Do Cultural Differences Matter In Development Education

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Abstract: The article discusses the impact of cultural differences on the implementation of Development Education (DE). Firstly, it presents dimensions of cultural differences and gives reasons on the selection of Hofstede's five dimensions model to be used for comparison between national cultures. Then the article presents some findings on cultural differences based on surveyed school practitioners' perceptions on the main issues of DE (economic, political, environmental and social). The evaluation survey, implemented in four EU countries (UK, PL, BG and Cyprus), is part of the project 'The world from our doorstep', funded by EuropeAid. It was based on a self-assessment questionnaire as well as on focus groups discussions, including multiple-choice activities. Using Hofstede's model, the paper draws certain suppositions and then compares them with the survey results. Another applied approach is field observation on how DE was being implemented in the project countries. The conclusions derived from the comparison between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the project findings indicate some ideas on defining the content of the DE to become more culturally open and thus more effective. Building teachers' intercultural competence and awareness of interconnectedness is timely and necessity-driven, especially under the framework of DE goals.

Keywords: intercultural competence; cultural differences; Hofstede's five dimensions model

1. Introduction

The article deals with the assumption that cultural differences across several EU countries shape the way the Development education (DE) is implemented there. Firstly, it presents the Hofstede five dimensional model (5D) and compares the national scores of the cultural variables (accessible at the Hofstede Center web site http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html) for the three countries: Bulgaria, United Kingdom and Poland. In fact these are three out of the four countries, which participate in the project "World from our Doorstep" (WOD project) on Development Education (www.worldfromourdoorstep.com). The fourth participant is Cyprus, however due to the lack of published scores on the 5D, its cultural variables not discussed.

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Then the paper showcases some findings from the DE Watch report, accessible at https://webgate.ec.europa.eu, which concern the national performance on DE in these three states. The article applies the Hofstede model and based on the cultural variables scores reasonably explains why the organization of DE on national level differs (organizational level).

Finally, it discusses the WOD project report (Audit report), which evaluates teachers' perceptions and concepts on DE issues (developing countries, stereotypes, interconnectedness, hunger) and based on the same Hofstede model, explains how cultural differences shape the respondents' answers and define their professional preparedness for teaching DE in class (professional group level).

2. General Outline

2.1. Definitions of Culture

The concept of culture has been used differently in various scientific fields, which explains why there is a variety of definitions. It is so because the way this notion is defined determines the standpoint for surveying the connection between culture and any branch of human life.

The current paper embarks on the Hofstede's concept of culture as 'the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others (Hofstede, 2001). This definition implies the notion of culture as a group representation, which can be dimensionalized and distinguished from other groups. In fact in his research into the dominant cultural values, Hofstede used groups of professionals form a number of states and in this way equalled 'culture' to 'national culture'.

2.2. Hofstede's Five Dimensional Theory

Original data for the Hofstede's study was based on an extensive IBM database for which 116,000 questionnaires were used in 72 countries and in 20 languages (Wursten, & Jacobs, 2013). The scores, he calculated for the studied countries, indicate the relative differences between cultures on a numeric scale between 0 and 100 for each one of the dimensions (Hofstede, 2001). The results of his research were validated against 40 cross-cultural studies from a variety of disciplines (Wursten & Jacobs, 2013). As already said, the paper embarks on this specific five-dimensional theory, based on the following reasons: firstly, a broad number of countries were indicated with rating scores results; secondly, it's the simplicity of Hofstede's dimensions related to the other cultural frameworks; thirdly, Hofstede has taken in mind a factor in the affluent level (e.g. GNI/capita) (Hofstede, 2001);

lastly, many academic studies or managerial implications substantiate his theory as a positive witness. The five cultural dimensions include:

- **Power Distance**

This dimension presents the attitude of the studied culture towards inequalities in societies. Hofstede defines it as 'the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally' (Hofstede, 2011). It is measured with an index (PDI) from 0 to 100, the bigger the score, the greater respect and acceptance of inequalities and hierarchical structures.

- **Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)**

On its turn, the discussed dimension deals with the way a society accepts the fact that future can never be known. Cultures adapt differently to the ambiguity about future and the anxiety the unknown future brings with it. They learn either to deal with it or avoid it and have created rules and institutions that try to escape ambiguous or unknown situations. Hofstede explains it: as 'to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations' (Hofstede, 2011). It is measured with an Index (UAI) ranking from 0 (low-level of uncertainty avoidance) to 100.

- **Individualism/ vs Collectivism (IND/COL)**

The dimension addresses 'the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members' (Hofstede, 2011). It has to do with whether people´s self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "We". In Individualist societies people focus on defining their self-image from the standpoint of 'I' in comparison to collectivist societies, in which the 'group belonging' is appreciated much more and societal care for individuals is accepted as granted in exchange for loyalty. Hofstede defines it briefly as 'the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups' (Hofstede, G. 2011). **A** high score of the Index correlates with a collectivistic culture, while low level – with individualistic.

- **Masculinity/Femininity (MAS/FEM)**

Societies that value competition and award achievement are considered masculine on this dimension and personal success is highly valued, which relates to low level of the Index. A low score on the dimension means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life, feminine society (Hofstede, 2011).

- **Long Term – Short Term Orientation (LTO/STO)**

This dimension describes 'how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future' (Wursten, & Jacobs, 2013). For example, societies with low scores tend to maintain time-

honoured traditions in contrast to cultures with high scores, which invest efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

The national scores for the cultural variables are easily accessible on the Hofstede Center web site http://geert-hofstede.com/united-kingdom.html These quantitative values don't imply that every individual in a particular society is programmed in exactly the same way. But when the scores of different cultures are compared, the societal preferences come out and explain national organizations and functioning at all levels, including the educational system.

Since this article deals with DE, it has to be mentioned that Hofstede (2001) considers education as one of the key institutions that perpetuates culture at a national level. As people pass through educational systems, they are indoctrinated in existing cultural values (Hofstede, 2001). Thus it is really hard to disentangle deeply embedded cultural values from social and educational policies (Wursten, & Jacobs, 2013).

Deploying from this conclusion, the paper applies the 5D theory and the relevant national scores, accessible on the Hofstede Center web site to three out of the four countries, participating in the project "World from our Doorstep" on Development Education (www.worldfromourdoorstep.com). These states are Bulgaria (BG), the United Kingdom (UK) and Poland (PL), where the project is being implemented. The project activities are funded by the European Commission through the programme "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development" and support DE and awareness raising among preschool and primary teachers, pupils and school community. Although Cyprus is the fourth participating country since there are no available national scores, this country's performance is not being commented.

2.3. Comparison between the Cultural Variables for BG, PL, UK

Table 1 presents the scores of the mentioned countries, as published on the Hofstede Center web site http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html.

Table 1. Cultural dimensions scores for BG, PL and UK

VARIABLE	BG	PL	UK
Power Distance Index (PDI)	70	68	35
Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)	85	93	35
Individualism/ vs Collectivism (IND/COL)	30	60	89
Masculinity/Femininity (MAS/FEM)	40	64	66
Long Term Orientation Index (LTO/STO)	69	38	51

The first look at the table clearly indicates that BG (70) and PL (68) have strikingly similar indexes for PDI, which are twice as much as the UK (35). Same is the situation with UAI. The high score of PDI is usually connected with high hierarchy order in societies and the respect towards higher positions in organizations and state institutions, including the educational system. At the same time the high score of UAI indicates cultures, where people need rules and formality to structure life. The social life is driven by a number of instructions, which once established are there to be obeyed and changes are highly avoided (Hofstede, 2011). Based on the scores BG and PL fall into this group.

Conclusion: It would be expected that in these two countries, the decision-makers would be hesitant towards attempts of introducing new concepts and ideas in society and the educational curriculum. A reasonable conclusion can be drawn that the functioning of the national systems, incl. formal educational system in BG and PL would be far more rigid and resistant to external factors than in UK.

Next, it has to be mentioned that BG, scoring 30 on IND/COL is a very collectivistic society in comparison to PL (60) and the UK (89). The latter is the most individualistic country, which from the standpoint of the Hofstede's theory impacts looser relations between the groups in the society. In contrast in collectivistic countries, where people tend to belong to smaller community-groups 'in-groups', formal harmony and in-group relations should be maintained and respected in all times.

Conclusion: Having said that, the article claims that coordination of actors from the different managerial levels will be very difficult in a highly collectivistic country, like BG. On the other side is the UK scoring 89, where networking between institutions and organizations is expected to be much more flexible, open and straight forwarded.

The scores on MAS/FEM are more or less equal, with BG being a 'feminine' country, while PL and the UK – 'masculine'. In masculine cultures the dominant values are achievement and success. The dominant value in feminine cultures, like BG is consensus seeking. In the case with BG the high score on Collectivism correlates with the low score on Masculinity, which indicates a caring culture with a people orientation. In contrast in the UK, the high score of Individualism correlates with the high score on Masculinity to determine a culture which values performance, success and achievement. Interestingly, Polish culture presents itself somewhere in the middle between BG and UK on the Masculinity Index.

Conclusion: It is expected that in BG, being a feminine country, negotiating a DE application policy might take longer time and more efforts. In contrast the UK, for which the high score of Individualism correlates with the high score on Masculinity, the commitment to DE issues will relate with flexible educational policy, which targets performance, success and achievement.

At this stage, the article introduces the DE concept and presents findings on the differences in the national performance in that field of education.

2.4. What is Development Education (DE)

In their editorial review in the on-line magazine, published by the Center for Development Education, Su-ming Khoo and Stephen McCloskey acknowledge:

'The theoretical roots of DE lie in the pedagogy of Paulo Freire who regarded education as a socially transformative, empowering process both at an individual level and in wider society. He regarded education as a means toward altering unfair and exploitative social, cultural and economic relations through practice that combined reflection, analysis, debate and action' (Khoo & McCloskey, 2015).

In fact it was exactly this transformative power of Freire's pedagogy, which was welcomed by the aid organizations to help and support their work during the early 1970s. A number of non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) came up with the term 'Development Education' when they started to expand their action beyond the provision of overseas aid (Khoo & McCloskey, 2015). Then at the 2002 Europe-wide Maastricht Global Education Congress, the importance of DE was emphasized at the EU political level as a means to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

A look back some ten years ago reveals that development education and awareness raising became part of the EU development policy, called DEAR (Lappalainen, 2010). To harmonize European development strategies, a common framework was published in November 2007 to define the common principles within which the EU and its Member States would implement their development policies in a spirit of complementarity (Development Policy of the European Community).

Then on July 5th 2012 the European Parliament issued a Declaration calling the EC to develop a long term, cross-sectoral European Strategy for Development education, awareness-raising and active global citizenship. Currently, as part of the Development policies, the European DE Consensus document defines that:

"Development Education and Awareness Raising contribute to the eradication of poverty and to the promotion of sustainable development through public awareness raising and education approaches and activities that are based on values of human rights, social responsibility, gender equality, and a sense of belonging to one world; on ideas and understandings of the disparities in human living conditions and of efforts to overcome such disparities; and on participation in democratic actions that influence social, economic, political or environmental situations that affect poverty and sustainable development" (European Commission Staff Working Document).

It becomes clear that being part of the EC political approach, DE is not a formal curriculum 'special' subject but a concept that expands knowledge to embrace the world around us. From the standpoint of adhering to European values and human

rights, it uses transformative approaches to question stereotypes and encourage understanding of global development concerns. Even more importantly, DE discusses personal relevance to these topics and calls for enacting our rights and responsibilities as inhabitants of the interdependent and changing world.

As the DE Watch report states, the EU countries are encouraged to implement it 'within the Formal Education Sector, the policies and approaches of the national Ministries responsible for development and their subordinate agencies, as well as the activities of civil society actors, local and regional authorities'.[1]

Obviously, there is a policy framework but not a strict obligation on DE implementation across concerned ministries and sectors. Such an adoption process is definitely marked by a number of the country's specific political, socio-economic and cultural history factors. As a result EU countries' commitment and practices will be different. Thus the application of the Hofstede Five Dimensional Theory and the relevant national scores to the DE Watch findings on the countries' performances can produce more food for the thought on the influence of the cultural variables on the DE implementation. The next part of the paper briefly elaborates on this topic.

2.5. Comparison based on the DE Watch findings and the cultural values – organizational level

The DE Watch states that factors, like: a colonial past, strong religious influence, a relatively recent democratic history, cultural diversity and economic migration influence DE practices[2]. However, a few macro-trends can be observed and some speculations can be provided using the Hofstede's model.

The comparison in Table 2 for the three countries (BG, PL and UK) is based on three indicators: Funding of DE, Coordination of actors (ministries, like Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Ministry of Education (MoE) or agencies, like Development Education Agency (DEA).

Table 2. DE Watch findings for the four countries (with abbreviations from https://webgate.ec.europa.eu.)

UK	***Funding***: 727.000.000 € (2009/10); Further DE funding by: MoE, Charities, the four geographic jurisdictions

[1] https://webgate.ec.europa.eu.
[2] https://webgate.ec.europa.eu

	Coordination of actors: There is a very well established DEAR movement, with its roots in international advocacy work, humanitarian aid and NGDO development cooperation programmes. There are strong linkages with government initiatives, academic institutions, faith based organisations. DE is co-ordinated by a UK Development Education Network. ***Formal education sector***: There are good links between the DEA, the educational system and the UK government; generally there is a high level of co-operation between civil society and the UK government.
PL	***Funding***: 900.000 € (2009); The MFA provides leadership at national level in GE policy making, institutional support and public funding. ***Coordination of actors:*** Vibrant, committed, growing, guided by clear vision, strong values and with a strong voluntary base. A few bigger NGOs are implementing nation-wide DE projects. The NGDO platform (Grupa Zagranica) plays a very important role in providing leadership and encouraging greater coordination and improved quality among NGOs. ***Formal education sector***: There is a regular flow of information between Grupa Zagranica and the Department for Development Co-operation of the MFA; the MFA is open for NGDO contributions; there are often shared views between the Department, large NGDOs and Grupa Zagranica. MFA and MoE co-operate closely with university staff.
BG	***Funding:*** 0 €; Commitment: Playing a lead role in international development and DE does not appear to be a priority for the MFA ***Coordination of actors***: The platform includes NGOs from diverse backgrounds: social care, education, environment, church, local & regional development. NGO projects include areas of: gender, environmental education, antidiscrimination, integration of immigrants, peace. ***Formal education sector***: Lack of coordination between the actors. NGOs and state authorities used to have tense relationship; now many educational partnerships between institutions of formal education and NGOs appear.

The DE Watch report states that BG (and CY) present the weakest performance in terms of DE commitment and national practices, while the UK is marked with the highest DE commitment of governmental and nongovernmental actors. The document also comments that in the UK there is a very well established DEAR movement, with its roots in 'international advocacy work, humanitarian aid and development cooperation programmes of the NGDO sector, and increasingly within the formal education system'. The report declares that there are strong linkages among authorities, including schools to support DE learning activities. While in BG there is a complete lack of communication and thus coordination between the different hierarchical levels of the educational system and NGOs.

It becomes clear that in the case with BG and the UK, the DE Watch report findings support the conclusions on the cultural differences scores as described above. Being a culture with a high PDI, the BG line ministries find it hard to communicate among themselves and with the civil sector, thus cooperation in DE is hard to achieve. Additionally, the high index of UA, which correlates with the high PDI in BG, makes the educational system rigid and resistant to external factors and potential partnerships with other educational organizations. The practices in UK are marked with flexibility and open structures communication, which correlates with its low scores on PDI and UAI.

Interestingly, PL takes an intermediate position according to the report, while PD and UA Indexes for this country place it together with BG. At the same time it shows institutional commitment to DE and regular flow of information and communication among all the DE actors. Such performance might relate with the PL Index on Individualism/Collectivism, which places this country as a more individualistic culture in comparison with BG, thus success and achievement in DE are better valued. Of course other country's specific political and socio-economic factors might be applied to explain this difference in the DE application across the country, including the consequences of earlier acceptance in the EU. It might be concluded that the case with Poland is worth further research.

The last part of the article applies Hofstede's Model to the WOD project survey of four professional focus groups of teachers to comment some of the findings.

2.6. Comparison between the Findings of the DE Practitioners' Audit Report and the Cultural Values – Professional Group Level

The survey (Practitioner Audit) has the main goal to evaluate practitioners' readiness to deliver such type of tutoring by presenting snapshots of their cultural perceptions and concepts, which impact the way they discuss DE topics in class.

The article presents the survey results (Practitioner Audit Report) and then based on the national scores for several of the cultural variables indexes for the participating countries, provides some suggestions for further considerations.

2.6.1. Focus Groups Characteristics

As tested by Hofstede (2001), focus groups of well-educated individuals, working in similar organizational structures at similar levels should better represent their country on national-level correlations.

'We expect that those having spent more years in the educational system have increased autonomy and freedom and thus find it easier to align their personal values and behaviors with the national culture norms strengthening the relationship between values and the outcome variables' (Taras, Kirkman, & Steel, 2010).

Based on that, the survey was done with focus groups of pre-school and primary school practitioners from the four countries, totally 18 groups of practitioners. There were 14 groups from UK, 2 from Bulgaria, 1 from Cyprus and 1 from Poland. All of the participants had little or almost no previous experience in DE.

Here it has to be mentioned that these were 100% women, which is very representative for the formal education sector (especially for the primary education classes) across the countries. However, regarding the gender of the respondents, as in Taras, Kirkman, & Steel (2010) described, we keep in mind that the predictive power of the cultural values will be weaker for women, rather than men.

2.6.2. Methodology Used

The survey method is an associative group analysis (AGA), which is generally used to 'reconstruct people's subjective images from the spontaneous distributions of their free associations' (Ryan, 2006).

In our case AGA methodology is intended to highlight the thinking patterns of early-years practitioners and allow a deeper level of understanding of cultural differences (Ryan, 2006). The article, as well as the survey, uses the content analysis to do a more in-depth content analysis of the overall data.

The procedure follows a well-prescribed plan of activities and questionnaires, provided in the book titled 'Practitioner's Audit Handbook', initially developed by CDEC, UK. The basic unit used is the stimulus word, phrase or image, which evokes deeply hidden associations and hence serves as a key unit in the perceptual representational system.

2.6.3. Procedure

The audit activities were done separately in the countries during the first project year 2013-214 and the results were compiled, summarized and analyzed for project purposes in the WOD 'Audit Report' by an external expert. Both cited documents are accessible at http://www.worldfromourdoorstep.com/index.php/en/. The participants were asked 8 questions exploring their personal perceptions on Africa and the Caribbean, world hunger, reasons for world hunger and way to end it. These are some of the topics discussed under DE, which include the notions of interconnectedness, human rights, stereotypes and etc. Some activities ask the respondents to write all their associations on worksheets after reading the question. Others provide images instead of questionnaires as visual stimulus.

In the first activity, the practitioners worked in small groups (4-5) people and were encouraged to write in five minutes all the words that came to their mind about the two Africa and Caribbean, as these are the regions studied in the DE project context. Here the article discusses the similarities and differences in the perception, based on the national cultural background of the participants.

When discussing Africa and the Caribbean, *the UK practitioners* used key words as 'diversity' and 'inequalities'. Apart from geographical features, they also discussed the relations between rich and poor countries, human rights abuses, gender issues and the impact of North/ South trade relations on the African economy. In addition the UK practitioners stated some associations coming from British history, especially connected with Egypt. However, their associations with the Caribbean refered to popular culture especially films and TV series ("Pirates from the Caribbean", "The Lion King", "Death in paradise"). The respondents admit unawareness of the characteristics of the islands.

Describing Africa, *the BG practitioners* enlisted geographical data (climatic zones, certain geographical places of interest) and names of countries. They also mentioned race and physical features such as black skin as a distinguishing feature for African people. These focus group participants clearly stated difficulties with recalling associations with the Caribbean geographical features (size, climate, flora and fauna).

When talking about Africa, *the Polish focus group* respondents distinguished both regions by the outlook of people, race and physical features such as curly hair, white teeth, black skin, mulatto, negro ethnicity. In their description they provide references to Polish culture (19th century novels), which portrait the image of Africa in the Polish society. They didn't mention a single African country but did name Cuba for the Caribbean.

In the second activity practitioners were presented with a set of 12 photos taken either in Europe (in the UK, Cyprus, Poland, Bulgaria), Africa (Kenya and Uganda), or the Caribbean (Curacao, Costa Rica, Jamaica, St Lucia). The selected images were purposefully ambiguous so that they could be interpreted in many ways. The focus group participants were encouraged to 'visit' each photo at the exhibition and put a mark to indicate whether it comes from Africa, Europe and the Caribbean. The next step was to launch a discussion on the individual motivation and justification for the answers. While presenting their opinions the practitioners were asked to provide arguments and clues for their choices.

From the photos, all practitioners recognized places from their countries best with almost no exceptions. The participants found it easiest to locate the photos with familiar European architectural features. Thus historic buildings and architecture as well as maintained neighborhood surroundings in residential areas motivate their answers as 'Europe'

Black people, in typical 'stereotyped' surroundings (e.g. barefooted children playing football) were taken as a clue to 'Africa'. However, in all national focus groups the practitioners debated on the photo presenting a black person placed in a more "technologically advanced" background.

In general, the **UK practitioners had most varied** answers pointing different

locations as possible answers. They also explained that they were aware of the potential stereotypes, which might had predefined their answers in most cases.

In the third activity practitioners were encouraged to reflect on the question "Why are people in the world hungry?". First, they had to think about it individually, then discuss and share their ideas in pairs. Next, practitioners were shown eight cards with eight possible causes of hunger in the world written on card face. Teachers had to decide individually which of the presented eight reasons they most agreed with, which seemed the most plausible, important and convincing.

We can speculate on the results by indicating that some of the enlisted reasons direct to the topic of interconnectedness and the impact of global trading while others as *'Answer 8. Lack of education & skills in poorer countries'* limit the causes for hunger on a country level.

From this standpoint, it appears *that UK practitioners had the highest awareness of interdependencies* in this area. British respondents pointed to reasons such as 'unfair trade relations, climate and position of the Southern countries as food producers'.

Polish teachers' choices seem to be most stereotypical in that respect. They preserved the understanding that 'poverty' could be close to home and had comments like: 'we have our own problems and have to help people in Poland', 'in our setting we have children who come to kindergarten hungry, they only eat in kindergarten".

The aim of the fourth activity is to observe how practitioners understand the notion of poverty and different ways it may be defined and measured. Practitioners were encouraged to reflect on six statements about poverty and firstly, showing out their agreement or disagreement by using a 'concept line' and secondly, commenting the notion.

2.6.4. Assessing Survey Results with the Hofstede's Five Dimensional Model

The application of the Hofstede's five dimensional model on the survey results concerning personal values, present a blur picture. We use mostly the UAI dimension, which best fits describing learning situations and adoption of new ideas.

From the above presented answers, especially from *Activity 1*, it becomes obvious that the UK practitioners are much more open and aware of DE issues and new learning topics. They indicated that they were apt to take initiatives and introduce new topics that match their students' needs. They openly questioned their own answers as in the case with *Activity 2*, indicating that they find communication and discussion beneficial for the learning process. The UK respondents' showed disagreement with certain statements in the last *Activity*, even though these instructions came from the 'authority' (in this case the audit expert). These

observations correlate with the UK low scores in PDI (35), which suggests that in the educational systems the British teachers would value more two-way communication with students. As a low UAI (35) country, the British didn't avoid any ambiguous photos or topics, they openly admitted that some of the presented images were misleading or 'their answers were impacted by common stereotypes'. Since DE learning methodology encourages a similar type of approaches towards current issues, we can suggest that UK practitioners are well prepared for teaching DE in class.

At the same time, BG and PL practitioners, as indicated in the Audit report, refer to Africa with geographical data mainly and didn't mention current issues there. The Polish focus group respondents being not quite aware of stereotyping, based their answers mainly on race and physical features. In their description they also provided references to 19th century Polish novel, whose image of Africa was still kept in the Polish society. Both groups showed little awareness on relativity when exploring the photo images in *Activity 2*.

Such results correlate with the high UAI for PL (93) and BG (85). In these cultures the need is to know about what other people in the past and present already said about a certain subject. This knowledge is considered to be a prerequisite for competence especially for a teacher – centered educational process, where the teacher 'should know' all answers. And since no similar topics are discussed and studied in the formal curriculum for primary schools, the BG and PL respondents preferred to enlist words connected with 'obvious' things, like climate, flora and fauna, rather than discuss topics and show relativity. In such high UAI cultures, adherence to prescribed norms and values is respected and ambiguous situations should be avoided.

According to the Audit report, the reaction of the Polish respondents on the topic of *'poverty'* during Activity 3 showcased very stereotypical views and opinions, which correlates with their high score of UAI.

They preserve the understanding that 'poverty' can be close to home and social care and thinking should be kept for compatriots. This situation correlates with the IND/COL score, which is 60 for PL - an Individualist society. This means individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. Such a notion explains PL respondents' reaction to the topic 'poverty can be close to home'. Obviously, this built-in in-group perception will impact the way the PL practitioners will discuss the topic of 'World hunger' in DE class.

These conclusions indicate that BG and PL teachers might need some further support and training activities to develop awareness of DE approaches and methodology.

3. Conclusion

The article clearly showed that the Five Dimensional Hofstede's model might be successfully used to explain why DE education is applied differently and with deviating success in the EU countries both on the level of national organizational structuring and then at school, on the professional level.

The paper also states possible limitations of the used model as well as the lack of quantitative data from the WOD project survey. Nevertheless, the results are very indicative for the first project year and prove that cultural differences in DE do matter.

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