

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Culture

Individualism vs. collectivism

Stereotypes

Dislocational (i.e., "cultural") shock

1

Culture

- An integrated system of learned and shared values & beliefs that are characteristic of the members of any given society

- (Hofstede) "The collective programming of minds which distinguishes members of one human group from another."

2

Major elements of culture

- Language
 - Verbal language
 - *Non-verbal language*

3

- Religion
 - Class and *caste*
 - Manners and customs
 - Cultural attitudes
- 4

- Attitudes toward one's personal role**
- Work and achievement
 - Authority and responsibility
 - Risk and uncertainty
 - *Fatalism*
 - Science and the scientific method
 - Wealth
- 5

- Attitudes toward other groups**
- Age
 - Gender
 - Class and caste
 - Family or tribe
 - Religion
- 6

- **Region**
 - **Foreigners**
 - **Other non-members**
 - **Political groups**
 - **Job or place of work**
- 7

- Other attitudes**
- **Life and death**
 - **Status**
 - **Individualism vs. collectivism**
- 8

**Individualism
vs.
collectivism**

9

Individualism

- A social structure that places a strong focus on the rights and responsibilities of the individual
- *Loose social ties* between individuals
- Large measure of *individual freedom*

10

Individualism

- People are expected to look after themselves and their immediate family.
 - *Extended families* are not usually significant.
 - *Nepotism* is generally viewed as undesirable and unacceptable.

11

Individualism

- People have very limited responsibility for non-members.
 - However, the government may provide economic and social *safety nets*.

12

**Managerial implications
of individualism**

- **Individual responsibility: The individual is expected to make decisions.**
 - Entrepreneurship is rewarded.
 - Rewards are based upon individual merit.

13

Collectivism

- **A social structure that places a strong focus on the rights and responsibilities of the *group***
 - People are born into cohesive groups.
 - Social ties between individuals in the group are very tight.

14

Collectivism

- **People are expected to protect the interests of the group in return for receiving the protection and support of the group.**
 - Nepotism is the norm.

15

Collectivism

- People have very limited responsibility for non-members.
- The government is *not* as likely to provide strong safety nets.
 - Those without a group can be very exposed.

16

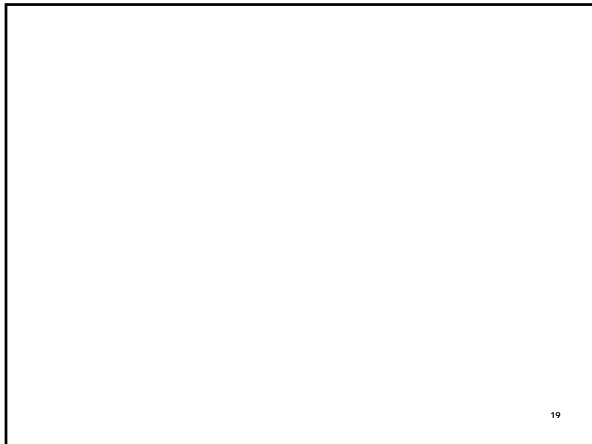
Managerial implications of collectivism

- The focus in decision making is upon group consensus.
 - Decisions are expected to come from the boss, based upon that group consensus.
 - The individual is *not* expected to make important decisions.

17

- Reward systems in a collective society are based upon the group, not the individual.
 - The good of the company supersedes that of the individual.
 - e.g., "Japan, Inc."

18



Stereotypes

- **Mental pictures that attribute common characteristics to a group**
 - People
 - Animals
 - Things
 - Events

20

Stereotypes are:

- **Generalizations**
- **Mental shortcuts**
- **A natural part of the human mental process.**

21

Origins of stereotypes

- Family
- Experience
- Friends
- Media

22

- **Stereotypes are necessary in order for us to be able to absorb and understand all that goes on around us or happens to us.**

23

We all use stereotypes!

- They are:
 - Unavoidable
 - Useful

24

Stereotypes can be:

- Positive or negative
- Accurate or inaccurate

25

Name some *positive* stereotypes.

- Europeans
- Nurses
- Women / men
- College professors

26

- We cannot avoid the use of stereotypes!
- Therefore, we need to:
 - Recognize that we stereotype.
 - Be conscious that we are doing it.
 - Be cautious and fair in stereotyping.

27

■ **Although stereotypes are of groups, we also tend to apply them to individuals.**

- Useful initially
- However, thereafter we must be open-minded, observe carefully, and measure the individual – not the stereotype of a group.

28

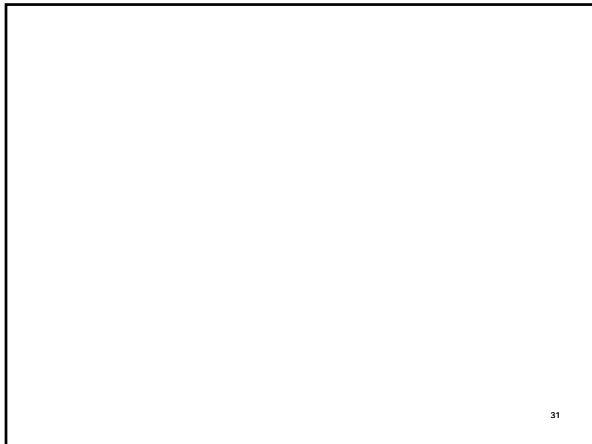
■ **Finally, be aware that *others also stereotype us!***

29

Major categories of stereotypes

- Ethnic or racial
- Gender
- Age
- National or regional origin
- Education
- Job or place of employment
- Religion
- Political affiliation
- Associations
- Activities

30



Dislocational shock

- **The general disorientation and discomfort experienced by an individual living in a different environment**

- **Dislocational shock may occur domestically as well as internationally.**

- **Culture is only one source of dislocational shock.**
 - *Economic shock*
 - *Political shock*
 - *Legal shock*
 - *Weather shock*

34

- **Generally, but not always, the dislocational shock results from being in a new location.**
 - Sometimes the shock comes to us.
 - Or we might deliberately seek the new environment where we currently reside.

35

- **Almost everyone experiences dislocational shock to some extent when placed in a new environment for an extended period.**
- **People differ greatly in their flexibility and adaptability to new environments.**

36

Time line of dislocational shock

- Can appear very quickly or only after weeks or months.
- It can last for weeks or months, or even longer.
 - Some people *never* overcome it.

37

Phases of dislocational shock

- *"Honeymoon" period*
- *Rejection period*
- *Adjustment period*

38

- **Secondary and tertiary rejection and adjustment periods**
- *Acceptance or adaptation*
 - *Biculturalism*

39

Symptoms of “dislocational” shock

- Loneliness
- Boredom
- Sense of loss
- Criticism of the environment

40

- Withdrawal
- Compulsive behavior (e.g., drinking, eating, sleeping)
- Interpersonal tensions
- Physical ailments
- Poor job performance

41

Forewarned is forearmed

- Dislocational shock can usually be survived.
 - Be prepared -- it can't be avoided.
 - Be patient and flexible.

42

- **Be open-minded and try to avoid being too negative.**
 - **Develop *empathy*: The generalized ability to see the world through the eyes of other people**
- 43

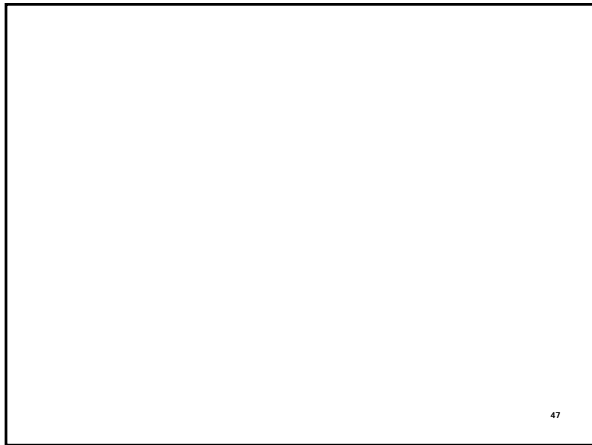
- **Don't withdraw -- try to experience the new situation as fully as possible.**
 - **Network--Talk with others who have already experienced and overcome the shock.**
 - **Avoid the complainers**
- 44

- **Stay busy.**
 - **Get involved.**
 - **Learn as much about the new environment as possible.**
- 45

Return shock

- **Some people become so adjusted to their foreign lifestyle that they are reluctant to return home!**
 - "Going native"
- **Returning home can produce its own dislocational shock!**

46



47
