The Key to China's Market – Negotiation

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Abstract: In the context of economic globalization, business negotiation has become increasingly important. When western business negotiators seek opportunities in the huge Chinese market, they often encounter setbacks in negotiations. This article starts from the perspective of universal cultural dimensions, and through the analysis of the characteristics of Chinese culture, to explore the cultural factors that affect China's business negotiations from the shallow to the deep, from the outside to the inside

Keywords: Chinese business negotiation, Chinese culture, culture dimensions

1. Introduction

The main topic of this article is to explore the essence of China's business negotiation style from the perspective of social culture. The article mainly starts with the following problems: What are the major features and styles of Chinese business negotiation? What is the cultural foundation of Chinese negotiation behavior? What are the business negotiation challenges added by Cultural differences? How to do business more effectively in China? Triandis points out that culture-specific and culture-general are the two fundamental approaches in culture studies[1]. Since previous studies on Chinese business negotiation styles were basically conducted in a single direction, this study summarizes both approaches in the previous studies to analyze Chinese business negotiation. In other words, the research aims to explore the characteristics of Chinese social and cultural characteristics to seek explanations for Chinese business negotiation behaviors, and also use the existing dimensional theory to help interpret these behaviors.

2. A Global Model ——Cultural Dimension

Hofstede's cultural dimension theory is a framework proposed by Dutch psychologist Gilt Hofstede to measure cultural differences in different countries. He believes that culture is a psychological program shared by people in an environment, which can distinguish a group of people from others. Through research, he summarized the differences between different cultures into six basic dimensions of cultural values[2]. I will analyze the business culture differences between China and European countries through the theory of cultural dimension

2.1. Power Distance

Power distance is used to indicate people's acceptance of the unequal distribution of power in the organization. China's power distance index is 80, while most European countries' power distance

index is between 20 and 40. China's power distance index is much higher than that of European countries. Generally speaking, the power distance index under the influence of oriental culture is relatively high, and people usually respond to inequality with indifference or tolerance[3]. However, the power distance index under the influence of western culture is low, and the "right consciousness" is deeply rooted in people's hearts, which makes them have a strong spirit of resistance to the inequality of power distribution. In European culture, the awareness of individual rights is obvious and the hierarchical orientation is weak.

In a culture with large power distance, subordinates have strong dependence on their superiors. The ideal superiors in people's minds are enlightened autocrats and benevolent dictators. In a culture with a small power distance, employees participate in decision-making to a higher degree, and subordinates have corresponding autonomy within their specified responsibilities[4].

In China, enterprises are applicable to more authoritarian and authoritarian strategic decisions, and enterprises should have a centralized organizational structure. Branches and institutions in Europe should apply democratic and decentralized organizational structures.

2.2. Individualism and Collectivism

A culture that values individualism tends to emphasize individual rights and freedoms. In collectivism, personal feelings are subordinate to the overall interests of the team. Europe has an individualistic culture, while China is collectivistic. The differences of management decision-making methods on this cultural level are shown as follows: Generally speaking, in China, company managers often encourage employees to actively participate in decision-making when making decisions. The decision-making takes a long time to reach, but the implementation and implementation of decisions are fast, because almost every employee has participated in the decision-making process and understood the purpose and content of the decision-making. In European countries, company managers should make decisions independently, making decisions quickly but taking a long time to implement, and spend more time to "sell" their own decision-making goals and contents to employees.

2.3. Masculinity and Femininity

China is a male society[3]. It is feasible to pay attention to harmony and ethics, advocate the spirit of active WTO entry, and let employees actively participate in management. The values of the people of the Netherlands and the Nordic countries also tend to be "feminine".

2.4. Uncertainty Avoidance

China is a society with a high degree of uncertainty avoidance, so it is suitable to implement the humanistic policy of employee participation in management and increasing career stability in China. Organizations tend to establish more work rules, processes or norms to deal with uncertainty. Management is also relatively focused on work and task orientation. Managers' decisions are mostly procedural decisions. Employees are also very willing to receive specific instructions from their superiors. They have a high degree of uncertainty avoidance and prefer to avoid ambiguity in work.

Europe belongs to a society with a low degree of uncertainty avoidance[6]. People are more likely to accept the inherent uncertainty in life and can accept more opinions. The delegation of authority from superiors to subordinates is more thorough, and employees tend to manage independently and work independently. Ambiguity does not threaten their lower needs for stability and security. These employees may even be comfortable with uncertainty at work.

2.5. Long Term Orientation and Short-term Orientation

China is a typical country with a long-term orientation[7], which advocates "summing up the past, basing on the present, and grasping the future". We focus on the establishment and maintenance of long-term relations: we focus on "taking a long-term view" instead of "one city and one pool"; We believe that long-term planning is more meaningful than short-term planning. At the organizational level, in personnel recruitment and promotion, it is believed that organizational recognition and long-term commitment are more important than having directly applied technology. In terms of personnel incentives, it is believed that long-term job security is more attractive than short-term economic incentives; In terms of strategic decisions, growth and long-term returns are more important than changes in short-term financial indicators.

European countries tend to be short-term oriented. In enterprises, managers pay attention to the profit and loss status and current profits of enterprises, and advocate treating all suppliers and customers equally.

2.6. Self-indulgence and Restraint

This refers to the extent to which a society allows people to meet their basic needs and enjoy life. In China, the desire for pleasure is often regarded as a manifestation of laziness. Enterprises encourage employees to work overtime and advocate becoming rich through hard work. It is different in most European countries. Compared with China, the working hours per week are greatly reduced, and employees have more time to enjoy life

3. Limitations of Cultural Dimension Theory

Hofstede's cultural dimension theory can be said to be a relatively complete and systematic cultural analysis model for analyzing national culture in cross-cultural research so far[8]. However, Hofstede's cultural dimension model, which is based on empirical research, is affected by many factors and has some limitations, which have been questioned by some scholars[9]

1) Some researchers pointed out that Hofstede's research on culture is a static study, which does not involve the analysis of cultural evolution and factors affecting the change of cultural values. One of the important characteristics of culture is that culture is dynamic, not static, and changes with the development of society. Since Hofstede's last selected samples, the world has undergone tremendous changes. The world of the 21st century is characterized by globalization and internationalization. Some cultural characteristics that reasonably existed in the 1960s and 1970s may no longer exist today. The determination of the first four dimensions in Hofstede's value dimension model was affected by the political environment at that time. In the 1960s and 1970s, Europe was in the cold war period. Due to the political instability at that time, there is no sample of socialist countries and less affluent third-world countries in the survey data. The cultural dimension proposed in Hofstede's research is only a product of that era. Can the data collected by Hofstede fully reflect today's social reality? China is the best example. Over the past 40 years of reform and opening up, great changes have taken place in Chinese society. The values of the older generation are far from those of the young. Hofstede himself acknowledges that the biggest limitation of this research method is that the problems measured by the measurement tool are considered important only in the country where the tool was developed, while the problems that do not occur in the society where the researcher lives are excluded because the researcher cannot see this problem[10].

Hofstede's cultural model has only five dimensions, which, in a sense, implies that culture is static rather than dynamic. However, some researchers refute this criticism. Samovar believes that although culture is dynamic, Hofstede's values refer to the deep structure of culture, which is relatively stable and does not change much over a long period of time[11].

2) Hofstede only discusses the issue of cultural value orientation at the national level. His research is based on the assumption that there is a one-to-one correspondence between culture and national nationalities, but in fact, culture is not a synonym of the state[12]. McSweeney believes that culture has no boundaries, and the state cannot be a unit of cultural research[13]. Many countries are composed of different nationalities, have more than one culture, and have different levels of subculture. Hofstede only focuses on culture as a national characteristic, ignoring subculture, regional culture Research on group culture and individual culture. For example, the determination of male/female temperament and uncertainty avoidance were largely affected by the working environment at that time. In the age when Hofstede first made the survey, IBM employees were mostly male. The differences between these two dimensions may be more differences between men and women than differences between countries[14]. Hofstede's limited five cultural value dimensions cannot provide enough information about cultural differences at all levels[15].

In this regard, Hofstede himself admitted that his theory of cultural differences is like a product of the research room, waiting for other researchers to make efforts to improve it and continue to study and add new dimensions of cultural values.

3) Some scholars question the lack of Hofstede's research methods. The theoretical basis is to infer whether a certain value can guarantee the validity of research results only through an attitude survey[16]. Baskerville questions whether it is appropriate to quantify culture based on digital dimensions and models. He believes that culture is dynamic and extremely complex, and should not be described by digital indexes[17]. Hofstede's research only examined the data obtained from questionnaires and economic statistics, rather than observing the real population with this culture from the culture itself. Matsumoto criticized Hofstede's lack of experimental evidence to support the individualism/collectivism dimension, and the existing evidence could not support his theory well[17]

Although academia has pointed out many limitations of Hofstede's theory, this does not affect that his theory of cultural dimension has become the focus of research in the field of cross-cultural communication. Hofstede's theory reflects the common basic features of cultural values to some extent, which provides a benchmark for people to better understand and understand cultural phenomena at the national level, and can be used as a powerful tool for people to analyze and compare different cultures.

4. Chinese Philosophy and Culture

Aware of the limitations of the existing cultural dimension analysis methods, scholars began to explore the relationship between Chinese local culture and philosophy and Chinese negotiation style. Researchers believe that Chinese people have three basic philosophical belief systems: Taoism, which focuses on harmony with nature; Confucianism and interpersonal relationship; And Buddhism, that is, to stop suffering and to lead to enlightenment[18].

The research shows that Confucianism is still influencing today's Chinese culture. Confucianism is an all-embracing word, symbolizing China's two-thousand-year life style. As a teacher and interpreter of ancient culture and literature, Confucius' life and thoughts shaped the thoughts and characters of Chinese people[19]. This influence has a long history. As a solid system, Confucianism controls all aspects of people's life. Confucianism can be traced back to 2500 years ago. It is the combination of many Chinese philosophical thoughts and traditions, and has had a great impact on the behavior and thoughts of Chinese and East Asians. In addition, the feudal system in China, where Confucianism has grown, has also deeply affected the Chinese people's views on themselves, their own country and the world

The researchers believe that the consistency of ideas and methods with Chinese tradition is one of the important factors to be recognized by Chinese people. In addition, the Chinese cultural system, such as Confucianism, familism, group-oriented philosophy of life and the unique and powerful way

of thinking that makes the Chinese cultural system unique, has an impact on all aspects of Chinese social life, including business[21]. The six basic Confucian values related to China's business negotiation style are: (1) moral cultivation (Confucianism), emphasizing morality and learning. Sincerity, trust and justice are considered to be the important qualities of human beings; (2) Interpersonal relationship, emphasizing the harmony between people; (3) Family and collective, in which family is the most important social unit; (4) Respect elders and identity levels; (5) Avoid conflicts; And (6) face (mianzi), which is a very important factor in Chinese interpersonal communication[22]. In addition, effective business negotiation is based on mutual respect, trust and interests, and guided by the Chinese people's high attention to etiquette[23].

Taoism pays attention to simplicity, contentment, instinct, calmness, weakness, and the most important is martial power. Therefore, to understand Taoism, we must understand Yin and Yang, and Wuwei.

Yin and Yang is a simple and broad ancient Chinese philosophy. The philosophy of Yin and Yang has three characteristics: unity, opposition and mutual transformation. In terms of thinking, it is an inseparable metaphysical node between arithmetic chips (arithmetic) and divination (logic). The biological genes in nature and the binary system in artificial intelligence fully demonstrate the vitality of yin and yang. Yin and Yang are the description of the fundamental factors behind the laws of nature and driving the development and change of the laws of nature in ancient Chinese civilization. They are the driving force behind the breeding, development, maturity, decline and even extinction of various things, and are the core elements that lay the foundation for the logical thinking of Chinese civilization. In a word, according to the thinking understanding of I Ching, it describes the most basic elements and functions of the universe, and is one of the basic concepts of Fu Xi Yi. Yin and Yang are the philosophical principles of Taoism dualism and the symbol of the primitive, unified and harmonious universe.

Yin Yang philosophy provides a dialectical worldview, a contradictory and balanced way of life. This is the philosophical basis, which enables Chinese people to follow different doctrines and behave differently in different environments. This is the key to understanding contradictions and a highly flexible Chinese negotiation style. Another important concept of Chinese negotiations with China is inaction, which literally means inaction and inaction, or simply doing nothing. That is to say, inaction suggests not taking practical action, not interfering, or simply letting go. Doing nothing also means doing things strategically. Therefore, inaction encourages, participates in and maintains a calm attitude, enabling individuals to absorb all the challenging forces and eventually become their masters. Inaction and the principle of yin and yang are the basis of the concept of Chinese strategic philosophy[23]. Researchers believe that the opposite elements have common factors, which together constitute a dynamic unity; This concept helps to understand China's conflict management and negotiation style.

5.   Chinese Business Negotiation Approaches

the Chinese negotiator is a blend of Maoist bureaucrat in learning, Confucian gentleman, and Sun Tzu-like strategist. I want to emphasize that it is this "three in one" Chinese style that makes China's business negotiation style unique; It is this "three in one" Chinese style that troubles many Western businessmen who deal with China.

5.1.   The Maoist Bureaucrat in Learning

As a Maoist bureaucrat, the Chinese negotiator follows the government's business plan. He put China's national interests first and never separated business from politics. He avoids taking initiative, evades responsibility, fears criticism, and has no final say. He lacks international business experience,

but he is rapidly rising on the steep learning curve. He is a shrewd and tough negotiator because he receives training every day in the Chinese bureaucracy, where bargaining is a comprehensive element[24]. Considering Mao Zedong's theory that "revolution is not a dinner party", his negotiating style may be "bellicose". As China's situation is constantly changing, he is the most "elusive" or "difficult to understand" negotiator. His negotiation strategy naturally comes from his old culture, which can be called a mixture of Confucian cooperation and Sun Tzu competition.

5.2. The Confucian Gentleman

As a Confucian gentleman, the behavior of Chinese negotiators is based on mutual trust and mutual benefit, seeking cooperation and "win-win" solutions, so that everyone can succeed. He attaches great importance to his trust and sincerity as a person. For Confucius, upholding justice is far more important than pursuing interests. He has had many experiences of reaching an agreement without negotiation. He prefers to use "discussion" (in fact, the Chinese word for negotiation is Tan Pan, which is literally translated as "negotiation" and "judge") than "negotiation", because the western concept of "negotiation" implies some unpleasant meanings of conflict, while Confucius prefers to avoid disputes. For Chinese negotiators, a contract is essentially a process of continuous relationship or problem solving, rather than a one-time legal process[25]. They associate business with relationships, friendship, and trust. They are group oriented, self-discipline, pay attention to face, age, grade and etiquette, and are suspicious of "non family" people. When they re-examine old issues to seek common interests of both sides according to the changing market situation, and when they bargain for the interests of "family members", the performance of Chinese negotiators is often daunting.

5.3. Sun Tzu-like Strategist

As a strategist like Sun Tzu, this Chinese negotiator regards negotiation as a "zero-sum game" and the market as a battlefield[26]. He is going to "win" you. He never stops bargaining. He is a skilled negotiator and has acquired various Chinese strategies from his ancestors. The core of his negotiation skills is Sun Tzu's secret: "To defeat the enemy without fighting". He rarely engages in physical warfare; On the contrary, he is keen on an intellectual psychological struggle to manipulate you to do business in his way. His behavior in negotiation tends to be deceptive and indirect. He often uses external forces to create favorable conditions to achieve his goals. His favorite negotiation strategy is "killing people with borrowed knives". He is always ready to withdraw from the negotiation table when everything else fails, but this is just China's counterattack strategy. Compared with Taijiquan, his general mode of negotiation strategy is a "soft" form of Chinese martial arts (kungfu). Tai Chi is often regarded as water; Nothing is more fragile than water. However, when water moves forward and attacks something hard or resistant, nothing can resist it. Similarly, Sun Tzu's strategists adopted a seemingly mild but essentially tough strategy in the negotiations. His negotiating strategy is characterized by competition.

6. Possible Measures

(1) Familiar with the process

In the opening stage, the Chinese rarely put forward their own requirements and suggestions for products. They always ask the other party to introduce the performance of their products. They always listen carefully to the other party's ideas, views and suggestions about the transaction, but they rarely talk about their own positions and views. In negotiations, they often bring in technical experts to explore their products and technical information with the characteristics of competitors' products. Once the other party has put forward its own views, positions and related characteristics of the product,

the negotiation will enter a substantive stage. At this stage, the Chinese people require to reach a general framework of principles first, and then discuss the specific details in detail after completing this task. They think it can avoid quarrels and reach an agreement faster. The general principal framework usually adopts the form of letter of intent and meeting record. The Chinese people have detailed meeting minutes during the negotiation. Even if the negotiators are replaced in the middle of the negotiation, the Chinese representatives still know the contents of the previous negotiation very well. In detailed negotiations, the Chinese are good at using various strategies to force their opponents to make concessions.

(2) Seek government support

The general influence of Chinese politics on Chinese business has led to the tendency of Chinese decision-makers to negotiate. By reviewing past cases, if your government does not support your company, the Chinese may doubt the stability, reliability and reputation of your company. Therefore, when negotiating large-scale industrial high-risk B2B projects in China, it is very important to show the Chinese people the political support and government support behind your Chinese tasks. The Chinese government is an important participant in China's business network[27]. If your government and business leaders work together to do business with China, you can sign large business contracts to solve potential problems.

(3) Reduce personnel changes

Maintaining the same team throughout the negotiation process is an important means to gain China's trust. Chinese people do business with you as individuals rather than as companies; Your successor will not automatically inherit your friends and relationships. If you rotate team members frequently, the trust you have taken time to build may be destroyed overnight. Therefore, when negotiating with Chinese people, it is important to keep a consistent team as much as possible. As long as the business continues, the same people are allowed to deal with each other. This has an impact on the expatriation policy of foreign companies. In large multinational companies, regular rotation of managers is a common way to train managers and enrich their international experience. Although this practice is important in many aspects, it must adapt to China's commercial culture. In view of its social and cultural characteristics, the Chinese market requires foreigners to stay for a long time, so that they can have time to establish a solid working relationship with Chinese partners and customers and gain a firm foothold in the market. Therefore, managers doing business with China should not withdraw from China business too soon

(4) Respond to government policies

In China, decision-makers are often not only technicians but also bureaucrats. Therefore, it is important to understand the government's position and orientation and reduce the potential criticism of their dealings with you. You should put yourself in the shoes of both sides of the negotiation, instead of focusing on the interests of one side, and formulate language and solutions to better obtain the approval of your superiors. You can indicate to the Chinese negotiator that other negotiators have previously accepted the same terms or conditions of the contract. In view of the Chinese people's fear of making mistakes, there is nothing more reassuring than the evidence that other Chinese colleagues agree to the same or similar contract terms. Sometimes, in order to create an atmosphere of mutual benefit, you must make symbolic concessions, so that Chinese negotiators can successfully promote the "package plan" within the Chinese bureaucracy. Culturally, the Chinese follow the Confucian principle of reciprocity when dealing with business relations. Help your Chinese partners. When your enterprise is in trouble, they will come back to help you, so that a win-win negotiation atmosphere is more likely to emerge[28].

(5) Patience is important

The Chinese are patient. China's 5000-year history and cultural environment has cultivated their patience. Compared with immediate interests, they are more willing to choose a plan with long-term

interests. The patience of the Chinese people can be said to be shown incisively and vividly in business negotiations. When they are the hosts, they are not eager to negotiate, but patiently know and get familiar with each other and establish a long-term and firm relationship as far as possible. In terms of the composition of negotiators, Chinese people often send a large number of negotiators, including negotiators, technical experts, legal experts, etc. Due to the large number of people, the negotiation time must be extended. In the negotiation, if the other party's questions exceed their own authority to make decisions, or they are difficult to answer, they often take these questions back, ask for instructions from their superiors, or discuss them again until they have a firm grasp of these questions and can avoid all possible mistakes.

7.   Conclusion

China's economic leadership has enhanced the influence of China's business negotiations in international business negotiations. After opening up the market economy, China's economic growth model led by the central planning government has increased the interest of many foreign leaders. In fact, according to research data, during the global financial crisis, China's economy played an important role in improving the global financial crisis. However, at the same time, due to the lack of understanding of China's business negotiations, doing business in China is largely hindered.

In international business negotiations, people from different countries gather together for communication. To a large extent, it is difficult to study or describe the whole picture simply by literature. Sebenius believes that the process and results of decision-making will vary according to different cultures, which is not only reflected in law and technology, but also in behavior and belief[29]. Therefore, the adoption of home country strategy in international negotiations may lead to adverse results.

In addition, according to the research, grasping the negotiation style and characteristics of the other party is conducive to successful negotiation. However, the process of understanding the other party's negotiation culture is challenging[30]. Therefore, in order to negotiate effectively with Chinese negotiators in international business negotiations, foreign negotiators must have a deep understanding of how culture affects China's negotiation style. But in today's closely connected global economy, culture is not static. Understanding a country's culture is a very difficult task.

In the context of understanding the cultural dimension, how to use it to help understand Chinese culture and philosophy and promote communication with China is the basis for understanding and promoting issues related to China's business negotiations. In addition, the impact of technology and globalization has increased the impact of one culture on another. These global flows have had cultural consequences, which are crucial to understanding the changing dimensions of Chinese culture related to international negotiations.

In addition, research shows that Chinese people attach great importance to "face". There is no exact definition of the word "face", which is often associated with prestige and dignity. A relationship of mutual respect can help individuals build trust and long-term relationships. In addition, international business negotiators with profound cultural and intellectual knowledge are more effective when negotiating with Chinese business negotiators. In addition, international negotiators doing business in China should consider developing their understanding of Chinese culture, cultivating cultural wisdom, maintaining an open mind, adapting to different behaviors and negotiation styles, and avoiding value judgments, ethnocentrism and self-reference standards, because this is applicable to international business negotiations[21].

In addition, this challenging and in-depth understanding of Chinese culture only establishes a framework for continuing to understand and learn Chinese negotiation style; It depends on culture, philosophy and specific conditions, and its application is also different. Therefore, when understanding China's negotiation style, it is necessary to understand the impact of culture on China's

business negotiation, because this is the primary challenge of international business negotiation. In addition, China's practices are different from those of other cultures. Since conflict is the norm in negotiations, it is necessary to understand how to manipulate and manage conflicts with Chinese negotiators in negotiations. In addition, it is also important to understand China's behavior in negotiations. In other words, learn how their negotiation behavior is affected by their complex cultural and philosophical factors, such as their personal character, cultural values, economic, political and social background.

In addition, international business negotiators must fully understand the general process, strategy and strategy of China's business negotiations. For example, the concepts of game theory, social theory and reciprocal exchange theory have application value in understanding 65 Chinese negotiation styles; Because they are part of China's negotiation process. This structure helps international business negotiators understand the three different methods and applications of Chinese business negotiations, depending on the situation and cultural influence of Chinese negotiators: Confucian gentlemen; Maoist bureaucrats; And Sun Tzu's strategy. The study believes that it is necessary for international negotiators and Chinese people to determine the key factors that promote the success of international business negotiations, so as to provide reference and experience for more relevant research and practice in the future.

Therefore, with more and more effective cases of business negotiation with China in international business negotiation, Chinese negotiation strategies will be more and more integrated into international business negotiation. This is also an area where further research should be encouraged in the future. Researchers believe that there are deviations in understanding actual Chinese negotiations based on existing literature, such as etiquette differences affecting international business negotiations. Another possible research field in the future is whether the development of globalization will weaken the influence of Chinese traditional culture on contemporary Chinese business negotiation style. Therefore, this article discusses the culture and Chinese negotiation style related to international business negotiation.

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