

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND VALUES AS DETERMINANTS OF MANAGEMENT IN UKRAINE

Yuriy Robul¹, Eduard Kuznietsov², Oleksandr Radchenko³

Abstract. The *subject* of the present study is the system of managerial values and cultural orientations that determine the behaviour, learning and sustainability of management in Ukrainian organisations. The study focuses on the identification of how cultural dimensions, as defined by Hofstede's model, shape managerial practices, decision-making and ethical responsibility in a post-transition and post-war economy. *Methodology.* The present study employs an exploratory research design, combining conceptual analysis with an empirical pilot survey of 156 Ukrainian managers based on the Hofstede Values Survey Module (VSM 2013). A comparison was made between managerial value orientations and Hofstede's national indices for Ukraine, with both descriptive statistics and interpretive analysis being utilised in the process. The employment of a mixed-method approach guaranteed the presence of coherence between quantitative indicators and qualitative interpretations derived from theories of sustainable and value-based management. The *objective* of the present article is twofold: firstly, to identify the dominant value orientations that characterise Ukrainian managerial culture; and secondly, to determine their influence on the development of sustainable, ethical and socially responsible management practices. The *results* obtained demonstrate a distinctive cultural profile among Ukrainian managers when compared with Hofstede's national averages. The managerial sample exhibited lower power distance, higher individualism, stronger achievement motivation and a higher tolerance of uncertainty. These tendencies are indicative of the gradual professionalisation and autonomy of management. However, these communities are characterised by a lack of long-term orientation and fragmented trust, factors which impede the development of collective learning and sustainability-oriented governance. It is evident that managers who adopt participatory or coaching styles often encounter resistance from employees who expect directive leadership and stability. This phenomenon is often referred to as a "value gap of management". This discrepancy can be attributed to a divergence between the globally internalised managerial norms of autonomy and the locally embedded expectations of control. The coexistence of adaptability and fragility is explained by the lack of institutional trust, with autonomy turning into fragmentation and flexibility into inconsistency. Consequently, managerial systems remain vulnerable to short-termism and symbolic compliance with sustainability principles. *Conclusion.* The study posits that the viability of sustainable management in Ukraine is contingent on a comprehensive moral and cultural reconstruction, as opposed to a mere structural reform. The establishment of institutional trust, the alignment of declared and enacted values, and the integration of ethical responsibility into managerial autonomy are identified as fundamental conditions for the transformation of adaptability into resilience. The empirical application of Hofstede's framework thus provides a new perspective on the cultural foundations of sustainable management and the evolution of managerial capital in transitional economies.

Keywords: managerial culture, values, Hofstede model, sustainable management, Ukraine.

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¹ Odesa I.I. Mechnikov National University, Ukraine

E-mail: yrobul@onu.edu.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7299-9648>

ResearcherID: <https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/B-6018-2015>

² Odesa I.I. Mechnikov National University, Ukraine (*corresponding author*)

E-mail: edkuznietsov@onu.edu.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7569-7533>

³ Odesa I.I. Mechnikov National University, Ukraine

E-mail: rap_1@ukr.net

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8407-7619>



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1. Introduction

The growing complexity of economic systems and organisations in contemporary management has transformed the very nature of managerial work. Management is no longer confined to coordinating resources or achieving performance indicators; rather, it is increasingly dependent on the values that inform behaviour, decision-making and learning. Recent studies demonstrate that sustainable management models are based on the human and cultural aspects of organisations, influencing their long-term adaptability and capacity for innovation (Hristov & Chirico, 2022; Ketprapakorn, 2022; Griep et al., 2024). Consequently, the manager is no longer merely an executor of corporate goals, but also a cultural actor who is able to shape organisational identity and responsibility.

The concept of sustainable development provides the strategic framework for understanding managerial values. The concept of management is redefined as a social process aimed at achieving a balance between efficiency and responsibility towards people and the environment. From this standpoint, the ethical and cultural orientations that organisations adopt serve as the primary factors in determining the manner in which strategic objectives are translated into socially responsible and resilient practices. The exploration of managerial value orientations facilitates an assessment of the human foundations of sustainability, and the identification of whether managerial culture supports inclusive growth, innovation, and long-term development.

Although Hofstede's cultural dimensions have been extensively applied in the field of international management research, their empirical use in Ukraine remains extremely limited. Domestic studies rarely examine management through cultural frameworks, instead relying on generalised notions of mentality or traditional leadership styles. The absence of a systematic empirical analysis has resulted in a paucity of understanding regarding the interpretation of authority, co-operation, and responsibility by Ukrainian managers. These elements are pivotal in determining the potential of management to contribute to sustainable development and post-war reconstruction.

The objective of this study is to ascertain the prevailing value orientations that typify managerial behaviour and learning in Ukraine, and to examine the manner in which these orientations influence the development of sustainable and socially responsible management practices. The research combines conceptual analysis with an exploratory survey of Ukrainian managers, utilising Hofstede's methodological approach to unveil value-driven patterns of managerial behaviour and learning.

2. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The human and ethical dimensions of management have become a central focus of contemporary scholarship in the search for sustainable managerial paradigms. A plethora of studies underscores the notion that the efficacy of contemporary management cannot be adequately elucidated by rational coordination or performance indicators alone. Instead, the effectiveness of managerial action is contingent upon its alignment with shared systems of values that facilitate co-operation, learning, and responsibility (Ketprapakorn, 2022; Hristov & Chirico, 2022). The cultural perspective on management has the capacity to expand the traditional view of organisations as rational systems by highlighting their embeddedness in broader social and cultural contexts. In accordance with the findings of Pedraza-Rodríguez et al. (2023), the manifestation of managerial aptitude and decision-making patterns is derived from the interplay between organisational culture and personal value orientations. This finding aligns with the tenets of value-based leadership theory, which conceptualises managerial influence as a process of meaning creation rather than control (Copeland, 2014; Liao, 2022). In transitional economies, managerial culture is characterised by the coexistence of inherited hierarchical norms and emerging participatory practices. These tensions have been shown to influence organisational efficiency and learning behaviour. The latter is defined as the process through which managers internalise new values and adapt to changing institutional conditions. Consequently, management can be understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon that reflects the historical, institutional, and moral context of society. (Kuznietsov, 2017; Liao, 2022; Purnomo et al., 2024).

In this regard, sustainable management is understood as a process of aligning organisational goals with social and environmental responsibility. The extant literature pertaining to sustainable leadership posits a correlation between ethical orientation, participatory decision-making, and learning capacity, on the one hand, and the resilience of organisations, on the other. This, in turn, is associated with their contribution to sustainable development (Griep et al., 2024). Culture, therefore, emerges as a strategic driver of sustainability: Hristov and Chirico (2022) demonstrate that corporate resilience is rooted in value-based governance and a long-term ethical orientation, while Sedita et al. (2022) demonstrate that the success of sustainability strategies varies across cultural configurations. These findings underscore the necessity to investigate the role of cultural values in shaping managerial conduct and the general validity of management systems.

Cross-cultural management research provides the conceptual and empirical tools necessary for such analysis. As demonstrated in the seminal work of Smith et al. (2002), fundamental studies have shown that national value systems exert a significant influence on the preferred sources of guidance and leadership styles that managers adopt. Subsequent research by Minkov and Kaasa (2022) has confirmed the lasting influence of cultural profiles, even within a globalised and technologically convergent environment. Recent advancements in the realm of sustainable human resource management have indicated a correlation between organisational value congruence and employee engagement, wellbeing, and ethical conduct (Griep et al., 2024). Hofstede's six-dimension model remains the most influential framework for examining how values translate into managerial norms and practices.

Despite the pervasive influence of Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework within the domain of cross-cultural studies, its utilisation within the context of Ukrainian academic literature is characterised by its sporadic presence and predominantly descriptive nature. The majority of publications that reference Hofstede (e.g., Averkina & Matvieiev, 2025; Blagodyr & Filatova, 2024; Lozinska, 2025) discuss cultural values in the context of communication, international business, or marketing localisation, without linking them to managerial decision-making or organisational behaviour. Empirical research that employs Hofstede's methodology to examine management practices, leadership patterns, or governance structures in Ukraine is practically non-existent. This restricted interpretation has curtailed the model's capacity to enhance comprehension of the cultural underpinnings governing management and organisational transformation. Consequently, the extant scholarship in this field is still lacking a systematic body of evidence on how cultural dimensions influence managerial thinking, control systems, or change management processes in Ukrainian organisations.

However, recent studies have demonstrated an emerging interest in the intersection of cultural analysis and managerial and marketing transformations. For instance, Robul et al. (2023) highlight how cultural values can act as agents of socially responsible marketing in the digital economy, illustrating a promising direction for integrating cultural dimensions into the study of management and strategic behaviour.

Utilising these extant gaps, the present study employs Hofstede's methodological framework to identify the dominant value orientations of Ukrainian managers and interpret them through the lens of sustainability. The objective of the present research is to elucidate the manner in which cultural dimensions exert influence on managerial learning, ethical responsibility, and the integration of sustainable management principles

into quotidian practice. In doing so, it establishes a connection between global theories of value-based management and the empirical realities of Ukrainian organisations, thus offering a novel perspective on the manner in which managerial culture can support sustainable economic transformation and institutional resilience.

3. Materials and Methods

The present study adopts an exploratory and qualitative research design with the aim of interpreting how managerial values and cultural orientations manifest in managerial behaviour and learning in Ukrainian organisations. The approach combines conceptual analysis with a limited empirical component that serves as a pilot investigation. The fundamental objective of this design is to identify interpretive patterns rather than to produce statistically representative results. The study therefore prioritises analytical depth and theoretical coherence, ensuring that observed tendencies contribute to understanding management as a value-based and socio-cultural phenomenon.

Empirical data were collected via an online self-administered questionnaire, which was distributed via professional and educational networks among middle- and upper-level managers. The instrument was based on the Values Survey Module 2013 (VSM 2013), which was developed by Hofstede et al. (2010), and adapted to managerial contexts. The adaptation entailed the refinement of item wording to reflect workplace realities, managerial communication, and decision-making processes, while ensuring the retention of the five-point Likert scale (1 – "strongly disagree", 5 – "strongly agree"). The final questionnaire comprised 24 items measuring value orientations relevant to management, in addition to six demographic questions concerning age, gender, management level, tenure, industry, and organisation type. The adaptation procedure was subjected to a rigorous review process involving academic experts and pilot testing to ensure clarity and internal consistency.

The target population comprised managers employed in Ukrainian enterprises of various sizes and ownership types. The data were collected via a secure web-based platform that guaranteed accessibility, anonymity, and reliability. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all respondents provided informed consent. Out of 180 invitations, 156 valid responses were collected, including 97 (62.2%) middle-level managers and 59 (37.8%) top-level managers representing the manufacturing, agriculture, services, trade, and information-technology sectors. The majority of respondents (approximately 85%)

were employed in private enterprises, with the remainder representing public or non-profit organisations. The geographic coverage encompassed all major Ukrainian economic regions, namely Kyiv, Odesa, Lviv, Dnipro, and Kharkiv, thereby ensuring a balanced qualitative overview of managerial value orientations.

The data coding and processing followed the methodological VSM (2013) for calculating composite indices of the six cultural dimensions: power distance (PDI), individualism (IDV), masculinity or motivation towards success (MAS), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), long-term orientation (LTO), and indulgence (IND). A descriptive analysis and interpretive comparisons were performed across managerial levels and organisation types. In light of the exploratory nature of the study, it is important to note that the statistical results were interpreted as indicative tendencies rather than definitive national estimates. Quantitative outputs were supported by qualitative interpretation derived from open-ended comments and the theoretical literature on sustainable and value-based management.

Reliability and validity were addressed through internal consistency checks and theoretical triangulation. The convergence between empirical data and conceptual findings from recent sustainability-oriented management research (Hristov & Chirico, 2022; Griep et al., 2024; Ketprapakorn, 2022) ensured methodological coherence. The ethical considerations were strictly observed, with anonymous data collection, voluntary participation, and the non-retention of identifying information.

The methodological framework provides a sufficient and transparent basis for examining the link between managerial values, learning orientations, and sustainable management practices within the Ukrainian context. The present study contributes new empirical evidence to the cross-cultural understanding of management by applying Hofstede's model to a contemporary managerial sample. The study also offers a foundation for developing value-driven strategies that support sustainable organisational transformation.

4. Results and Discussion

The empirical results of the survey provide a comparative overview of the cultural dimensions that shape managerial behaviour in Ukraine. As illustrated in Table 1, the mean values for six value dimensions are presented, as described by Hofstede et al. (2010), for the managerial sample. The corresponding national indices reported in the Hofstede Insights database are also included.

The empirical findings enable the delineation of a distinctive cultural profile of Ukrainian managers that diverges from Hofstede's national indices and reflects the ongoing transformation of managerial culture in a post-transition economy. The findings indicated a consistent pattern: lower perceived power distance, stronger individual achievement orientation, and notably higher tolerance of uncertainty compared with Hofstede's national averages for Ukraine. Informal post-survey conversations confirmed that effective management is increasingly dependent on personal initiative, flexibility, and trust rather than formal authority.

The decline in power distance indicates a gradual shift from command-based coordination towards participatory management, a phenomenon that has been observed in other transitional contexts (Minkov & Kaasa, 2022). From the standpoint of sustainable development, this shift enhances responsibility and adaptability (Hristov & Chirico, 2022). However, a lower power distance can also have a dual effect: where self-regulation and shared accountability are underdeveloped, it can erode managerial authority and organisational coherence. In such cases, the phenomenon of decentralisation is not balanced by the internal culture of self-governance (Senge, 1990; Morgan, 1997).

The managers within the sample exhibited elevated levels of individualism and achievement motivation, concomitant with constrained long-term orientation. These traits correspond to global trends in managerial professionalisation and market integration (Sedita et al., 2022), but they also engender tension in Ukrainian organisations, where many line employees remain

Table 1

Cultural value profile of Ukrainian managers compared with national culture

Cultural dimension	Score (managers only)	Score (Ukraine)
Power Distance (PDI)	76	92
Individualism (IDV)	68	55
Motivation Towards Success (MAS)	59	27
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	75	95
Long Term Orientation (LTO)	50	51
Indulgence (IND)	30	14

Note: The authors have collated and calculated managerial data using the Hofstede VSM 2013 methodology. National indices for Ukraine are taken from the Country Comparison Tool at The Culture Factor. Available at: <https://www.theculturefactor.com/country-comparison-tool?countries=ukraine>

collectivist and risk averse. It is frequently observed that managers who adopt democratic or coaching styles often encounter resistance from their subordinates, who continue to expect directive leadership and detailed instructions. The cultural discrepancy between managerial and employee value systems thus gives rise to what may be termed a "value gap of management". While managers may internalise global norms of autonomy, their teams remain anchored in stability and control (Mukha, 2019).

This divergence restricts sustainability-oriented governance: managers often have to be more authoritative than they would like in order to maintain control. The generational factor exacerbates this paradox. Younger employees reject authoritarianism, yet they are not yet ready for self-regulation, which is now being amplified by institutional volatility. The managerial system oscillates between autonomy and dependency, and between participation and control.

The relatively low level of uncertainty avoidance exhibited by managers is indicative of an increased tolerance for ambiguity and a readiness to engage in experimental practices. This is a pivotal quality in a crisis-affected economy (Jalonen, 2012; Agoraki et al., 2024). However, at the operational level, there is still a high level of avoidance of uncertainty, which is inhibiting collective learning and innovation. The paucity of teamwork within the organisation is indicative not only of managerial short-termism but also of a general lack of awareness of sustainability among employees. It is widely perceived as an abstract or external agenda, a perception that is partly attributable to a deficiency in educational and reflective capacity. Consequently, while managers exhibit adaptability, organisations frequently perpetuate routine patterns, hindering their transition into learning systems.

The moderate long-term orientation and relatively high indulgence further underscore the transitional nature of managerial values. The strategic vision remains underdeveloped, with short-term priorities prevailing in decision-making processes (Carayannis & Morawska-Jancelewicz, 2022). However, the increasing emphasis on indulgence is indicative of a growing awareness of wellbeing, work-life balance, and psychological well-being, which are all pivotal components of human-centred sustainability (Griep et al., 2024). This humanistic potential, however, has yet to be institutionalised.

The structural and ethical contradictions observed in the study are consistent with the configuration of cultural values revealed. The combination of low power distance (PDI) and high individualism (IDV) reflects an aspiration towards autonomy. In the absence of institutional trust, this aspiration transforms into fragmentation. Rigid hierarchies are rejected by managers, yet in the absence of mutual accountability, co-operation is replaced by defensive autonomy,

which is characterised by a preference for "minding one's own sphere" rather than engaging in shared action. The pursuit of autonomy, therefore, exists alongside profound mistrust and inadequate cohesion, resulting in decentralisation without concomitant solidarity.

Similar ambivalence can be seen in the combination of high masculinity (MAS) and low long-term orientation (LTO). While managers are competitive and performance-driven, which sustains productivity, this also reinforces short-term thinking. Success tends to be defined by immediate results and personal recognition rather than institutional continuity. This short-term focus explains why rhetoric surrounding innovation and sustainability in management is often merely symbolic (Brunsson, 1989; Edelman, 1992). When long-term goals lack institutional foundations, situational pragmatism takes precedence. The culture of 'managing the moment', inherited from decades of uncertainty, prioritises improvisation over strategy.

Lower uncertainty avoidance (UAI) and higher indulgence (IND) introduce a further duality. On the one hand, they reveal an openness to experimentation and human-centred values (Griep et al., 2024). On the other hand, in the absence of strategic vision and trust, this flexibility can lead to a tolerance of inconsistency. Rules are perceived as negotiable and results as contingent. This contributes to normative relativism, which is the belief that success depends not on procedures, but on relationships and personal discretion.

Together, these dimensions explain how Ukrainian managerial culture combines adaptability with fragility. While traits such as independence, ambition and openness to ambiguity could foster sustainable innovation, they become destabilising when detached from ethics and continuity. The crisis of managerial coherence is therefore not accidental, but is encoded in the value system itself. The pattern described by Hofstede's indices provides the psychological and normative basis for the institutional contradictions observed in Ukrainian organisations, such as autonomy without trust, ambition without continuity and flexibility without responsibility.

This paradox does not stem from historical residues but from the cumulative effects of prolonged crisis, institutional volatility, and cultural diffusion under incomplete modernisation. For a period of three decades, Ukrainian organisations have functioned in a context where survival supersedes development, short-term perspectives predominate over strategic vision, and discourse supplants practical action. In such circumstances, the discourse of management regarding efficiency and sustainability frequently functions more as a symbolic gesture than as an operational mechanism. This phenomenon, termed "symbolic management" (Brunsson, 1989; Edelman, 1992), can be defined as the preservation of legitimacy

through the use of rhetoric rather than through coherent actions. The resulting institutional duality maintains a chronic gap between declared and enacted values, impeding the accumulation of managerial capital (Kuznietsov, 2017; 2019) and undermining the transformation of adaptive behaviour into sustainable competence.

A corrupt managerial culture, understood here as a patrimonial-adaptive culture that has lost its moral foundation, functions not merely as an economic pathology, but also as a value system that stabilises expectations in the absence of institutional trust. In such environments, advancement depends more on loyalty and favour than competence. While these patterns are rational in times of volatility, they reinforce short-termism and weaken ethical accountability, thereby eroding the moral basis of sustainable management. As Francis Fukuyama (1995) argued, trust acts as a social lubricant, aligning formal rules with informal norms and enabling organisations to remain flexible and efficient. In high-trust societies such as Japan, patrimonial-adaptive cultures promote long-term efficiency because loyalty is both moral and reciprocal (Kotter, 1997). However, in Ukraine, where mistrust remains pervasive, the same logic becomes corrosive: loyalty without trust turns into dependency and adaptation into opportunism.

Therefore, it is essential to distinguish between a patrimonial-adaptive culture and its distorted form. In contexts where there is a high level of trust, patrimonial-adaptive systems encourage flexibility and long-term cohesion because personal relationships are based on shared responsibility (Fukuyama, 1995; Kotter, 1997). However, when trust erodes, the same adaptive logic can degenerate into a corrupt managerial culture that substitutes dependency for solidarity. The difference between the two is ethical, not structural: in one, personal relations integrate the organisation, while in the other, they fragment it. This distinction helps to explain why Ukrainian organisations often reproduce informality and loyalty, yet fail to achieve the cohesion and efficiency of patrimonial-adaptive systems in high-trust societies.

From a sustainability perspective, this analysis shows that organisational resilience cannot be achieved through structural reform alone. For sustainable development to be possible, managerial systems must be morally coherent – they must be able to align declared values with enacted norms and transform adaptability into institutional trust. Therefore, the central challenge for Ukrainian management is to bridge the gap between autonomy and authority, and between formal procedures and ethical commitments. Building trust across organisational levels should be treated as a strategic objective of equal importance to technological modernisation and competitiveness. Only through such cultural reconstruction can

managerial capital become genuinely sustainable, converting flexibility into institutional strength and responsibility into long-term development.

These findings collectively suggest that the value orientations of Ukrainian managers both facilitate and limit the country's progress towards sustainable management. They demonstrate how a distinctive configuration of cultural dimensions – low power distance combined with high individualism, strong achievement motivation alongside weak long-term orientation, and a tension between uncertainty tolerance and moral instability – shapes managerial practices and their ethical implications. Understanding the interaction between cultural values and institutional trust provides a basis for developing new approaches to leadership, education and policy aimed at embedding sustainability within managerial behaviour and organisational governance.

5. Conclusions

The study provides evidence that sustainable management in Ukraine depends not only on structural reforms or professional competencies, but also on the moral and cultural reconstruction of managerial systems. The establishment of institutional trust, and the alignment of ethical responsibility with managerial autonomy, are the primary conditions for converting adaptability into resilience and competitiveness into sustainable progress. An empirical analysis based on Hofstede's framework revealed a distinctive configuration of cultural dimensions: low power distance, high individualism, high achievement motivation, weak long-term orientation, relatively low uncertainty avoidance and increasing indulgence. This configuration delineates a managerial culture that is both adaptive and performance-driven, yet also fragmented and insufficiently coordinated.

Specific combinations of values generate systemic contradictions within managerial practice. A low power distance and a high level of individualism foster autonomy and creativity, but in the absence of institutional trust they lead to fragmentation and defensive behaviour. A high level of masculinity combined with a low level of long-term orientation explains why short-term competitiveness is favoured over strategic sustainability. Low uncertainty avoidance and increasing indulgence reveal an openness to change and a latent human-centred approach. However, this remains underdeveloped due to weak ethical integration. Together, these traits help to explain why Ukrainian managerial culture exhibits both adaptability and fragility.

The results suggest the prevalence of symbolic management, defined as the disjunction between declared values and actual behaviour, and propose the concept of a corrupt managerial culture. This is defined

as a patrimonial-adaptive culture that lacks a moral foundation. This analytical construct explains why informal relations and personal loyalty fail to produce cohesion and efficiency under conditions of low trust. The study concludes that trust is the decisive factor in transforming patrimonial-adaptive structures into sustainable, morally integrated organisations.

The findings also contribute to the general understanding of the development of management cultures by linking cultural value dimensions with institutional coherence and sustainability outcomes.

The research provides a qualitatively reliable interpretation of the value orientations and behavioural tendencies characteristic of Ukrainian managers. While the empirical scope may be considered

limited, the observed cultural patterns and ethical tensions offer a convincing illustration of the structural features of managerial culture in Ukraine.

It is recommended that further research be conducted in order to expand the comparative dimension of this work. Such expansion would be achieved by examining managerial subcultures across different sectors, ownership forms, and generations. Quantitative follow-ups could assess the robustness of the identified value configurations, while qualitative case studies could explore mechanisms of trust-building and ethical learning in organisations. Another promising research avenue involves the examination of the impact of digitalisation and post-war transformation on value change and sustainable managerial practices.

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