

ABSTRACT

The fit between information technology and cultural values

This presentation will present and discuss results from an extensive study of values and value systems across the world, and aims to answer the question of how differences between cultural values in different regions of the world do and should affect the design and use of information technology. Results will be presented from an extensive review of empirical studies of value across different parts of the world, including the World Value Survey, and attempts to propose theoretical frameworks for value analysis based on these empirical studies, notable the Inglehart-Welzel cultural map (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), with its distinction between traditional values and secular-rational values, and survival values vs. self-expression values. Traditional values are values that emphasize religious beliefs, familial obligations, marriage, national pride, obedience, absolute values and norms, and respect for authority. Secular-rational values, in contrast, have a greater openness and tolerance for different family models, sexual orientations, and lifestyles. Survival values are values that emphasize economic and physical security. Self-expression values take economic and physical security for granted, and focuses on immaterial needs, such as life satisfaction, public expression, and liberty.

After consideration of the validity and reliability of these empirical studies and theoretical constructs, their implications for the design and use of information technology will be studied. It will be analyzed how particular cultural values and value systems would necessitate different designs and uses for information technology, and it will be assessed whether there may be a bad fit in certain parts of the world between the information technology present and the prevailing value systems. Particular attention will be paid to the Inglehart-Welzel dimensions, as well as to the individualist-collectivist and the egalitarianism-hierarchy dichotomies.

References

Inglehart, R., & C. Welzel. *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.