often shown openly”. Respondent 1 “They keep small personal distance.” Respondents viewed Turkish negotiators as expressive and passionate about their businesses. People in Turkey generally converse in close proximity, standing two feet or less apart. Communication in Turkey may sometimes appear vague, especially early in business interaction. Local counterparts may become more direct and franker as this relationship strengthens. Respondent 16 “Even if you think you know them, always watch for subtle messages that may signal issues and concerns”. Respondent 11 “When it comes to presentations I think they should be short and concise. Ensure that your proposal is clearly structured and presented. However, make sure your presentation materials are attractive, with good visuals”.

Respect

In Turkish business culture, respect a person enjoys depends primarily on his or her status and age. Respondent 2 “It is crucial to treat elderly people with the greatest respect. ‘Saving face’ is very essential in Turkey”. Causing embarrassment to another person may cause a loss of face for all parties involved and can be disastrous for business negotiations. Thus, the importance of diplomatic restraint and tacts cannot be overestimated. Respondent 9 “Showing any disrespect for the religion could have disastrous consequences”. Respondent 7 “You can earn your counterparts’ respect by maintaining a positive, persistent attitude. Always consider that negotiating in Turkey may be about aspects such as power, or honor as much as it is about financial benefits”.

Information

In Turkey, information is treated with caution and not willingly shared. Respondent 10 “Don’t expect them to provide you with a very accurate information. Accurate information is rarely shared freely”. Turks believe that privileged information creates bargaining advantages. Respondent 1 “Deceptive techniques are frequently used. They often tell lies and send fake non-verbal messages, pretending to be disinterested in the entire deal or a particular concession. They also created false demands and concessions”. Respondent 11 “Expect your Turkish counterparts to attempt to mislead you in order to obtain bargaining advantages. Do not use such tactics personally. It is just their style. They also treat ‘outside’ the information with caution“. Respondent 26 “Even when you know they are lying, it would be an insult to state or even hint that your counterpart is not telling the truth”. Respondent 22 “They often claim limited authority, stating that they have to ask for their manager’s approval”.

Pace of Negotiation

Respondent 4 “Expect negotiations to be slow and be prepared to make several trips if necessary to achieve your objectives”. Respondent 1 “Initial exchanges that precede the negotiations may be lengthy”. Respondent 12 “Be patient. Decisions are usually made between meetings rather than at the table”. Respondent 13 “Throughout the negotiation, be patient, control your emotions, and accept that delays occur. Attempts to rush the process are unlikely to yield better results. And of course they may be viewed as offensive”.

Turks generally employ a polychronic work style. They are used to pursue multiple actions and goals simultaneously. When negotiating, they often take a holistic approach and may jump back and forth between topics, rather than addressing them in sequential order. Negotiators from strongly monochronic cultures, such as Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States, may find this style confusing, irritating, and annoying.

Bargaining

Respondent 4 “They like bargaining and haggling. They expect to do a lot of it during a negotiation and may be offended if you refuse to play this game with them”. Respondent 24 “Turks believe that the first person to quote a price will end up getting the worse part of the deal, and that initial proposals should never be accepted”. Respondent 19 “If you push them to give you the first offer they will probably open with an extreme offer that is far from realistic. Prices often move 40 percent or more between initial offers and final agreement”. Respondent 11 “Extreme openings are frequently employed as a way to start the bargaining process. In addition, they may make indirect threats and warnings or subtly display anger”. Respondent 18 “Always leave yourself a lot of room for concessions at different stages”. Respondent 22 “Final offers” come more than once and are really rarely final. Poles believe in Turkish negotiators, such as bargaining, and advise joining the process for the benefit of negotiation.

The study finds that Polish businesspeople perceive their Turkish counterparts as seeking enduring partnerships, emphasizing mutual benefits over time. While competition marks the initial negotiation stance, Turkish negotiators are inclined towards compromises and achieving mutually beneficial outcomes. High regard for respect and patience is critical, with trust-building and respect for cultural practices deemed essential. Early communications may seem indirect but gain clarity with stronger relational bonds. Expressiveness and a preference for negotiation and discretion in information sharing are noted traits. Understanding the Turkish emphasis on relational depth, patience, and adaptability to a multifaceted time orientation is vital for successful interactions. Analyzing Turkish negotiation behavior through Hofstede's cultural dimensions reveals a complex interplay of cultural values that influence negotiation styles. Turkey scores high on Power Distance, indicating a hierarchical society where authority and respect for seniors are emphasized, impacting negotiations with a formal and respectful

approach. Its moderate score in Uncertainty Avoidance reflects a balance between risk-taking and cautiousness, leading to a flexible yet structured negotiation process. Collectivism is evident, with a focus on building long-term relationships and harmony, prioritizing group consensus over individual gains. Masculinity scores suggest a competitive edge in negotiations, with success and achievement being valued. Finally, the indulgence score implies a positive attitude towards life, which can lead to a more relaxed and open negotiation atmosphere. Turkish negotiators may, therefore, combine respect for hierarchy, relationship-building, flexibility, competitiveness, and a positive approach in their negotiation tactics.

Turkey has a large domestic market of 73 million people, with high-quality products, a qualified manual and technical labor force, a relatively low labor cost, high productivity, developed infrastructure, and transformation facilities. Bridging Europe and Asia Minor, Turkey is a land of geographical, economic, and social contrast. The landscape spans bustling cosmopolitan centers, pastoral farming villages, barren wastelands, peaceful Aegean coastlines, and steep mountain regions. More than half of the population lives in urban areas that juxtapose Western lifestyles with traditional-style mosques and markets (Douing Business in Turkey...).

According to Hofstede (2005), religion, history, and geographic latitude are the most important factors. It can be concluded that the Turkish work mentality is a mixture of Islamic, Ottoman and Western Philosophies. Military conquests have moved and mixed populations, whereby new rules have been added to the culture (2003). There is a high correlation between Muslim religion and the Hofstede Dimensions of Power Distance (PDI) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). Hofstede (2005) claims that the incorporated values of Islam correlate with masculinity level because men have a dominant role, and that uncertainty avoidance can be linked to the fact that Muslims believe and accept their lot. Countries closer to equators, such as Turkey, are associated with lower individualism (2005). The values of the Ottoman Empire's centralization of work and authority explain the power distance in Turkey. According to Gannon (2001), cultural values derived from Islamic faith believe that the future will be better than the past. In addition, the soul lives forever, and everyone is responsible for their actions and the acceptance of their lot. Turkish hospitality originates from the ethical aspects of Islam. Furthermore, every event in people's lives is predetermined and people make decisions under a given set of circumstances (kismet/lot).

Cultural values derived from the Ottoman Empire, according to Aldemir (2003), are as follows: supporting the centralization of work and authority. Believing the superiority of the present work order and being in an effort to protect it. Other important aspects are obeying orders, being modest at work, friendships, and family ties. Turkish cultural values adopted from Western philosophies according to Arslan (2000) and Aldemir (2003) are as follows: giving importance to knowledge, skill, and ability at work, need for achievement, risk-taking, consensus, and responsibility.

5. Summary

In an era characterized by the enormous proliferation of trade and professional ties across borders (Berton, Kimura, Zartman, 1999; Brett, 2001; Cellich, Jain, 2004), international negotiations have received increasing attention. Cooperation across cultures increases the possibility of misunderstandings caused by variations in negotiating behaviors that are grounded in cultural differences (Foster, 1992; Faure, 1999). This research suggests that Poles view Turkish negotiators as partners who expect long-term commitments from their business partners and will focus mostly on long-term benefits. Although the primary negotiation style is quite competitive, Turks are ready to make frequent concessions and look for win-win solutions. Respect is very important, and negotiations usually take a long time to complete. Building trust is crucial in Turkish business culture. Respondents emphasized the importance of maintaining cordial relations, establishing personal relationships, and being respectful of cultural norms such as age and religion. Communication is close-proximity and may appear vague early in business interactions but becomes more direct as the relationship strengthens. Turks are expressive and passionate about their businesses and expect to engage in bargaining and haggling. Information is not readily shared and deceptive techniques such as lying and sending fake non-verbal messages are used to gain bargaining advantages. Negotiations are slow and decisions are made between meetings, so patience and control of emotions are essential. Turks employ a polychronic work style, which may be confusing for negotiators from strongly monochronic cultures.

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